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22

JANUARY 2019

**Flexibility and gender
equality in housing**

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Facade of the Ca l'Isidret public housing building, on the corner of Carrer Pere IV and Carrer Josep Pla.



Architectural flexibility and gender equality in collective housing



Josep Maria Montaner

Barcelona City Councillor for Housing and Renovation

If modern collective housing can be defined by two concepts, these are flexibility and gender equality. In addition to their diverse nature, these two concepts are directly related to the changes currently taking place: on the one hand, the possibility of change and evolution of housing in a dynamic society that sees several different family structures over its life cycle; and, on the other, the contributions of the modern feminist struggle that demands gender equality on the basis of justice. They are therefore two closely related concepts.

The concept of **flexibility** first emerged with modern architecture, in relation to the open plan layout promoted by the two new construction technologies of the 1920s: reinforced concrete and steel structures. Flexibility was reinforced in the early 20th century by the new families composed of two women or women at the head of the family – in summary, independent women that made flexibility make sense from a social point of view.

Flexibility brings with it a variety of possibilities for internal mobility (such as the designer Truus Schröder's home in Utrecht, designed with Gerrit Thomas Rietveld in 1924) and the ability to transform components based on the existing needs at any given time.

The practical concept of *perfectibility*, championed in Barcelona by Ignacio Paricio, appeared decades later. The British experts Sarah Wigglesworth, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till have also written about, and experimented with, this flexibility.

Through the theories on flexibility and the transformation ability of the work of architects and artists such as John Habraken, Jan Trapman, Constant and Yona Friedman, among others, the theory of supports and experimenting with growing megastructures was proposed. This is where the idea of the open building comes from, in which everything except for the structure and a few circulation elements can be transformed, including the façade and installations.



Interior of a home in the Glòries serviced housing development for the elderly.

Flexibility is related to measurements. The key measurement in this regard is the minimum of 2.8 metres per side for the various areas. It provides a threshold below which flexibility becomes subject to other things, particularly the different layout possibilities for the beds: it addresses the need for 2 metres for a bed and 80 centimetres to go past comfortably and is defined by a theoretical cube of 2.80 x 2.80 x 2.80 as a minimum area. Rooms that are too small or too narrow thus have less functional capacity and must therefore be avoided in projects.

Gender equality seeks to break with the traditional division of gender roles in domestic spaces and, thus, with the rigid dichotomy between private and public spaces. It aims to uphold spaces used for reproductive and care purposes. Based on this point of view, the lack of neutral elements in the home is demonstrated. This is particularly so in the case of the kitchen, which has encouraged the dominance of one gender over the other, the submission of women to housework. Because of all this, the kitchen must be in a central and visible position rather than relegated and closed off, and it should allow several people in the family to engage together in collaborative work, making housework visible and shared. In practice, it means that the home plan must take into account the entire laundry cycle and the provision of spaces for care; that each member of the shared-living unit must have his or her own space; and, in addition, that there must be suitable storage spaces.

In Catalan architecture, the defence of gender equality was started by Anna Bofill and continued by Zaida Muxí, the author of *Recomanacions per a un habitatge no jeràrquic ni androcèntric* (2009) and *Mujeres, casas y ciudades. Más allá del umbral* (2018)

The association Punt 6 – created as a result of the exhibition 'La casa sense gènere' ['The genderless home'] (2005) and which takes its name from the point at which the Catalonia District Plan established the compulsory nature of equality and gender perspective in all areas – has produced a number of educational publications on the various ways in which gender equality affects urban planning and architecture, public spaces and housing. Its publications include, among others: *Dones treballant: Guia de reconeixement urbà amb perspectiva*

de gènere (2014); *Espais per a la vida quotidiana: Auditoria de qualitat urbana amb perspectiva de gènere* (2014); *Entorns habitables: Auditoria de seguretat urbana amb perspectiva de gènere a l'habitatge i l'entorn* (2017). In these publications, these criteria are applied to housing, collective spaces, entrances and intermediate spaces between the home and the street.

In addition, flexibility and gender equality entail another element that is essential in modern housing: the removal of hierarchies. A non-hierarchical home doesn't have some rooms that are larger and have better qualities than the rest, or *en-suite* bathrooms that are exclusive to certain rooms and imply an internal hierarchy. Non-hierarchical homes are easier to sell on the second-hand market than rigid, hierarchical structures. They promote less specific areas and are therefore more adaptable to a variety of family groups and functions. The architects of the firm CIERTO ESTUDIO write about these matters based on their experience with the Glòries housing project.

In this issue No. 22 of *Qüestions d'Habitatge*, the articles written by Ana Paricio and David H. Falagán, who are very closely acquainted with the recent projects of the Barcelona Municipal Institute of Housing and Renovation (IMHAB), go deep into the conceptual, functional, formal and metrics implications of these two concepts. In addition, housing expert Max Gigling analyses the gender perspective in relation to access to housing in Spain.

All this takes place in a context in which these mechanisms are gradually being introduced into tenders and projects. It is also happening at a time of express commitment to gender equality at the City Council, with the Councillor's Office for Feminism and LGBTI Affairs led by Councillor Laura Pérez. In this context, the Gender Justice Plan cited by the Councillor has been reinforced by the Area of Ecology, Urban Planning and Mobility with a government measure for urban planning with a gender perspective. ©

Interior of a social housing rental home for the Carrer Tànger, 40 development.





Gender justice and the right to housing



Laura Pérez

Councillor for Feminism and LGBTI Affairs of Barcelona City Council

Housing is a fundamental inclusion factor that transcends the boundaries of built space and also affects spheres such as sustaining life and caring for people. Furthermore, it cannot be separated from other rights such as the right to education, work, health or political and social participation. This is why it is so important to guarantee it effectively.

It is therefore no coincidence that, historically, housing has been the subject of claims, conflict and resistance led primarily by women. All we need to do is look back at the Latin American rent strikes of the 19th and 20th centuries or the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages (PAH) in the last few years of the economic crisis. At present, the pressures of an economic model based on the construction and financialisation of life has ultimately placed this right out of reach.

At Barcelona City Council, we have taken on the challenge of promoting the right to housing, the right to the city, and we believe that it is necessary for housing policies to take account of the gender perspective. And we have included this in the Gender Justice Plan, which has been drawn up by the Councillor's Office for Feminism and LGBTI Affairs.

This plan states that policies must be designed taking into account family and demographic changes, and the increase in single-parent and single-person families in Barcelona is a fact. Because of these households, as well as others, we must adapt the design of public policies to the specific needs of the families that live in them and which change over their life cycle. Furthermore, we need non-hierar-

chical and non-man-centred constructions and renovations in order to break away from binary considerations and from the traditional distribution of roles that continue to cause gender inequalities.

Another challenge is experimenting with new sustainable forms of occupancy beyond the market that protect women from the higher social and financial vulnerability to which they are often subject. Examples include housing cooperatives, guaranteed rental schemes or measures based on access to public housing based on gender criteria, such as in cases of people who are at risk of gender violence.

The Gender Justice Plan includes the contributions of feminism to overcome the strong dichotomy between private and public spaces as a transferred representation of that other unreal division: the one that distinguishes between the domestic world and the productive world. Homes must include community uses, both inside and in their immediate surroundings, and must be designed together with their surrounding public spaces. Renovating housing also means regenerating neighbourhoods and providing them with local services.

The matter of housing is central to this. We need to move away from standard, uniform solutions and add flexibility and creativity to policies in order to meet this requirement effectively. Increasing the amount of money spent on this is necessary but not enough. This is a time for diversifying solutions and experimenting with new designs and new tools in order to achieve a greater impact from housing policies. In addition, all this needs to be done at multiple administrative levels. ☺





Flexibility and gender
equality in housing

Public housing building in Can Batlló.

CHAPTER



Adaptability and flexibility

Although here we talk about *flexibility*, the term that best defines our conceptual approach is *adaptability*. In relation to this, we agree with the terminology used by professors Jeremy Till and Tatjana Schneider in their research on flexible housing².

According to their work, which uses the nomenclature previously used by engineer Steven Groák (*The Idea of Building*, 1992)³, a home is flexible when it can adapt to changing needs and patterns, both social and technological. In a way, he is referring to a home designed to permit physical modifications that will make it suitable for different configurations. On the other hand, by *adaptability* we mean the home's ability to accommodate a variety of social uses. In this case, without making changes to the layout, spaces can be considered to be adaptable when they allow very different functions and uses.

The term *flexibility* would thus be used very specifically to refer to the ability to change the physical configuration of the home. But, in general, we will use the word *flexibility* in a much more open way so as to include both abilities – adaptability too –, although giving priority to the soft concept of flexibility, the concept according to which a user is able to modify the appropriation or use of a space without any technological resources.

In this regard, the wish for flexibility has been found to be one of the qualities most sought after by contemporary architecture. Great masters of modern architecture have included this characteristic – albeit with different strategies – in their designs. And neither is our local tradition

2. Jeremy Till, Tatjana Schneider (2007). *Flexible Housing*. London: Architectural Press.

3. Steven Groák (1992). *The idea of building: Thought and action in the design and production of buildings*. London: E & FN Spon.

of modern collective housing – originally represented by architectural projects as important as those of Francesc Mitjans, Francisco Juan Barba Corsini, Josep Antoni Coderch and Lluís Nadal, for example – a stranger to this desire for flexibility.

Space hierarchies

By including the gender perspective in this approach, the analysis of space hierarchies seeks to detect and raise the profile of situations of inequality, subordination or imbalance in the use of homes by men and women. It is worth remembering that the concept of gender perspective – or gender studies – refers to the category of analysis in which methods for detecting cultural constructions differentiated by



Interior of a home in the Can Batlló developments built by IMHAB.

Configuration



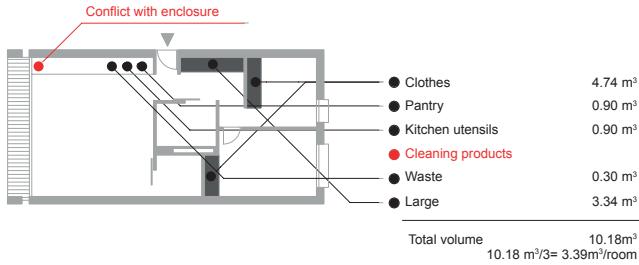
By observing the activities that usually take place at home, we can identify the main types of storage required, although subject to adding large spaces or storage rooms that can be used for any kind of storage.

Without reaching the percentage suggested by the Smithson's, in order to carry out this analysis we have assumed that each inhabitant could need a minimum of approximately 2.5 cubic metres for storage, spread out among the various areas based on function.

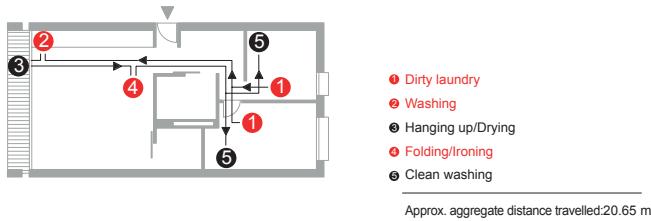
A good example of planned storage can be seen in the project for Building H1 of Phase IV of the Bon Pastor development designed by Alonso, Balaguer, Riera i Arquitectes Associats. This project envisages a large storage space located in a shared and central area of the home, near the entrance. The amount of storage space is supplemented by wardrobes in the bedrooms and over four metres of kitchen cupboards. It is easy to see how this amount of storage space makes it easier to distribute and store things.

Everyday uses

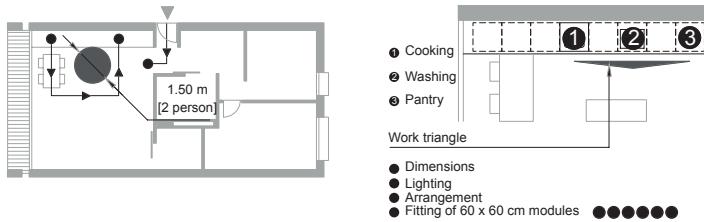
1 Storage



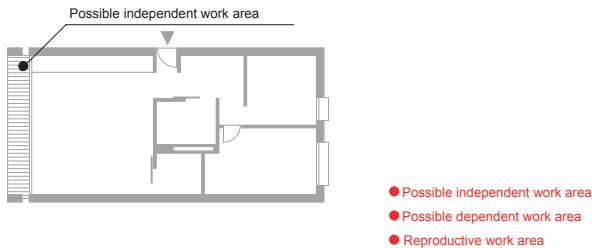
2 Laundry cycle



3 Food axis

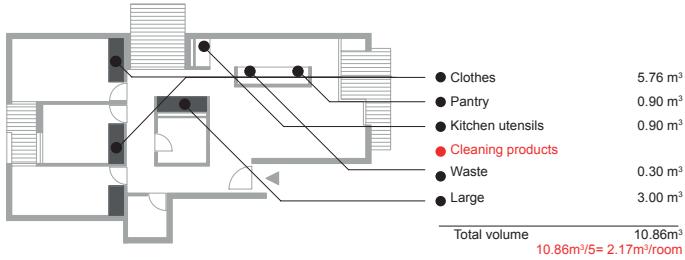


4 Work spaces

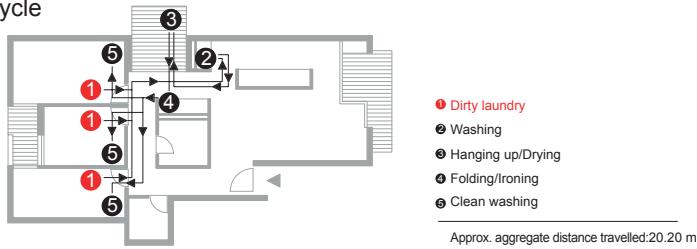


Everyday uses

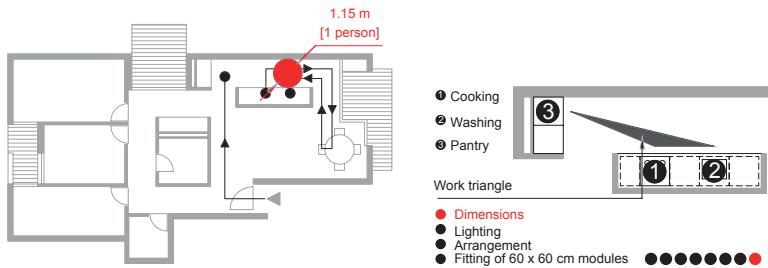
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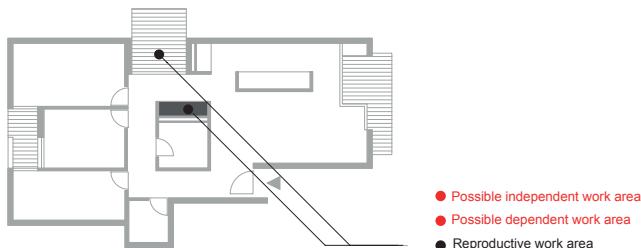
2 Laundry cycle



3 Food axis

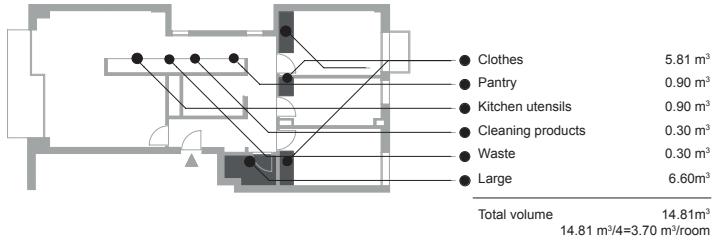


4 Work spaces

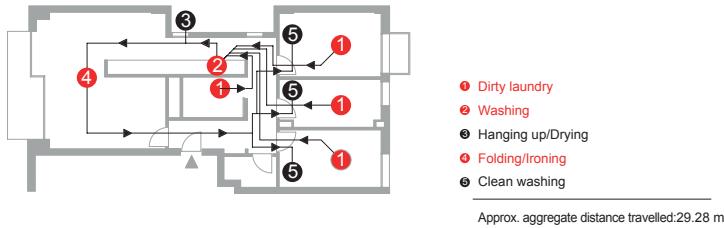


Everyday uses

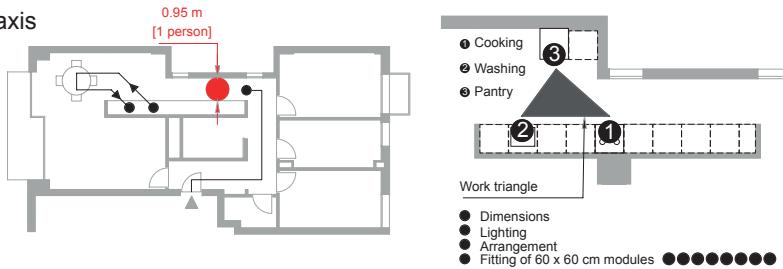
1 Storage



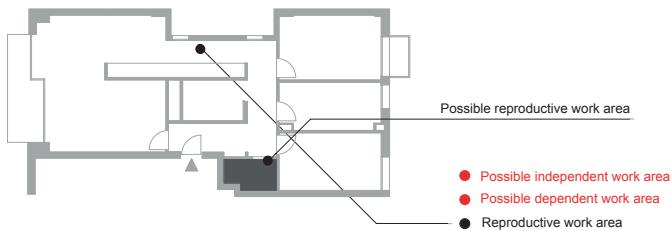
2 Laundry cycle



3 Food axis



4 Work spaces



Facade of the rental and accommodation social housing development at Tànger, 40.

CHAPTER





02

Inclusive habitat

Rethinking spaces to facilitate the socialisation of housework/ care work and the integration of all groups from all sources of inequality: gender, origin, age, class and abilities

Housing and gender: shall we extend the kitchen?

On reading the new requirements of the Barcelona Councillor’s Office for Housing and Renovation for the building of social housing in accordance with gender criteria, some architects first raise their eyebrows and then wonder if the idea is to *make larger kitchens*.

The liberal heteropatriarchal culture has given priority to the market economy and given it preferential treatment in the public sphere. Meanwhile, housework and care work – traditionally assigned to women – has been devalued, made less visible and relegated to the private sphere.¹ By 'housework and care work', we mean objective tasks such as food or cleaning, as well as subjective tasks such as emotional and relationship tasks.² This dual worldview has conditioned the entire social structure. The classic separation between the public and private spheres has been called into question by feminists for a long time on the basis that it is an exclusive view of 'everyday life'.

The commercialised view of the world seems to



Ana Paricio
Researcher

With the collaboration of Ignacio Paricio, Sonia Ruiz and Pep Vivas.

forget that we are all interdependent beings and that, at some point in our lives, we all need each other (e.g. during childhood, illness or old age). The design of habitats, which includes both housing and public spaces, should facilitate the activities that sustain life and meet the daily challenges faced by people, whether they are caregivers or the recipients of care. An inclusive habitat integrates all groups regardless of the various sources of inequality in our society, such as gender, origin, age or different abilities, and adapts times and spaces to their needs.

The patriarchal model results in a housing design that follows the rules of the game and expects each unit to be formed by a traditional nuclear family that does not change over time. But the appearance of new family models, new living arrangements and their evolution over time make it necessary to rethink the design of homes.

The constant evolution of living arrangements and the search for greater fairness and shared responsibility in housework and care work lead to the definition of new spaces to make all kinds of relationships and shared-living units possible. There is a need for **greater flexibility** of spaces – meaning the capacity of a space to accommodate different uses at different times – and the **removal of hierarchies** in the design of homes – such as

1. PATEMAN, C. (1983). 'Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy.' *Public and Private in Social Life*. S. I. Benn and G. F. Gaus (ed.). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, p. 281-303.
2. CARRASCO, C (2001). 'La sostenibilidad de la vida humana: ¿un asunto de mujeres?'. *Mientras Tanto*, no. 82. Barcelona: Icaria Editorial.



Communal lounge in the Torre Júlia development.

ing meeting spaces and anchorage points for the community.

In public spaces, capital or life?

The urban fabric and public spaces are at the end of this continuum. Cities and public spaces may, by definition and as opposed to private spaces, seem open to everyone but, in reality, they are not always accessible and inclusive.⁵

4. Habitar, UPC research group (2010). Exhibition 'Rehabitar' ('Las plantas bajas', 4). Ministry of Housing.

5. FRASER, N. (1992). 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy'. A: Calhoun, G (ed.). *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Social (re)production activities (such as buying food, going to the doctor, looking after children or people who are ill, playing, socialising or being involved in the community) should be translated into space and time. Depending on how cities organise these tasks and activities, they will be easier or more difficult to carry out and share. At the same time, cities will provide citizens, to a greater or lesser extent, with quality of life. The capital vs life conflict is also represented by cities' streets and buildings.

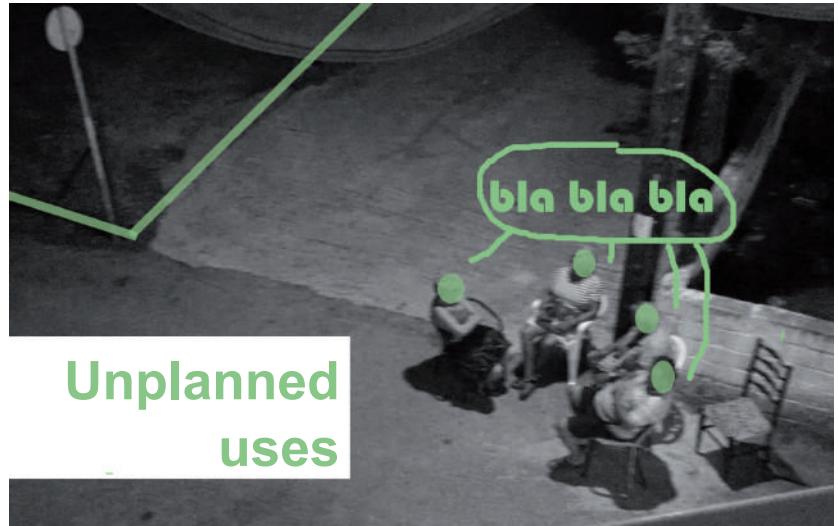
Big western cities show some symptoms of exclusion: children are not allowed to play in the streets, benches disappear for fear of being occupied by the homeless, streets are designed to move

Observing this social fabric will improve the results of any habitat-related action. We must collect information on users and the social networks they belong to and ascertain their profiles, relationships, time and needs. The first option for intervention is the **renovation** of housing. This is the easiest option, because the shared-living units that inhabit it are already known. In addition, it is the most sustainable option.

Another good opportunity for this task is provided by **social reports**, both in relation to housing and in small urban projects. By going all the way down to the micro scale and collecting both quantitative and qualitative physical and social information, we can obtain a better knowledge of the current and future inhabitants and carry out actions linked to the territory and the citizens who live in it. Along the same lines, work on the social report was carried out in the terms and conditions of the tender of the Housing Innovation Committee promoted by the Barcelona Municipal Institute of Housing and Renovation.

Finally, it is very valuable to incorporate the people living in the shared-living unit into the design and **construction** process whenever possible. This will be easy with cooperative experiences (such as the one currently being developed by La-col) and more complicated in the case of housing intended to go on the market, but it will always be a good idea to address people's daily needs, the various family units and the ways they inhabit space

To the extent that the focus of attention is placed on ascertaining the life processes of the various groups that inhabit and share cities and that we seek to find a way to meet their needs and support them from the point of view of space and time, we could say that we are getting closer to achieving an inclusive habitat. ☺



Facade of the Quatre Camins serviced housing development for the elderly (Carrer Vista Bella, 7-9).

CHAPTER





03

The gender perspective in housing in Spain

1. Introduction

Discrimination towards women is a cross-cutting social problem that demands cross-cutting responses. Thus, there is general consensus that political action needs to take gender into account, systematically and in all spheres, in order to change the structural inequality between men and women that characterises society.

A variety of forms of discrimination have been described in the field of urban planning and housing. For example, women are under-represented in politics and in home development and design. Similarly, urban planning and housing fail to adequately meet the needs arising from the everyday reality of women.

Regarding access to housing, the law ensures the full equality of women. In spite of this, there may be other forms of inequality, particularly in the financial arena, as there is still a significant salary gap between men and women.

In Spain, under Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March for the effective equality of men and women, housing policies must include measures aimed at enforcing the principle of equality between men and women.

Article 31 of the said law specifies the measures that must be included in urban, territorial



Max Gigling

Doctor of Social Psychology, housing policy researcher.

planning and housing policies. The following are the measures relating to access to housing:

1. Public administrations' plans and policies on access to housing must include measures aimed at giving effect to the principle of equality between men and women. [...]
2. The Government must, within the scope of its powers, promote access to housing for women in situations of need or at risk of exclusion, and those who have been victims of gender violence, particularly and in either case if they have any children under 18 under their sole charge.
3. [...]

There is also an obvious need for measures to support women who have been victims of gender violence, and this necessarily includes priority access to housing.

We will now examine the data relating to possible inequalities between men and women in access to housing outside the more specific field of gender violence.

2. Access to housing from a gender perspective

The main source of data for assessing differences in access to housing is the Survey of living

A clear difference between men and women can be seen only in the case of people aged over 64. In this segment of the population, in 2016 men spent an average of 9.9% of their income on housing, as compared with 11.3% in the case of women. In other words, women spend 14% more of their income on housing than men.

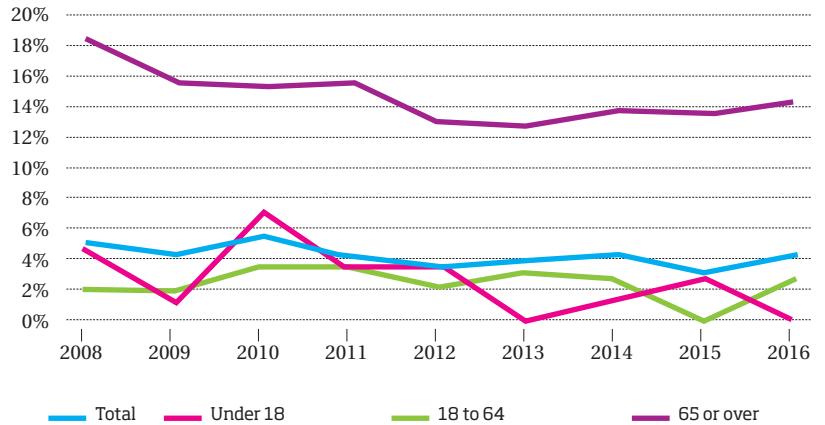
Although these differences fluctuate by year, there was a significant difference between men and women in the over-64 age group in all years, and a small or inconsistent difference in all other age groups.

The figures presented so far show the percentage of household income spent on housing. Below is the data relating to the second indicator, which shows the percentage of people living in households in which housing expenditure is an excessive burden because it accounts for 40% or more of household income.

An analysis of this second indicator confirms the above results. In the population of young people and the 18-64 segment, there is no significant or consistent difference between genders. In contrast, for people over 64, the percentage of women affected by excessive housing expenditure is clearly higher than the percentage of men in this situation, for all the years analysed. In 2016, the percentage of women (4.4%) was almost twice that of men (2.3%) in this age group.

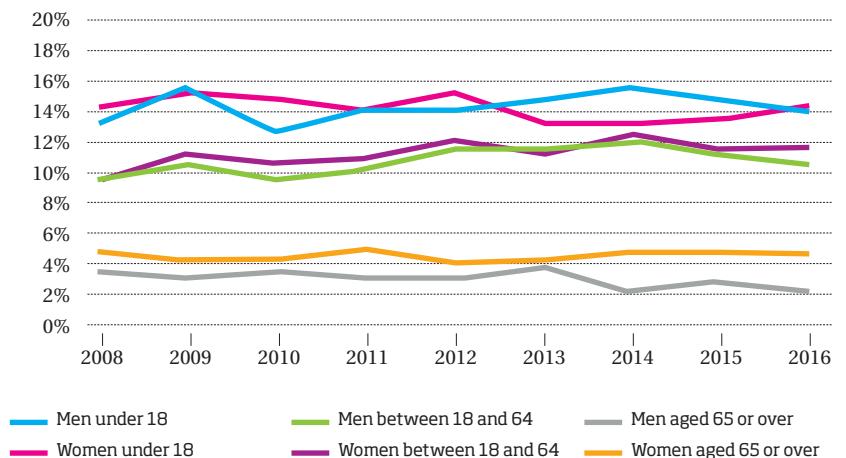
In summary, a small difference, albeit a consistent one, was found between men and women in relation to the proportion of household income spent on housing. This difference is mainly due to the over-64 group. In the population aged up to 64, the difference by gender is less significant or not consistent.

Fig. 3. Difference in the proportion of income spent on housing by men and women, by age. Spain



Difference, as a percentage, in the average proportion of income spent on housing by men and women. Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC. Original.

Figure 4. Proportion (as %) of households with excessive housing expenditure, by gender and age. Spain



Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC. Original.

Finally, no difference in overall satisfaction with housing was found either. This aspect was included in a well-being module of the 2013 Survey on living conditions.

Average satisfaction with housing in 2013, on a scale of 0 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (fully satisfied), was 7.3 for both men and women .

In summary, the indicators assessed show no signs of differences between men and women in the quality of housing.

3. Specific groups: elderly people, non-emancipated young people, single-parent households

After examining access to housing for all men and women, three specific groups are analysed below from a gender perspective: elderly people, single-parent households and young people.

3.1. Housing expenditure for elderly men and women

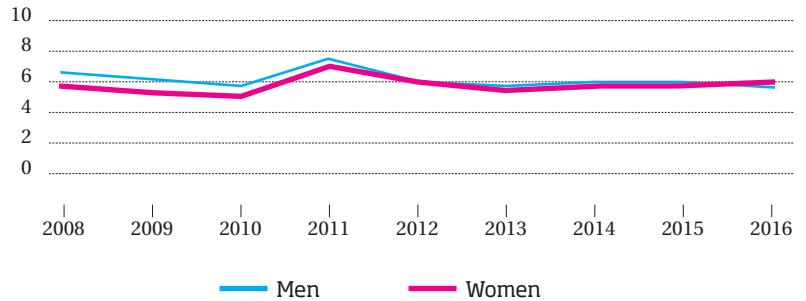
The data has shown a difference in the percentage of income spent on housing by men and women over 64. Below is a more detailed analysis of the situation of this segment of the population in order to establish the possible reasons for this difference.

The possible reasons include, on the one hand, the significant differences in pensions between men and women and, on the other, the higher proportion of women over 64 living alone.

According to Social Security data from 1 April 2018, the average pension for women over 64 is €729.52, 37% less than for men of the same age, which is €1,152.55.

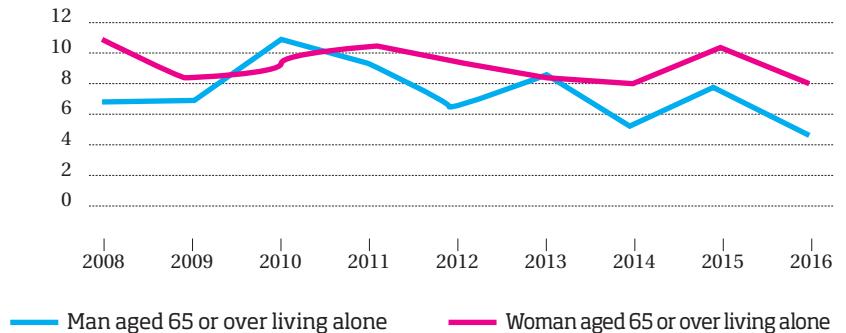
This pension inequality on the proportion of income spent on housing should result in visible differences in single-person households in particular. In the case of households composed of a couple, both pensions contribute to housing expenditure.

Fig. 7. Population (as %) with insufficient living space, by gender.



Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE), Survey of living conditions. Original.

Fig. 8. Population aged over 64 (as %) with excessive housing expenditure, by gender.



Source: National Institute of Statistics (INE), Survey of living conditions. Original.

According to data from the Survey of living conditions, there is indeed a difference between male and female single-person households for people over 64, with women spending a higher proportion of income on housing. In 2016, the proportion of women living alone with excessive housing expenditure was 7.8%, as compared to 4.7% in the case of men.

conditions for women than for men heading a single-parent household. In addition, it would create an incentive for women to head single-parent households, which would go against a broader gender equality perspective that aims to balance the number of men and women at the head of a single-parent household.

3.3. The emancipation of young people from a gender perspective

According to the available data shown above, almost no differences in housing expenditure were found between young men and young women.

However, the salaries of young women are lower than those of young men, which should affect their possibilities of emancipation, shown, for example, by women leaving home later.

However, according to the data provided by the Active Population Survey, daughters leave their parents' home earlier than sons. The following graph shows that, after the age of 20, the number of daughters living at home falls more rapidly or, in other words, the percentage of sons with respect to daughters increases.

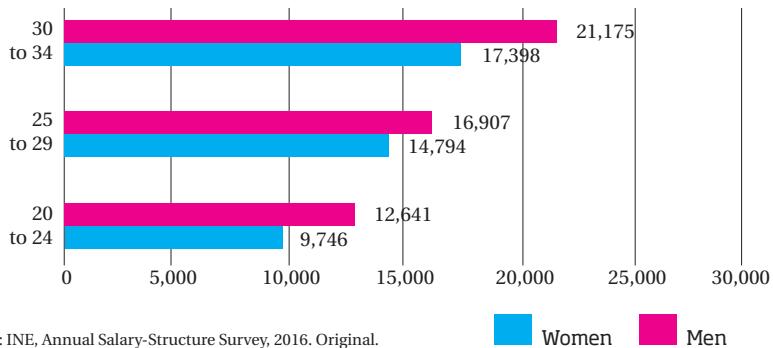
Despite lower income levels from work, daughters therefore leave home earlier than sons. This result shows the need to examine the emancipation of men and women from a gender perspective in greater detail.

4. Summary and proposals going forward

The analysis of the differences between men and women regarding access to housing and remaining in such housing is considerably complex.

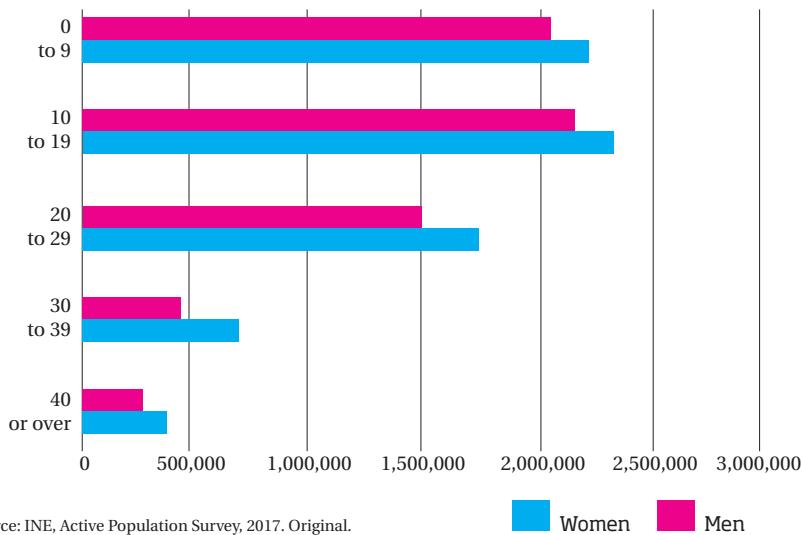
First, the household should be considered as the unit of analysis in order to establish relative housing expenditure, even though this expenditure is then applied individually and

Fig. 15. Average annual earnings per worker, by gender and age, in 2016.



Source: INE, Annual Salary-Structure Survey, 2016. Original.

Fig. 16. Children living at home, by age, in 2017.



Source: INE, Active Population Survey, 2017. Original.

The Glòries serviced housing development for elderly people is composed of three connected buildings.

CHAPTER





04 'The Housing Community', blurring the lines between public spaces, collective places and domestic activities

Presentation

CIERTO ESTUDIO is a team of six constantly experimenting young architects who work in the fields of architecture, design, culture and research. The study is a joint proposal in which various visions merge into a very personal project. The team, founded in Barcelona in 2014, is composed of Marta Benedicto, Ivet Gasol, Carlota de Gispert, Anna Llonch, Lucía Millet and Clara Vidal.

The essence of the firm is the joint conceptualisation of proposals and their development in smaller teams in the framework of a fully horizontal structure. This helps us 'infect' each other to achieve the best results, both aesthetic and functional.

Background

'The housing community' is the proposal of Certo Estudio and architect Franc Llonch that won the first prize under the 'Illa Glòries' tender, with the ensuing commission of the urban planning for the complex and the construction of one of the four project units composing the block. The residents' associations were involved in the tender, which was international and received about a hundred bids, as members of the jury. The other three winners were the team formed by the firms Haz Arquitectura, Bayona Valero Arquitectes Associats, Cantallops Vicente Arquitectes and Ensenyat-Tarrida Arquitectes; the tandem formed by Pau Vidal and Estudio Vivas Arquitectos; and the Sevillian firm SV60 Arquitectos.

The exceptional nature of the tender demonstrates that changes in the way housing is conceived are taking place. Even the public administration has included new criteria in its approach to future developments in line with





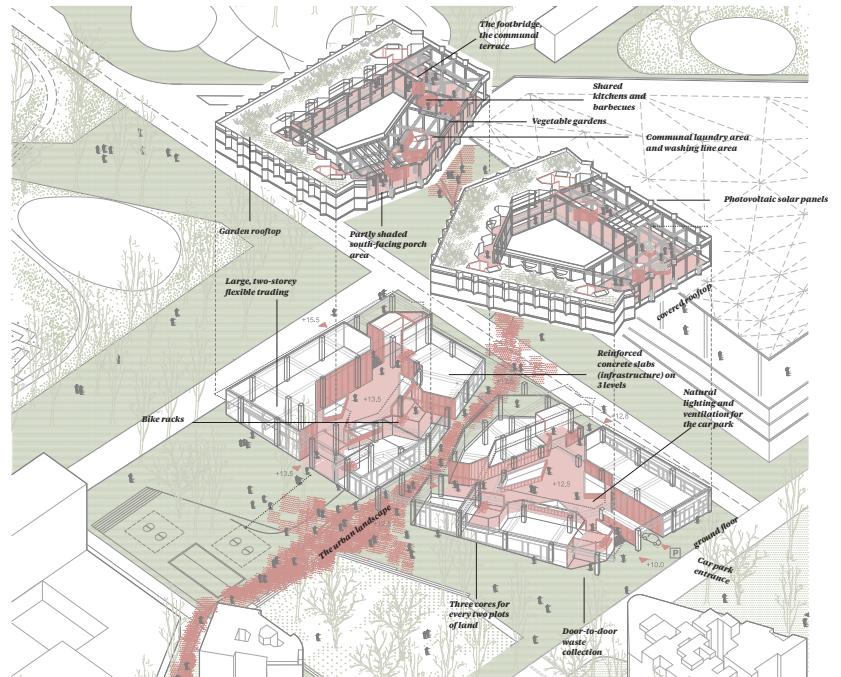
in the composition of its parts – itself helps contribute to a pluralised idea of the city. The contact between housing developments that share patios, entrances, walkways and rooftops creates a rich and cohesive community in its diversity. Finally, all this melting pot of urban relationships described above, both domestic and collective, is conveyed with the building’s façade, which reveals its status as a container of urban biodiversity.

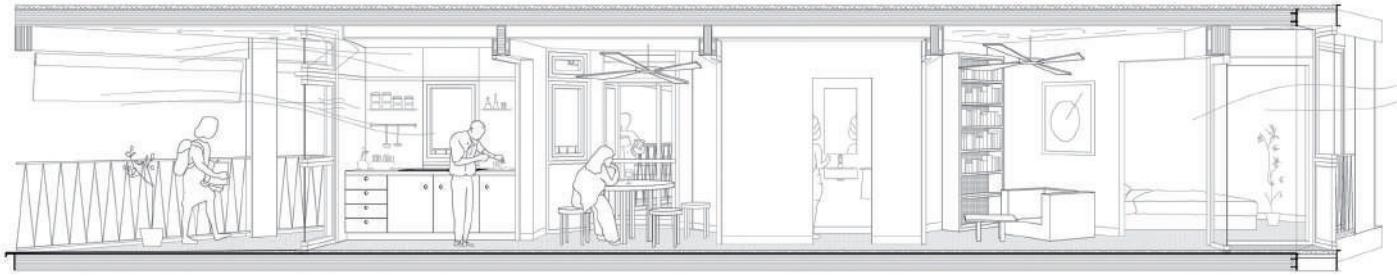
When collective spaces meet domestic spaces

Pursuant to our commitment to collective housing, we propose a home entrance strategy that fosters a community feeling. As explained in the urban strategy, the two courtyards shared by the four project units can be accessed from the adjacent streets and the urban landscape. The relationship between the various developments that share leisure spaces with benches, children’s play equipment, bike racks, etc. through the courtyards is thus promoted. Relationships between neighbours are also encouraged by means of large walkways that connect all the residential floors to each other, regardless of each development’s occupancy regime, and lead to the development’s rooftops. Depending on

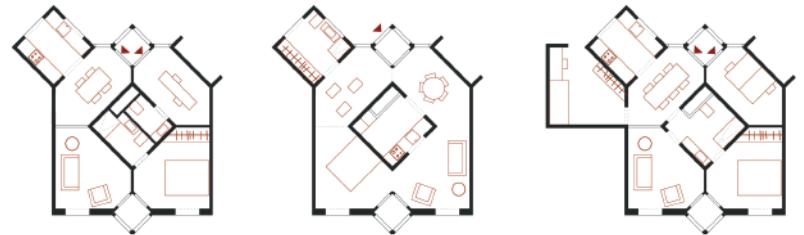
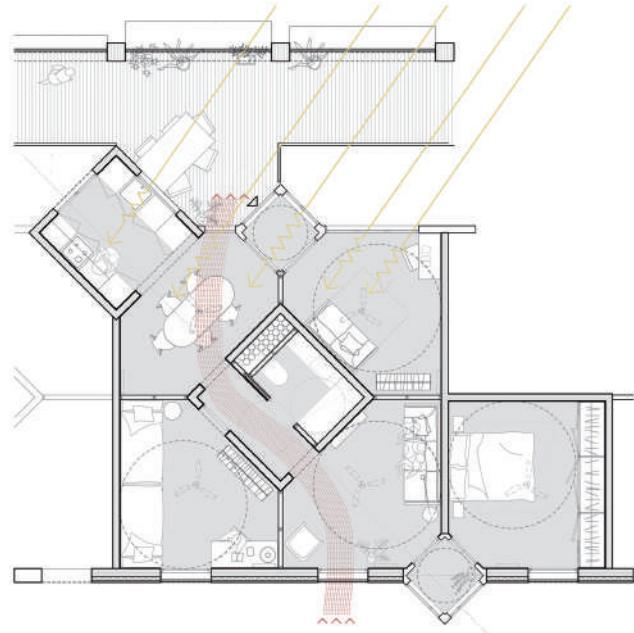
their position and orientation, the rooftops are either used for solar power panels and technical elements or reserved for the use and enjoyment of residents, with vegetable patches and leisure and relaxation areas.

The walkways, somewhere between a community space and the home environment, have been given generous dimensions and the best orientation in order to promote their use. The role of walkways as a collective balcony means that they are watched by everyone while respecting the privacy of the homes thanks to the gaps that make it impossible to get too close to the inner façade. Far from forming a linear route, the walkway expands at the entrances to the homes, where the kitchens come out to meet it. This highlights the importance of the home environment in the community. From now on,





As shown in the diagrams, spaces are arranged and connections multiplied, by means of a square divided into four parts with a central connecting room placed at a 45° angle. The south façade contains the kitchen and the entrance, giving dignity to spaces that are usually condemned to a lack of natural light or ventilation. We believe that there must be quality in every space. The serving space (kitchen, bathroom, laundry area, etc.) requires the same good conditions as the space served (such as living rooms and bedrooms). Household tasks occupy a significant proportion of the time spent at home, and it makes no sense to carry them out in unhealthy parts of the home. 'Ironing while looking out the window becomes a much more pleasant task than doing so relegated to a tiny room without natural light'. We propose that the kitchen should be located on the south façade and that it should have one of the best views in the home. Thanks to its position, it enjoys the long view that crosses the flat, goes through various spaces and looks out on two sides: the walkway and the street. An open-plan kitchen is part of the other spaces and activities of the home. This is one of the main changes to this new approach to housing. The kitchen is a room that is significant in itself: it is not a just bar attached to the living room due to lack of space. In spite of this, it is not isolated but connected directly to another shared space in order to promote companionship of any kind.





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