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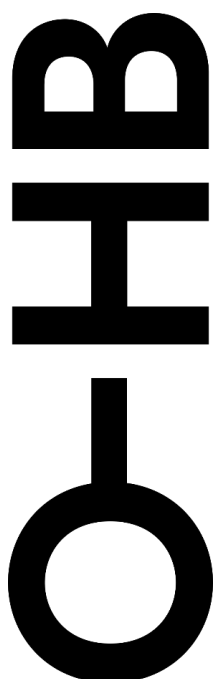
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State of housing in the Barcelona metropolis 2022



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Introduction

The evolution of residential systems are the product of interactions between several different structural and conjunctural components. As we have seen in other studies, the point of departure for any study of this process in the Barcelona metropolis is the structural deficit – despite the efforts in this field in recent years – that still characterises its affordable housing stock. (Donat, Sender, Bosch & Arcarons, 2021). Another structural feature is that in recent decades, during alternating periods of growth and recession, average house prices have increased far more quickly than average incomes. This trend is observable in many other countries (Gabriel & Painter, 2020; Housing Europe Observatory, 2022) and one of its principal consequences is that access to and the maintenance of housing no longer only affects the poorest segment of the population but is, in addition, now beginning to have an impact on an ever-larger segment of the whole population.

Within this context, the year 2022 saw the end to the Covid-19 restrictions as well as a new macro-economic scenario of high inflation¹ and, in the second half of the year, a marked acceleration in interest rates².

These are some of the main factors that affected the residential system in the Barcelona Metropolis in 2022. In this study we analyse and discuss some of the indicators of these factors in a continuation of the work presented in previous studies by the Barcelona Metropolitan Housing Observatory (BMHO).

In the first chapter we analyse the evolution of both the sale-purchase and rental housing market taking as a reference indicators based on the number of operations and average prices. In the second chapter we focus on the crisis of access to housing in the Barcelona metropolis via a comparison of the evolution of average housing prices and average household incomes, and also examine indicators of the efforts required of households in different income bands to access housing. Chapter three includes an analysis of certain aspects of residential exclusion based on data on court-ordered evictions and on the number of cases of exclusion referred to the emergency housing boards. In the final chapter we draw a number of conclusions regarding the main dynamics analysed in the main body of this review.

For those less versed in the terminology, the Barcelona metropolis refers to the whole of the province of Barcelona in which we establish three territorial divisions: 1. Barcelona, 2. the rest of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area, and 3. the rest of the province of Barcelona (see Annex).

¹ The retail price index has increased by 5.2% in Catalonia. Source: Idescat.

² The average interest rate for loans for over three years offered by financial entities in Spain rose from 1.42% in December 2021 to 3.2% in December 2022. Source: Bank of Spain.

1. The housing market

In this first chapter we explore the main indicators of trends in the sale-purchase and rental markets using an analysis of the operations carried out in 2022 and average prices. Besides analysing how these indicators have evolved, we also compare the current situation with that of 2019, i.e. the year before the Covid-10 pandemic hit.

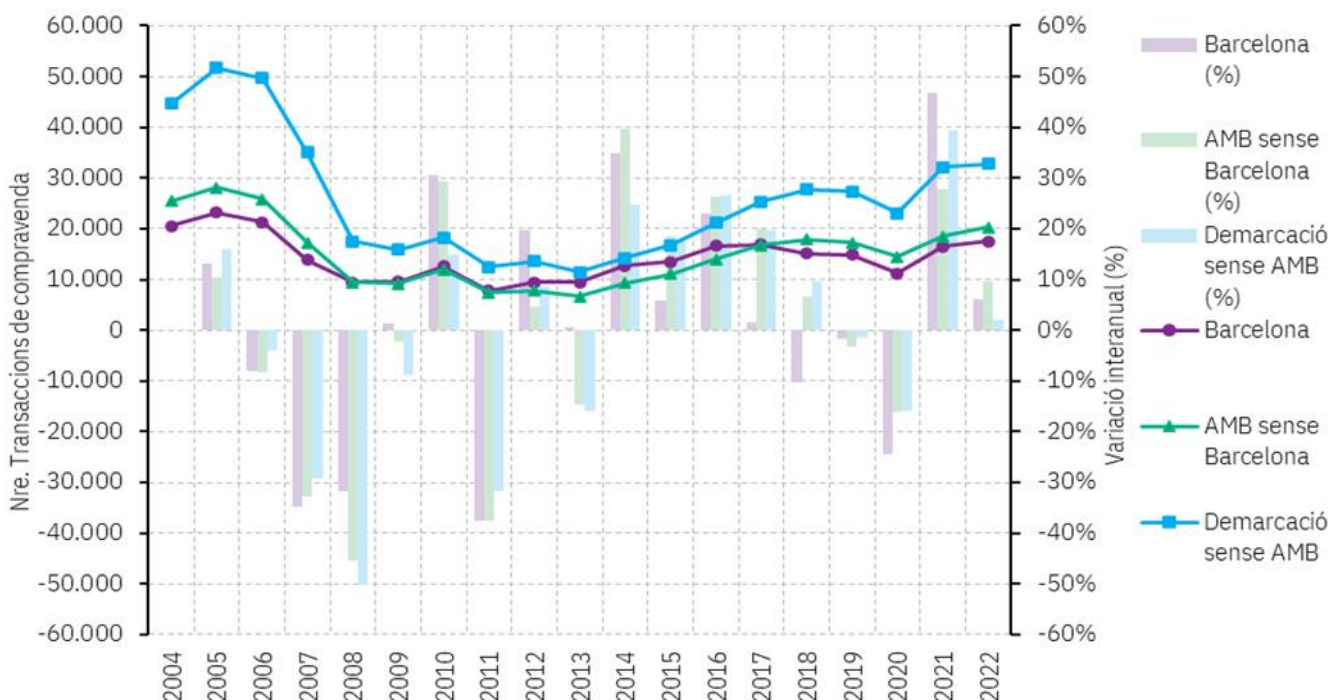
1.1 Sale-purchase and average prices in a high-inflation context

SALE-PURCHASE TRANSACTIONS

The year 2022 saw an increase in the number of sale-purchase transactions at all territorial scales in Catalonia, which reached their highest levels since the property boom of 1996–2007. However, since the final trimester of 2022, there has been a significant fall in transactions coinciding with the rise in interest rates.

Figure 1.1. Housing sale-purchase transactions 2004–2022 by territory.

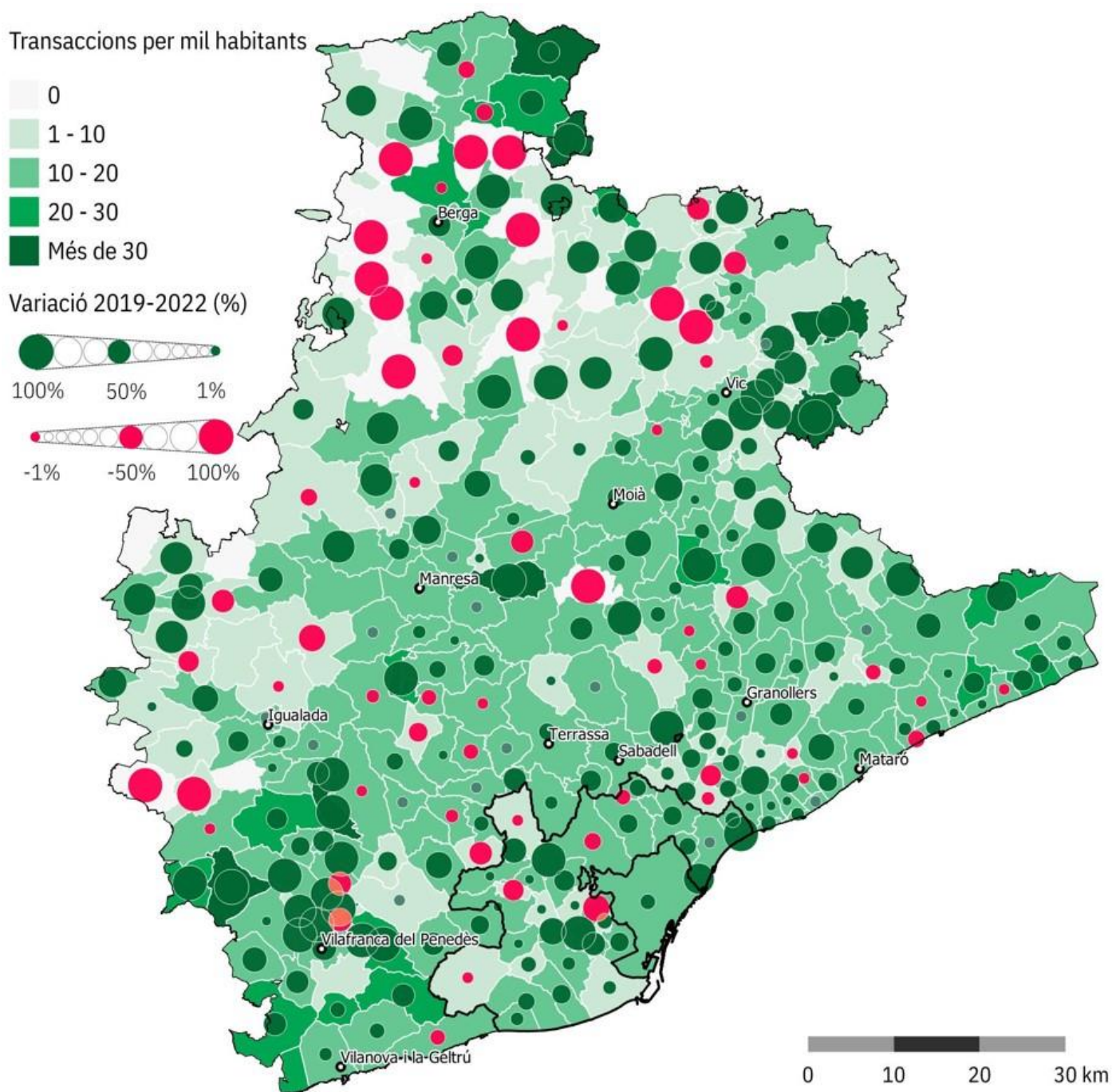
Source: Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda using data from the General Council of Spanish Notaries.



In the city of Barcelona there were 17,545 transactions in 2022 (6.2% more than in the previous year), while in the rest of the metropolitan area there were 20,344 (9.6% more) and in the rest of the province 32,832 (a growth of 2.1%) (Figure 1.1). Overall, thus, 70,721 sale-purchase transactions took place in the province of Barcelona in 2022, 5.2% more than in 2021.

Figure 1.2. Sale-purchase transactions per 1000 inhabitants. Municipalities in the province of Barcelona in 2022 and variation in 2019–2022.

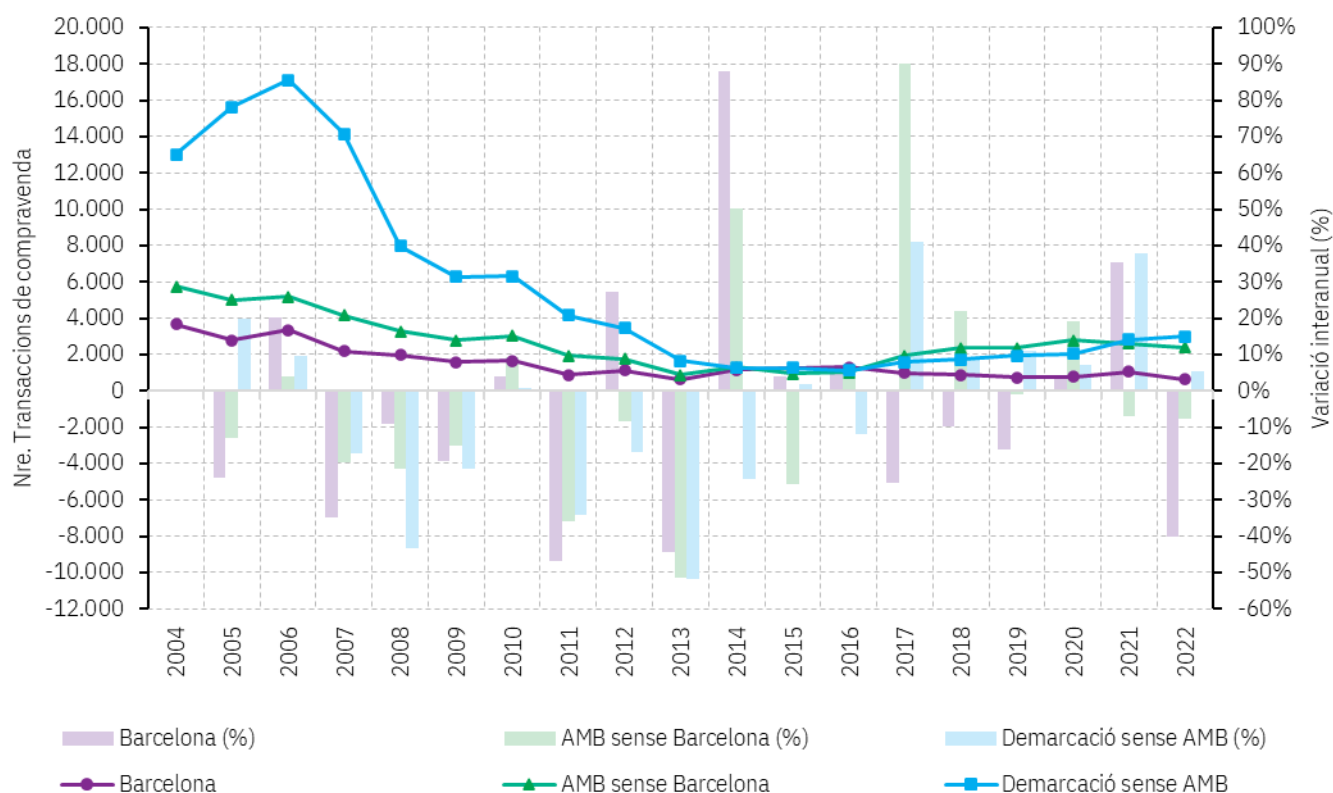
Source: Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda using data from the General Council of Spanish Notaries; National Statistical Institute, 2021 census.



If we look in greater territorial detail, the three municipalities in the metropolitan area with most transactions in 2022 were Barcelona (17,545), L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (3,748) and Badalona (2,742) and, in the rest of the province, Terrassa (3,540), Sabadell (3,108) and Mataró (1,659) (Figure 1.2). However, if we take into account total population, Montgat, Sant Adrià de Besòs and Sant Joan Despí were the municipalities with most transactions per 1000 inhabitants in the metropolitan area (17.3, 16.1 and 14.4, respectively), whilst in the rest of the province the municipalities with most transactions were Tavertet, Sant Sadurní d'Osona and Cabrera d'Anoia (86.2, 44.4 and 44.2, respectively).

Figure 1.3. Sale-purchase transactions of new housing in the Barcelona metropolis 2004–2022 by territory.

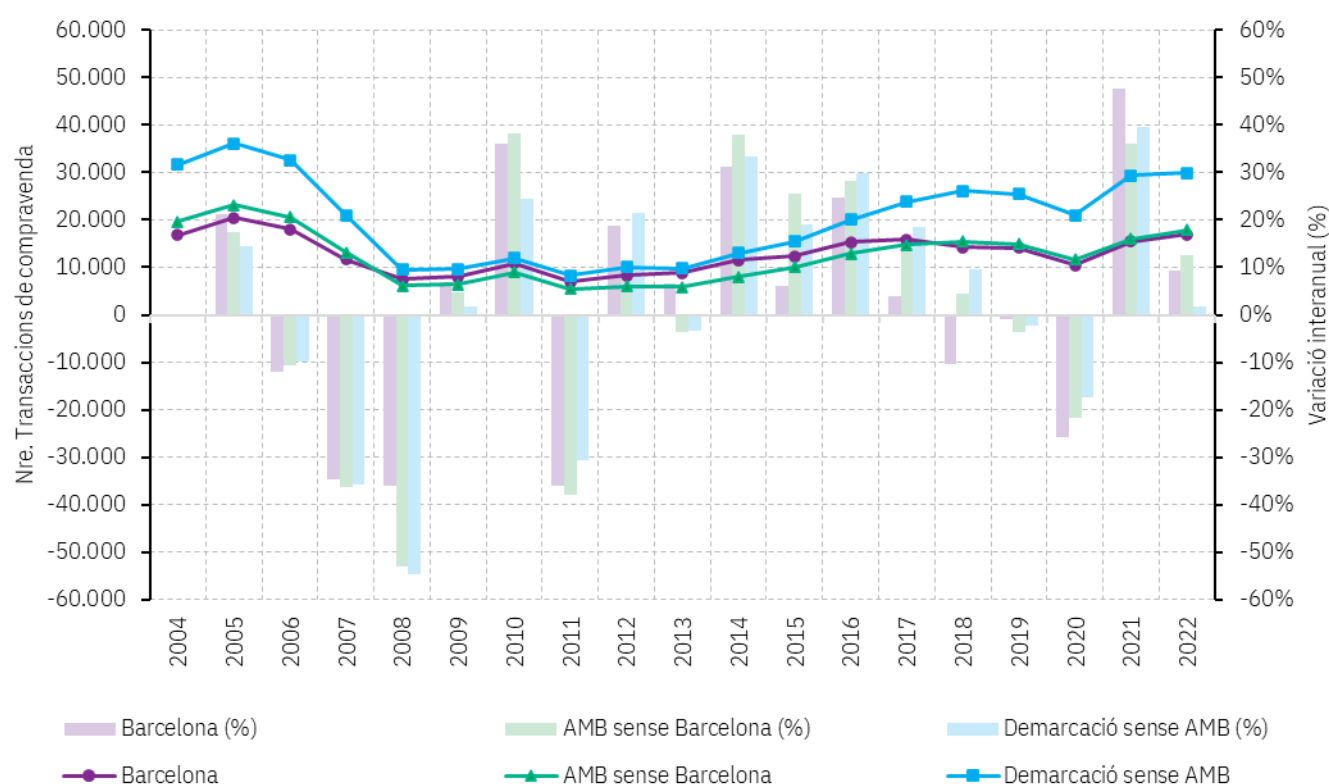
Source: Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda using data from the General Council of Spanish Notaries.



The increase in the number of transactions in 2022 occurred above all in used housing, the predominant sector of the market (91.5% of all transactions in the province of Barcelona) (Figure 1.4). Specifically, 16,925 such transactions were formalised in Barcelona (9.3% more than in 2021), 17,941 in the rest of the metropolitan area (a growth of 12.5%) and 29,844 in the rest of the province (1.8% more). By contrast, there was a fall in the sale-purchase transactions of new housing in the city of Barcelona (620 transactions, 40.3% fewer than in 2021) and in the rest of the metropolitan area (2,403, 7.8% fewer), although in the rest of the province there was a continued increase (2,988, growth of 5.4%) (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.4. Sale-purchase transactions of used housing in Barcelona metropolis 2004-2022 by territory.

Source: Ministry of Transport, Mobility and Urban Agenda using data from the General Council of Spanish Notaries.



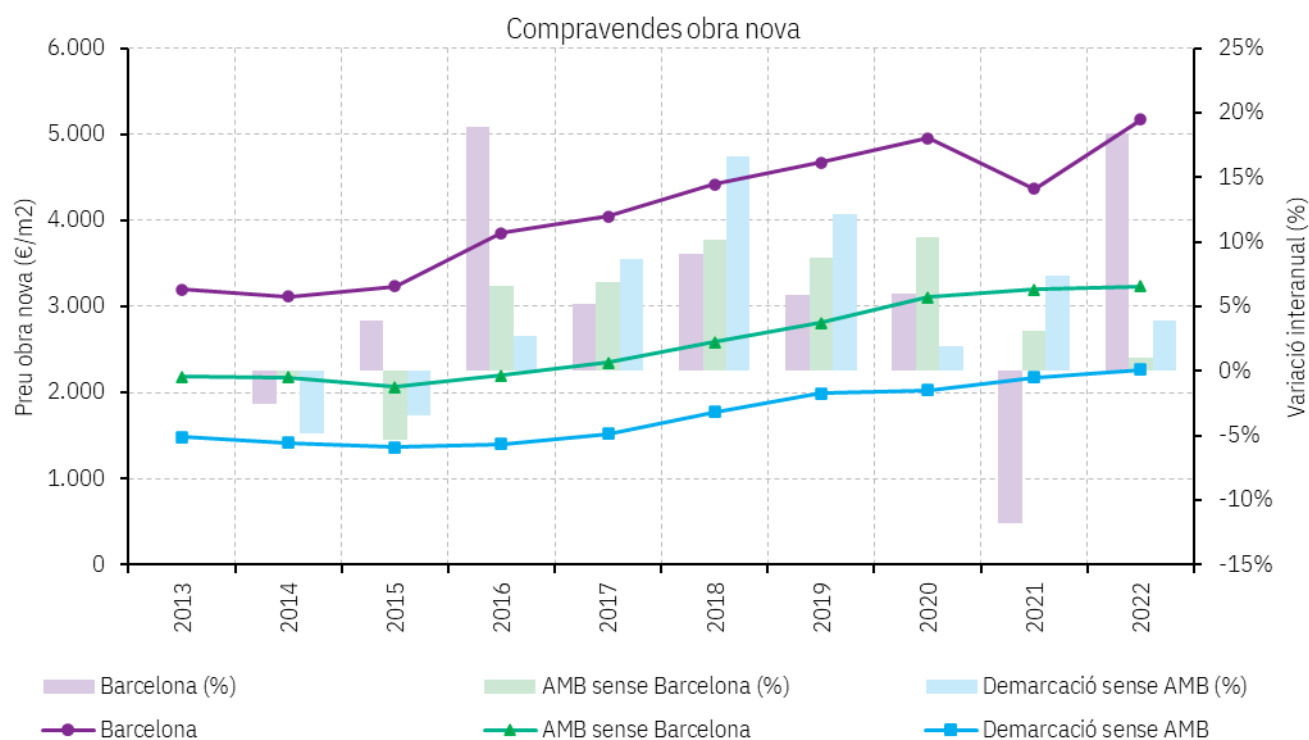
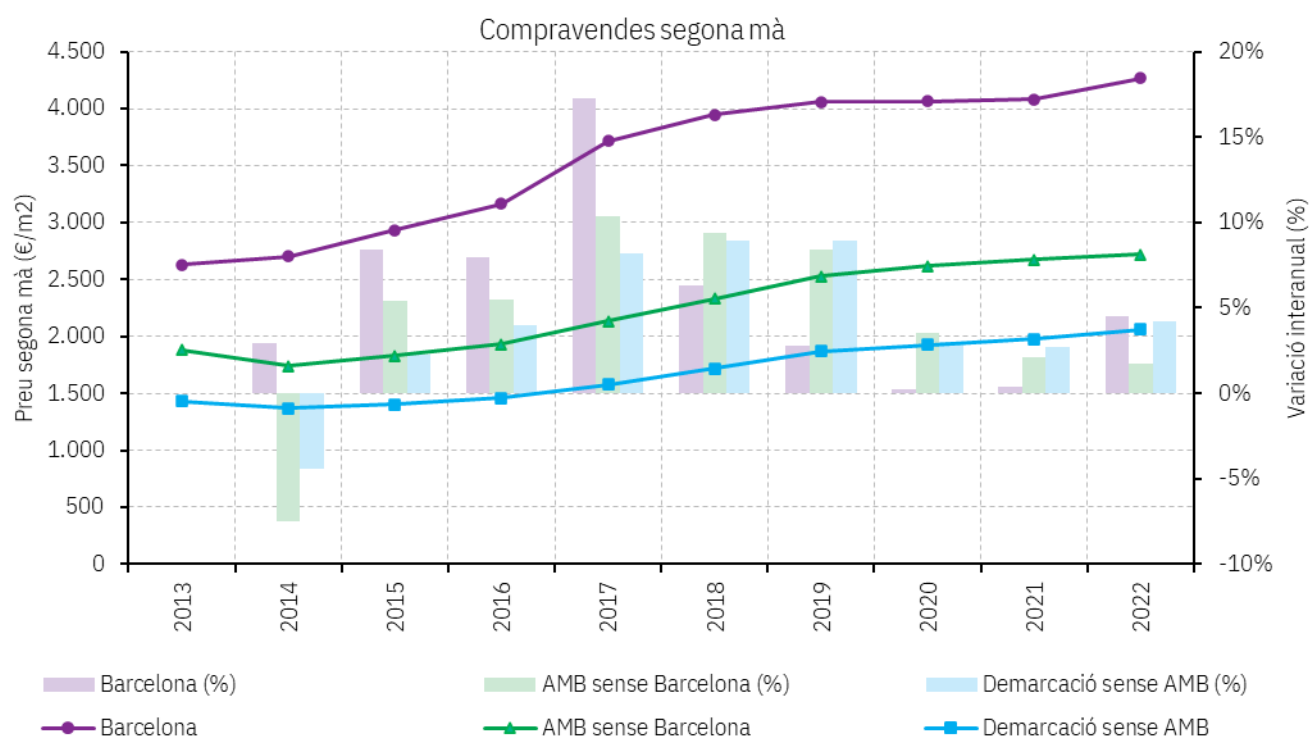
AVERAGE SALE-PURCHASE PRICES

In 2022 the prices of both new and used housing increased at all territorial scales and reached a new post-2013 high, the year in which the statistical series begins. For new housing the average price in the city of Barcelona increased by 18.4% in 2022 to reach 5,170.9 €/m² (Figure 1.5), although it is important to note that there had been a sharp fall in price during the previous year. In the rest of the metropolitan area the average price of new housing increased by 1% to reach 3,231.9 €/m² and in the rest of the province by 3.9% to reach 2,263.2 €/m².

In the case of used housing, the upward trend in prices in recent years was maintained in 2022, although rises were more significant at certain territorial scales (Figure 1.6). For example, in Barcelona the average price of used housing increased by 4.5% to reach 4,267.7 €/m², while in the rest of the metropolitan area the average price increased by 1.7% to reach 2,722.6 €/m². Finally, in the rest of the province the increase was more notable, with prices rising by 4.2% to reach an average price of 2,062.2 €/m².

Figures 1.5. and 1.6. Average sale-purchase price of new and used housing in the Barcelona metropolis 2014-2022 by territory.

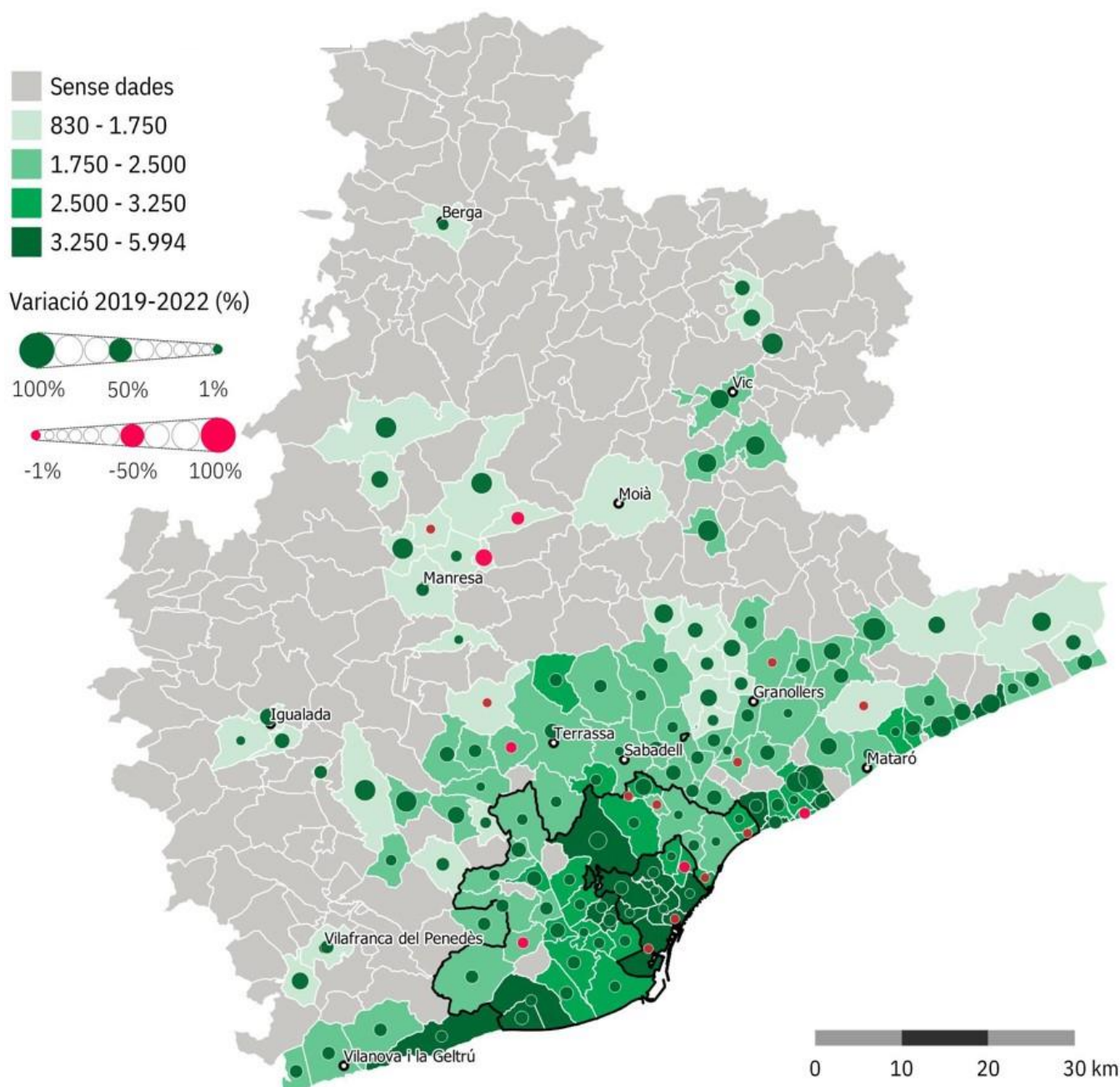
Source: Housing Secretariat using data from the Official Association of Property Registrars of Catalonia.



At a more detailed territorial scale, in 2022 the highest prices of used housing in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area were in the districts in Barcelona of Sarrià-Sant Gervasi (5,994 €/m²), L'Eixample (4,830 €/m²) and Les Corts (4,811 €/m²) (Figure 1.7), while in the rest of the province the highest used housing prices were in the municipalities of Sitges (4,828 €/m²), Vilassar de Mar (3,408 €/m²) and El Masnou (3,280 €/m²).

Figure 1.7. Average sale-purchase price (built €/m²) in municipalities in the province of Barcelona and in districts of the city of Barcelona 2022, and variation therein 2019–2022.

Source: Housing Secretariat using data from the Official Association of Property Registrars of Catalonia.



At the other end of the scale, the lowest prices in 2022 were in the municipalities of Badia del Vallès (1,358 €/m²), Corbera de Llobregat (1,788 €/m²) and Cervelló (1.882 €/m²) in the metropolitan area, and in Santa Margarida de Montbui (837 €/m²), Manlleu (1,044 €/m²) and Sallent (1,058 €/m²) in the rest of the province.

If we compare the evolution of used housing prices between 2019 (pre-Covid-19) and 2022, the greatest increases in the metropolitan area occurred in Barberà del Vallès (24.8%), Sant Cugat del Vallès (21.4%) and Pallejà (18,3%), and in the rest of the province in Cabriels (50.1%), Santa Maria de Palautordera (46%) and Centelles (38.4%).

On the other hand, the greatest falls in prices in the metropolitan area occurred in the district of Sant Andreu de Barcelona (-8.3%), Torrelles de Llobregat (-5.3%) and in the district of Ciutat Vella (-4.1%), whilst in the rest of the province the most notable decreases were in Navarcles (-22.7%), Artés (-12.2%) and Viladecavalls (-8.4%).

Overall, in 2022 there was an increase in the number of sale-purchase transactions that flattened out in the final trimester of the year coinciding with the rise in interest rates. Average sale-purchase prices of both new and used housing increased moderately within the context of a high inflation rate. These price rises were especially significant in the city of Barcelona.

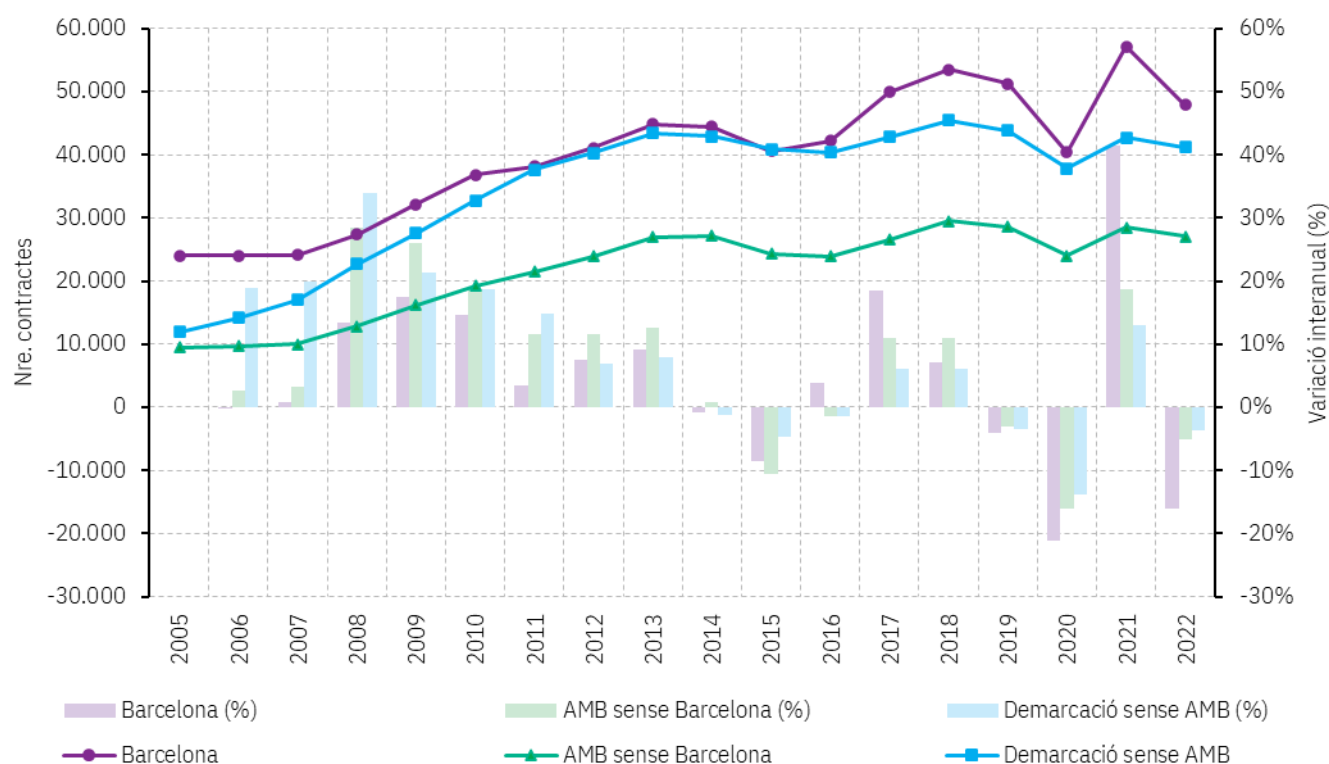
1.2 The fall in the number of new rental agreements and the notable increase in average rents

THE FALL IN THE NUMBER OF NEW RENTAL CONTRACTS

After 2021, a year in which the number of new rental contracts increased notably, in 2022 the number fell at all territorial scales (Figure 1.8). In 2022 47,927 new rental contracts were signed in the city of Barcelona, 16.1% fewer than in 2021. In the rest of the metropolitan area there were 27,072 new contracts registered, 5.0% fewer than in the previous year, while in the rest of the province there were 41,159 contracts signed, 3.7% fewer.

Figure 1.8. New rental contracts in Barcelona metropolis 2005–2022 by territory.

Source: Housing Secretariat based on the register of deposits placed with INCASOL.



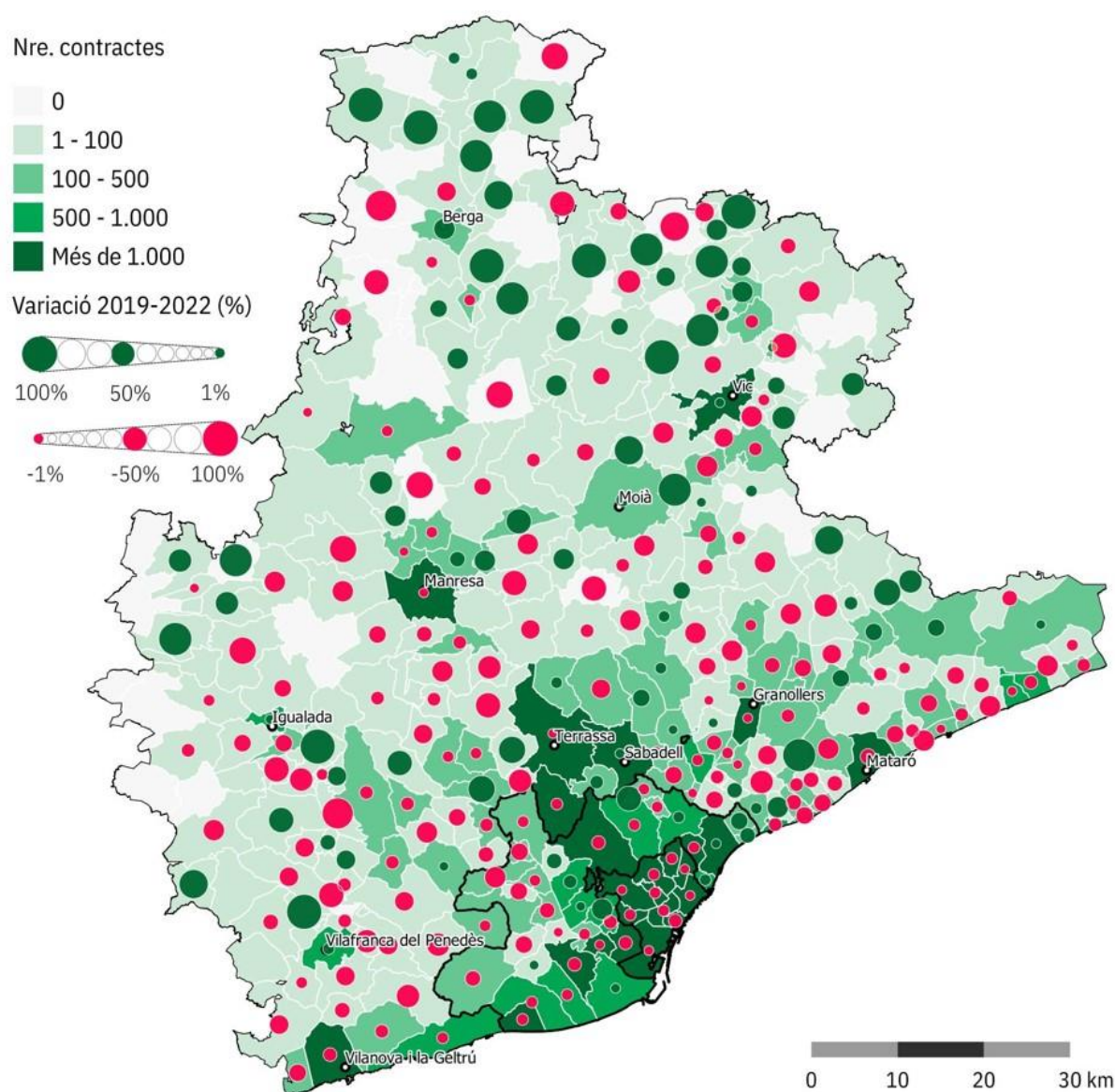
Despite the fluctuations in 2020 and 2021, which were mainly attributable to the social, economic and political effects of the Covid-19 pandemic (Observatori Metropolità de l'Habitatge de Barcelona, 2020; Sender et al., 2021), the number of new rental contracts in 2022 was close to the peaks of 2018 and 2019. Moreover, the number of contracts has continued in a context in which mandatory contract extensions were in force, a measure that theoretically should reduce the number of new contracts³. Factors such as the end of this exceptional measure, the

³ Measure implemented by the Spanish Government to confront the social impact of the Covid-19 crisis and the inflationary tendencies provoked by the invasion of Ukraine, in

duration of new contracts⁴, the turnover in rentals, the possibilities young people have of accessing housing, the creation of new households, the influx of population into the Barcelona metropolis, the conditions regarding the purchase of housing, and, finally, the evolution of the housing rental stock all will play a role in the coming years in the number of new contracts signed.

Figure 1.9. New rental contracts by municipality in the province of Barcelona and districts of the city of Barcelona 2022, and variation therein 2019–2022.

Source: Housing Secretariat based on the register of deposits placed with INCASOL; National Statistical Institute, 2021 census.



force from 31 March 2020 and during 2022, which, at the time of writing, have been extended until 31 December 2023 (Royal Decree Law 6/2020, 10 March and subsequent revisions).

⁴ As of 2019 (RDL 7/2019, 1 March), the minimum duration of new contracts rose from three to five years, and to seven years in the case of legal entities.

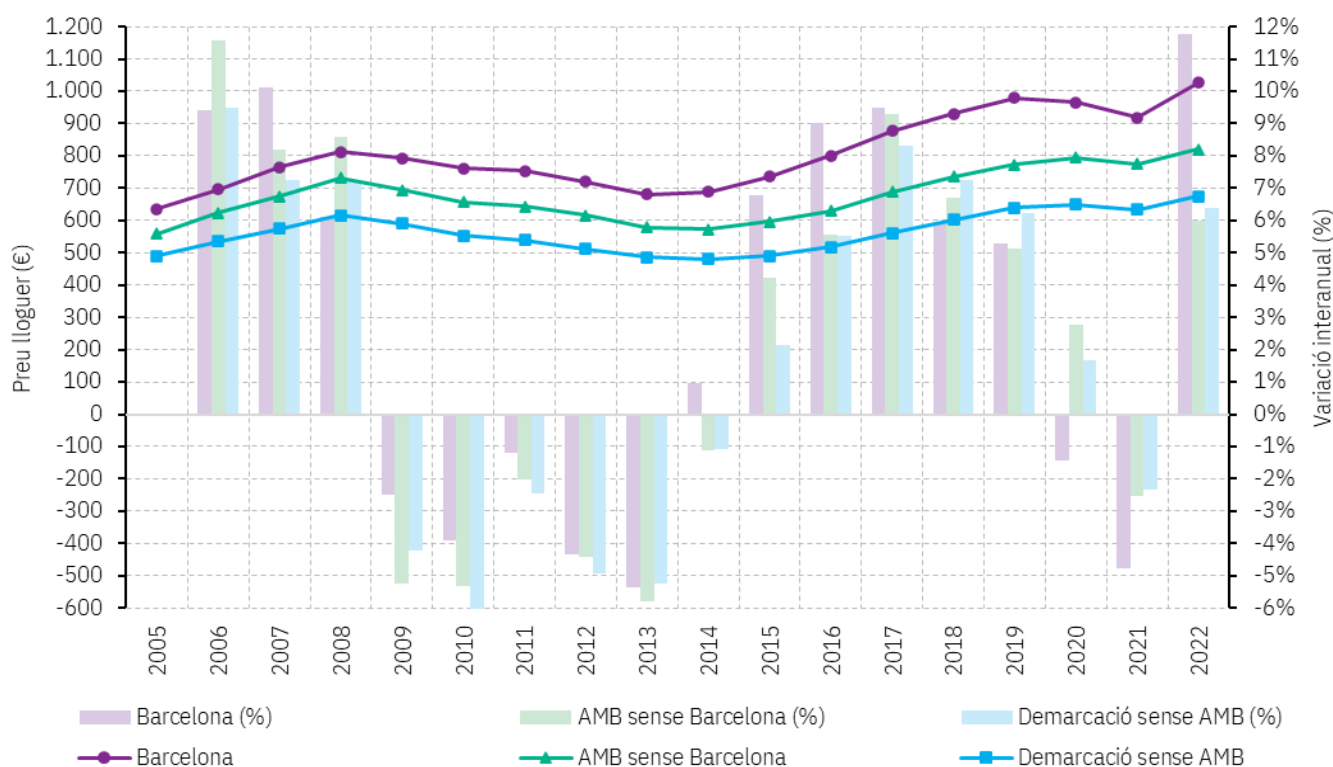
If we increase the detail of the analysis, the zones with the greatest number of new contracts in 2022 were the districts of L'Eixample (9,974) and Sant Martí (5,603) in Barcelona and the municipality of L'Hospitalet de Llobregat (5,451) (Figure 1.9). At the other extreme of the scale, there are 18 municipalities, all outside the metropolitan area, in which there were no new rental agreements registered in 2022. Nevertheless, in the years 2019–2022, 47 of the 50 municipalities in which the percentage of new rental contracts most increased were outside the metropolitan area.

THE INCREASE IN AVERAGE RENTAL PRICES

After the decline in 2021, in 2022 there was a highly significant increase in the average price of rents in all the analysed territories that took rents to new historical highs. In Barcelona the average rent increased by 11.8% to 1,026.9 €/month, in the rest of the metropolitan area by 6% to 820.4 €/month, and, finally, in the rest of the province by 6.4% to 675 €/month (Figure 1.10).

Figure 1.10. Average rents in the Barcelona metropolis 2005–2022 by territory.

Source: Housing Secretariat based on the register of deposits placed with INCASOL.

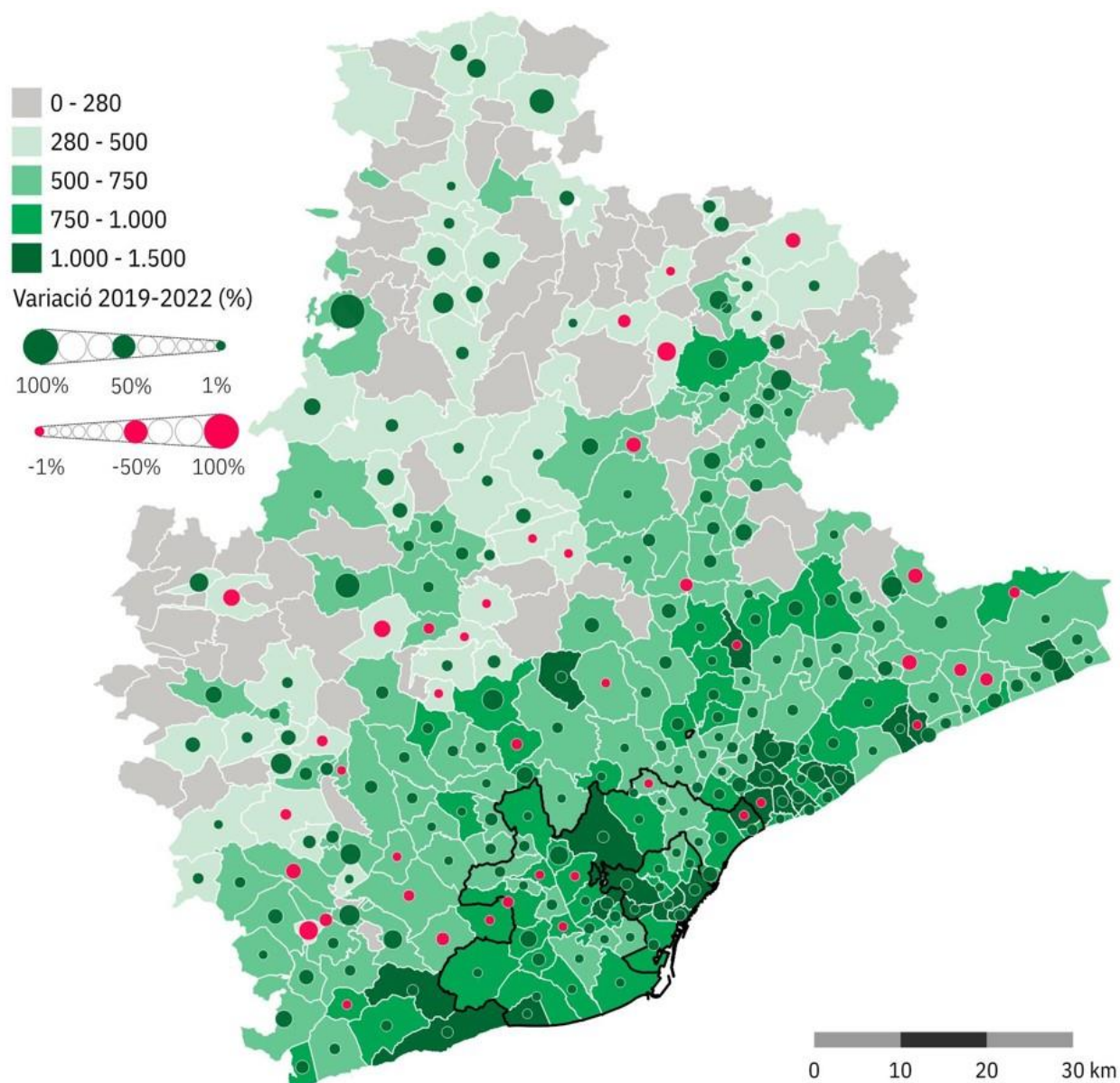


At a more detailed territorial scale, in 2022 the highest average rents were in Sant Vicenç de Montalt (1,490.0 €/month) and Cabriels (1,444.3 €/month), both in the county of El Maresme, and in the district of Sarrià-Sant Gervasi in Barcelona (1,348.1 €/month) (Figure 1.11). Conversely, the municipality with the lowest average rent was Badia del Vallès (282.6 €/month), the following 118 cheapest municipalities all being outside the metropolitan area. In the metropolitan area, after Badia del

Vallès, next cheapest municipality was Santa Coloma de Gramenet (637 €/month).

Figure 1.11. Average rents (€/month) in municipalities in the province of Barcelona and in the districts of the city Barcelona 2022 and variation therein 2019–2022

Source: Housing Secretariat based on the register of deposits placed with INCASOL.



In 2018–2022 the evolution of rental prices shows that, once the pandemic had finished, average rents in new contracts began to rise (Figure 1.11) and, specifically, increased in all 10 districts in the city of Barcelona, in 29 municipalities in the rest of the metropolitan area, and in 170 municipalities in the rest of the province. Overall, the average rental price increased in 199 out of 239 municipalities for which data is available, and in all 10 districts in the city of Barcelona.

2. Access to housing

As has been reported in other studies by the Barcelona Metropolitan Housing Observatory, over the past two decades a gap has grown between household incomes and the average price of housing, both in terms of sale-purchase prices and rents (Sender et al., 2021). That said, 2021 saw a change in trend, largely brought about by the measures introduced to combat the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the real estate market in combination with the measures designed to contain rental prices (Observatori Metropolità de l'Habitatge de Barcelona, 2022). Nonetheless, as we see below, in 2022 the gap between income and average prices began to grow once again, a tendency that has aggravated the crisis in access to housing.

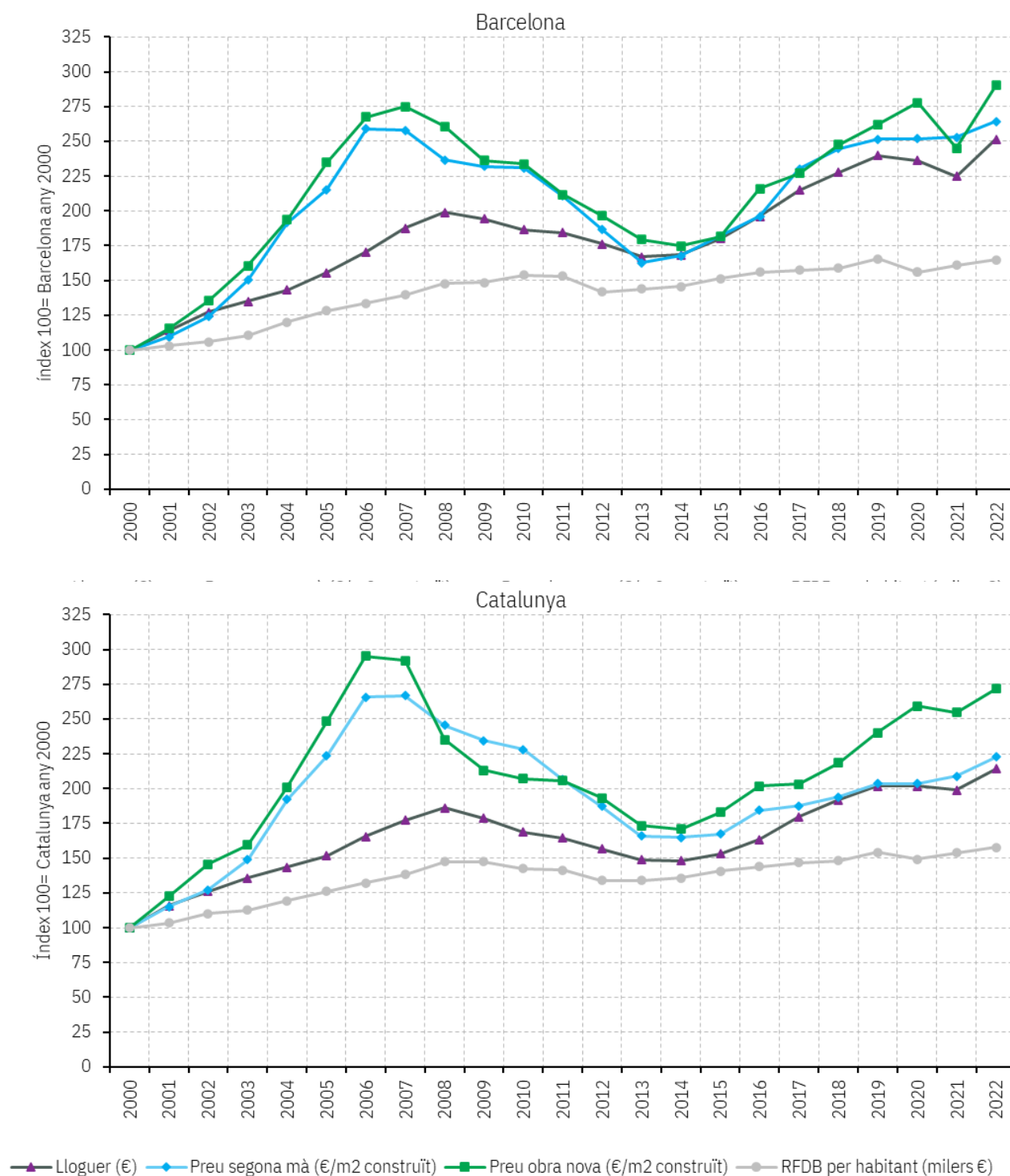
2.1 The growing gap between household income and the average price of housing

In the city of Barcelona in 2022, whilst the average household income increased by 2.6%, the average sale-purchase price of new housing rose by 18.4%, that of used housing by 4.5%, and rents by 11.8% (Figure 2.1). As a result, the structural crisis of access to housing deepened. Since the year 2000, household incomes have increased by 64.9% while the average sale-purchase price of new housing has risen by 190.1% (a 2.9-fold increase), that of used housing by 164.5% (a 2.5-fold increase) and rents by 151.5% (a 2.3-fold increase).

As reported in previous studies (Observatori Metropolità de l'Habitatge de Barcelona, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2022; Sender et al., 2021), these tendencies are being felt not only in Barcelona but throughout Catalonia. In Catalonia in 2022, whilst household incomes increased by 2.6%, the average sale-purchase price rose by 6.7%, that of used housing by 6.8%, and rents by 7.7% (Figure 2.2). If we analyse the whole of the period 2000–2022, whilst household incomes increased by 57.7%, the average sale-purchase price rose by 171.9% (a three-fold increase), that of used housing by 122.9% (a 2.1-fold increase), and rents by 114.2% (twofold increase).

Figures 2.1. and 2.2. Evolution of the gross available household income per inhabitant and average housing prices in 2000–2022 in Barcelona and Catalunya (2000 = 100).

Source: Own work. RFDB: Idescat, 2000–2020 and RFDB 2021–22 estimate using INE and Bank of Spain and national accounting data;
Average rents: Housing Secretariat based on data on rent deposits placed with INCASOL; Average sale-purchase price: Housing Secretariat 2000–2013 and Housing Secretariat 2013–2022 based on data from the Official Association of Property Registrars of Catalonia.



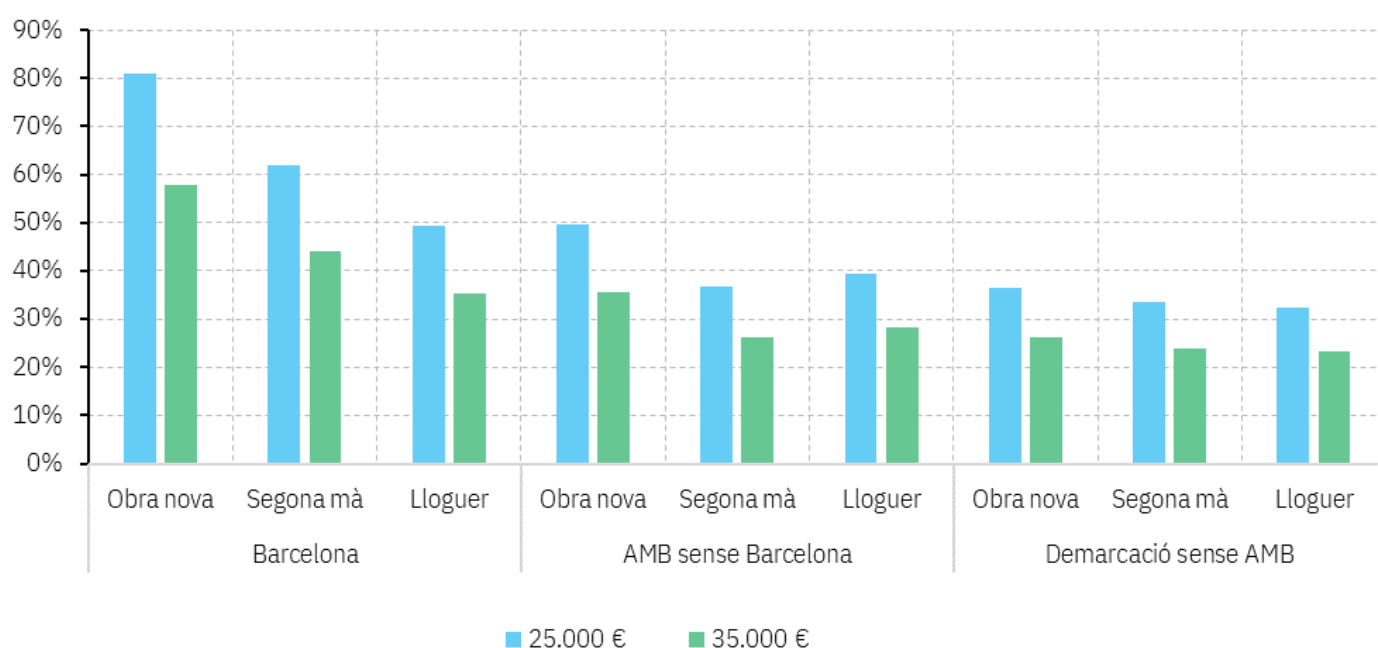
2.2 Difficulties in accessing housing

The growing gap between household income and average housing costs (both sale-purchase and rents) directly affects people's possibilities of accessing housing. During the property boom in 1996-2007, when the principal way of accessing housing was by sale-purchase, the separation between income and prices was partially compensated for by falling or low interest rates, with seemingly favourable financial terms (relationship: loan vs. value, and average length of mortgages) (Observatori Metropolità de l'Habitatge de Barcelona, 2018). Nevertheless, after the end of the boom the purchase of property became a luxury that many households could not afford and so the demand for rental accommodation increased notably. In this case, when entering the rental market, there are no strict financial terms and so the gap between income and average prices, as we have seen, is the most pressing factor affecting the possibilities of renting. As well, the significant increase in the Euribor (the main interest rate for mortgages) during the first trimester of 2022 had a substantial impact on the effort required to become a home-owner.

Figure 2.3. Theoretical effort required to access housing in the Barcelona metropolis in terms of households income in 2022 by territory.

Source: Own work. Average sale-purchase price, Housing Secretariat based on data the Official Association of Property Registrars of Catalonia; Bank of Spain based on interest rates offered of by group of entities on loans for more than three years, and Spanish Mortgage Association using accessibility indicators; average rent prices, Housing Secretariat using data on deposits placed with INCASOL.

Note: the following assumptions were made to calculate the annual quota for the first year: relationship loan/value at 80%, mortgage rate for group of entities offering loans for more than three years for housing (2022, 2.06%) and average length of mortgage (2022, 24.4 years).



The theoretical effort indicates the percentage of its income that a household would have to spend to enter the housing market. In the case of sale-purchase prices, the reference taken is the first mortgage

repayment, while in the case of a rent it is the first monthly rent payment. Generally, 30% of income is taken to be the threshold determining whether or not a dwelling is affordable. It should be taken into account that, in the case of lower-income households, spending this amount on housing may negatively affect their ability to pay for other basic necessities.

If we take as a reference an annual income of 25,000€, it is clear that in 2022 a household with this level of income could not enter the housing market either by buying or renting in any of the three territorial scales analysed (Barcelona, rest of the metropolitan area, rest of the province). This household would have to spend 81% of its income on a new dwelling or 61.9% if it was new, along with any savings it had on the initial down payment and legal fees (which together account for around 30% of the price of the dwelling). Finally, if this household with an annual income of 25,000€ chose instead to rent in Barcelona, it would still have to spend 49.3% of its total income on rent.

If this theoretical household wanted to buy an average-priced house in the rest of the metropolitan area, it would have to dedicate 49.7% of its income if it was new housing, 36.7% if it was used housing, or 39.4% on rent. Note that the cost of renting is high, even higher than purchasing a used dwelling. Finally, if this household was looking to buy an average-priced dwelling in the rest of the province, then it would be obliged to spend 36.5% of its income on new housing, 33.5% if it was used, or 32.4% on rent.

As a reference, almost half (45.3%) of households headed by young people (18–39 years old) in the province of Barcelona had incomes under 25,000€ (Observatori Metropolità de l’Habitatge de Barcelona, 2022). This means that if we accept the figure of 30% as a threshold for entering the housing market, half of all young people in the Barcelona metropolis are excluded from access to housing based on average house prices.

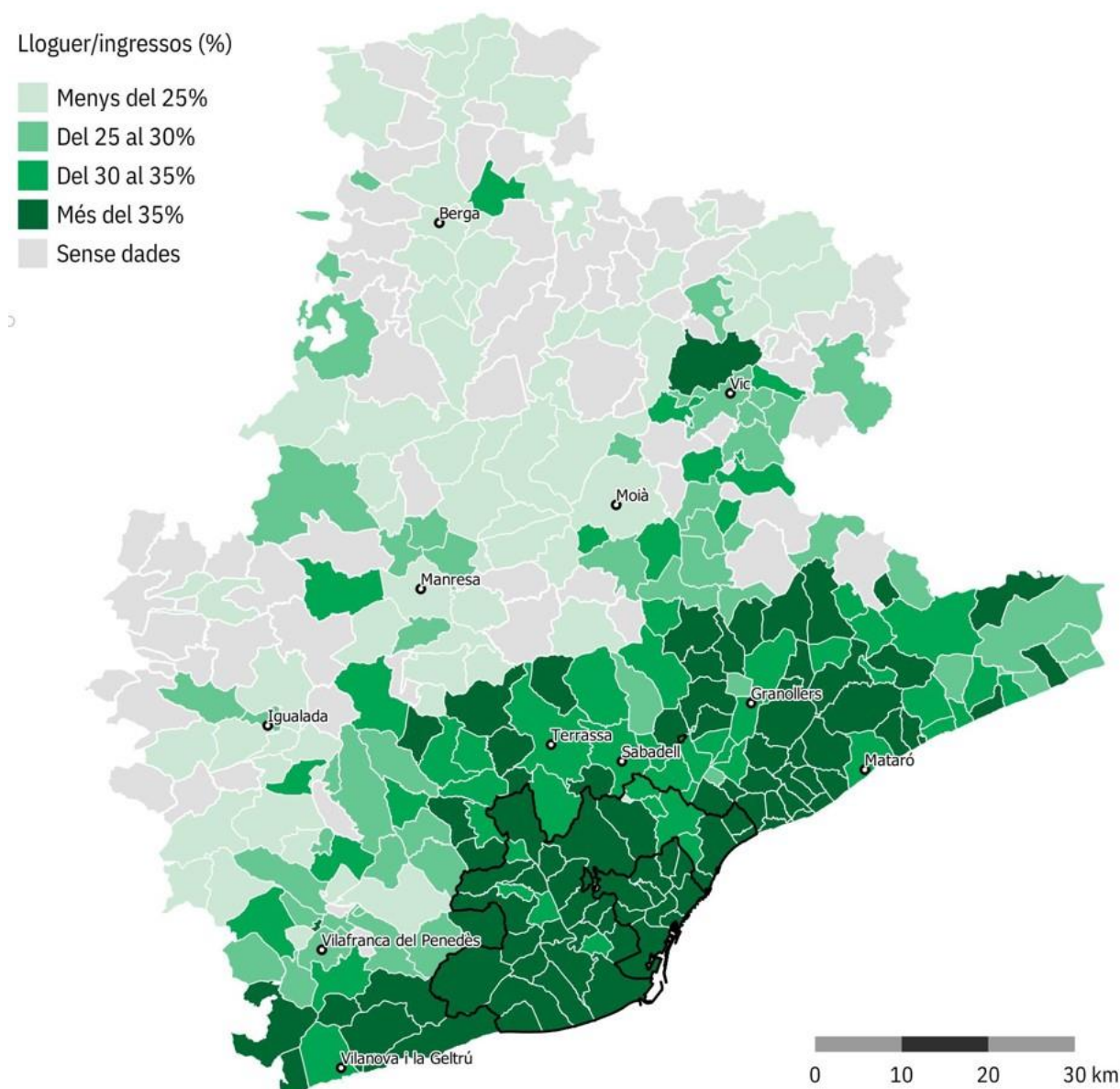
Even if we increase this threshold to 35,000 €, average-priced housing in Barcelona is still unaffordable: for new housing a household would have to spend 57.8% of its income, for used housing 44.2% and for renting 28.2%. Although these figures drop below 30%, they still require the spending of over 35% of the household’s income on housing. Finally, in the rest of the province, the possibilities of accessing housing are better and the theoretical effort required is below 30% in all cases: 26.1% for new housing, 23.9% for used housing and 23.1% for renting.

These situations are based on average prices in each of the three analysed territories (Barcelona, rest of the metropolitan area, rest of the province). However, if we go into greater detail in each territory we can see that this problem, far from being limited to Barcelona and its surrounding area, is in fact extending ever-further throughout the whole of the Barcelona metropolis.

Thus, in 132 out of 244 municipalities for which data are available for average rents, as well as in the 10 districts in the city of Barcelona, a household with an annual income of 25,000€ is excluded from the housing market as it would have to spend over 30% of its earnings on an average-priced rent (Figure 2.4). If we compare this to young people’s spending power, we can see that half of young people in the metropolis are priced out of the housing market in 132 of the 244 municipalities for which data are available and in all districts in the city of Barcelona.

Figure 2.4. Theoretical effort required to access rental housing for a household with an annual income of 25,000€. Municipalities in the province of Barcelona and districts in the city of Barcelona in 2022.

Source: own work. Housing Secretariat using data from the database of deposits placed with INCASOL.



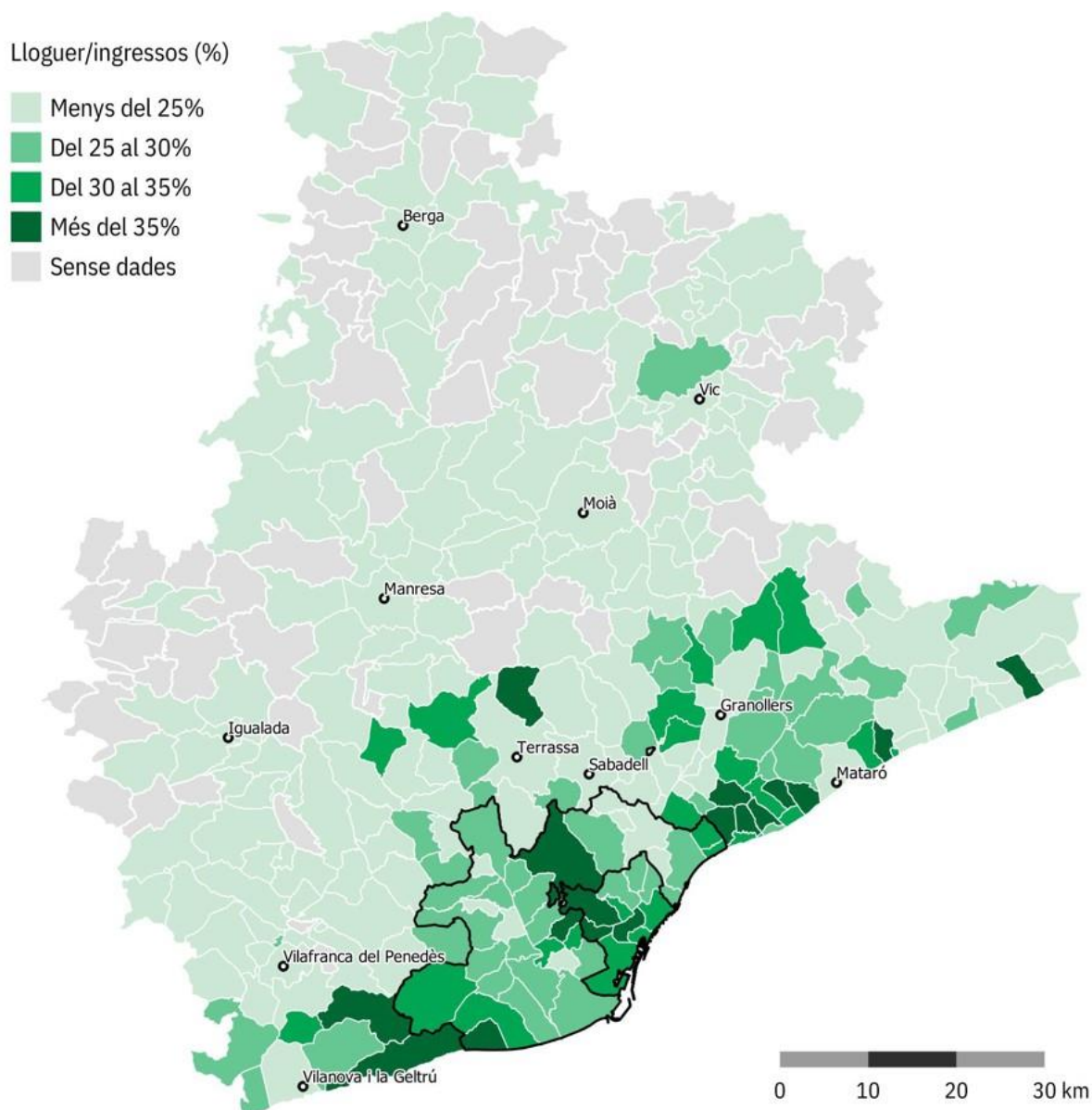
The municipalities requiring the greatest effort to afford a rent are those that have been mentioned above in which average prices are highest: Sant Vicenç de Montalt (71.5%), Cabrils (69.3%), the district of Sarrià Sant Gervasi (66.4%), Cabrera de Mar (61.9%) and Sant Cugat del Vallès (59.6%). It is worth noting that in general these municipalities typically have a high percentage of large single-family homes, which pushes up the prices considerably.

If we take as a reference households with an annual income of 35,000€, the indicators improve. Even so, in 35 out 244 municipalities and in seven of the 10 districts in Barcelona, these households would still be excluded from the market (Figure 2.5). In the remaining 209

municipalities and three remaining districts these households would be able to rent housing for 30% or less of their total income.

Figure 2.5. Theoretical effort required to access rental housing for a household with an annual income of 35,000€. Municipalities in the province of Barcelona and districts in the city of Barcelona in 2022.

Source: own work. Housing Secretariat using data from the database of deposits placed with INCASOL.



3. Residential exclusion

The crisis of access to housing discussed above has a direct link to the number of cases of residential exclusion, a complex and diverse phenomenon that, despite the advances made in its definition (Fundación Foessa, 2022; Observatori de la Realitat Social, Càritas, 2022; Porcel et al., 2022), is difficult to quantify in all its aspects and in all the territories in which it is prevalent.

In this chapter we focus our analysis on two aspects of residential exclusion, namely, its relationship with court-ordered evictions carried out with legal backing and the number of urgent cases that are referred to the Catalan emergency housing boards. In this way we give continuity to the indicators published by the Barcelona Municipal Housing Observatory.

3.1 Residential exclusion: court-ordered evictions

As noted elsewhere (Observatori Metropolità de l'Habitatge de Barcelona, 2020, 2022; Sender et al., 2021), any statistical estimate of the number of forced evictions practiced in the Barcelona metropolis has to be based on robust available data. Currently, the main source of information is from the General Council of the Judiciary, which compiles details of the court cases that have been instigated (forced evictions) by a property owner with the aim of regaining use of a property.

First of all, it is important to highlight some methodological considerations if the data are to be interpreted correctly. These legal statistics do not take into account those cases in which the eviction process has been halted due to the situation of vulnerability of the occupant of the property or those in which an agreement is reached between the two sides that often is achieved through mediation and/or financial assistance from a public administration or third-sector charity. It is worth noting that these situations, despite not counting as evictions in the statistics, do in fact generate situations of residential insecurity that are typified as a category of residential exclusion given the psychological and impact they can have on a household⁵.

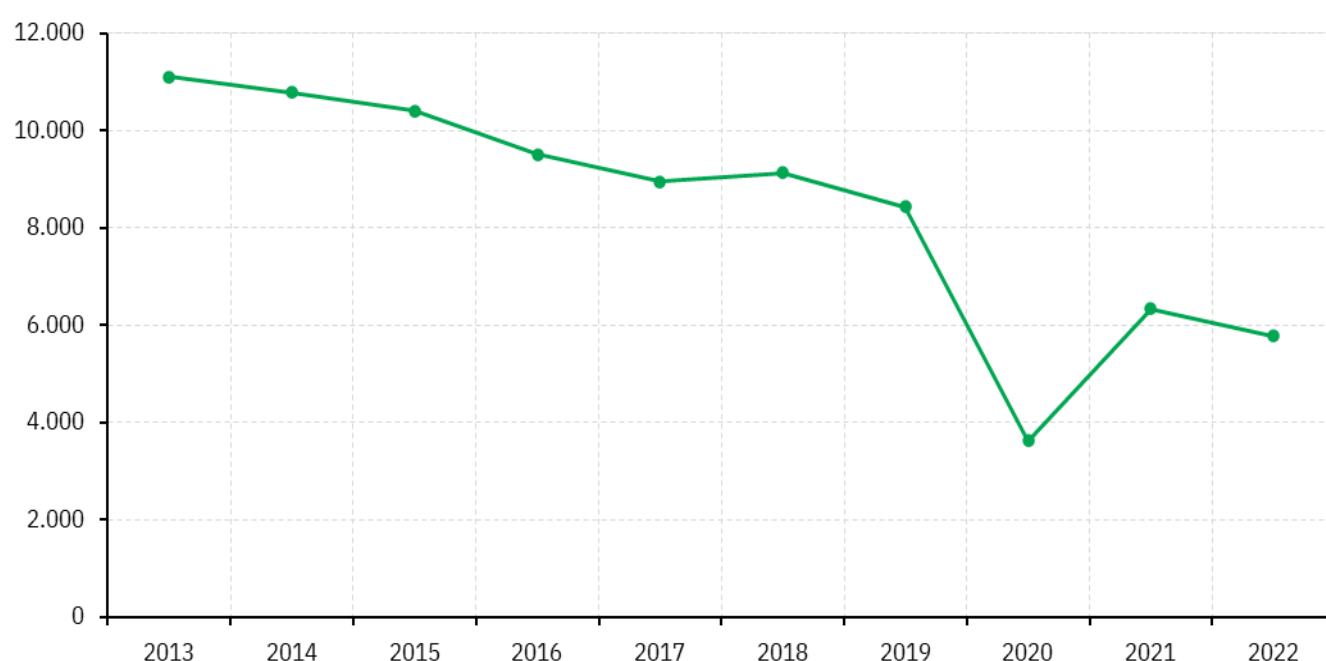
A study of the available data shows that, with the exception of the post-Covid year 2021, there has been a fall in the number court-ordered evictions carried out, which suggests that situations in which occupants are unable to pay for their housing are declining (Figure 3.1). In 2022

⁵ See the European Typology of homelessness and residential exclusion (ETHOS) developed by FEANTSA. <https://www.feantsa.org/download/ethos2484215748748239888.pdf>

there were 5,777 forced evictions practiced in the province of Barcelona, 48% fewer than in 2013 and 8.7% fewer than in 2021. However, this statistical series only begins in 2013, by which time the main impacts of the 2008 crisis had already been felt in terms of the number of evictions and destruction of employment, and the Catalan and Spanish economies were both entering a phase of growth. Yet, this contrasts with the evolution of the main indicators regarding the access to housing (see above) that indicate that during this same period a marked separation began to occur between people's true possibilities of entering the housing market and the average price of housing.

Figure 3.1. Court-ordered evictions carried out in the province of Barcelona 2013–2022.

Source: General Council of the Judiciary *Effects of the crisis on judicial organs*



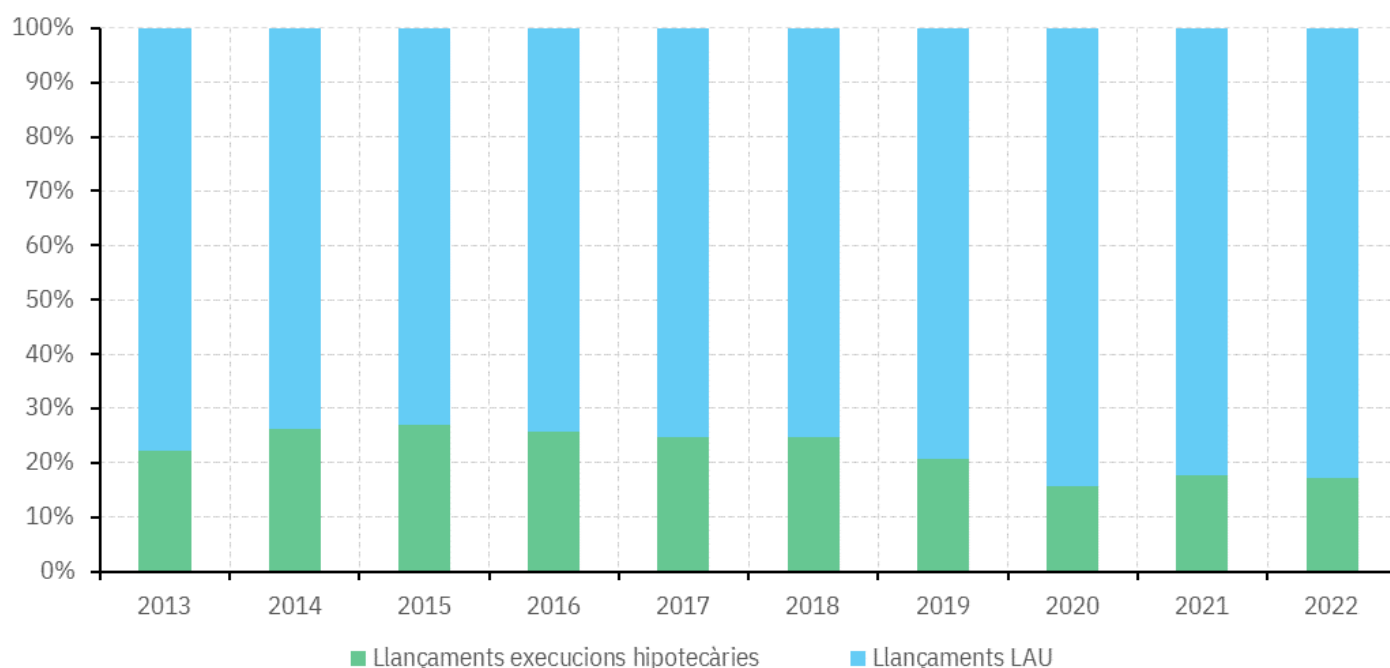
Although we have no access to data that could quantify more exactly this impact, the fall in the number of evictions practiced can be attributed to a large extent to the social policies developed in recent years, strengthened since the Covid-19 crisis (Sender et al., 2021). In the current context of high inflation and interest rates it is important to monitor the evolution and validity of these regulations and how much housing benefit is paid due to the effect these factors could have on the number of court-ordered evictions that are practiced.

The data generated by the General Council of the Judiciary allow us to know whether an eviction was due to the incompliance of the Law of Urban Rents or to the non-payment of a mortgage. Thus, we know that since 2013 most evictions concerned people who were paying rent (Figure 3.2). As well, it becomes clear that in recent years the evictions carried out via the Law of Urban Rents have increased to reach 4,281 in 2022, 74.1% of all cases, whilst evictions due to the non-payment of

mortgages were just 891 (15.4%)⁶. In the coming years the impact of the accelerating interest rates may well have a serious impact on households struggling to repay their mortgages.

Figure 3.2. Legal forced evictions by type in the province of Barcelona in 2013–2022.

Source: General Council of the Judiciary *Effects of the crisis on judicial organs*.



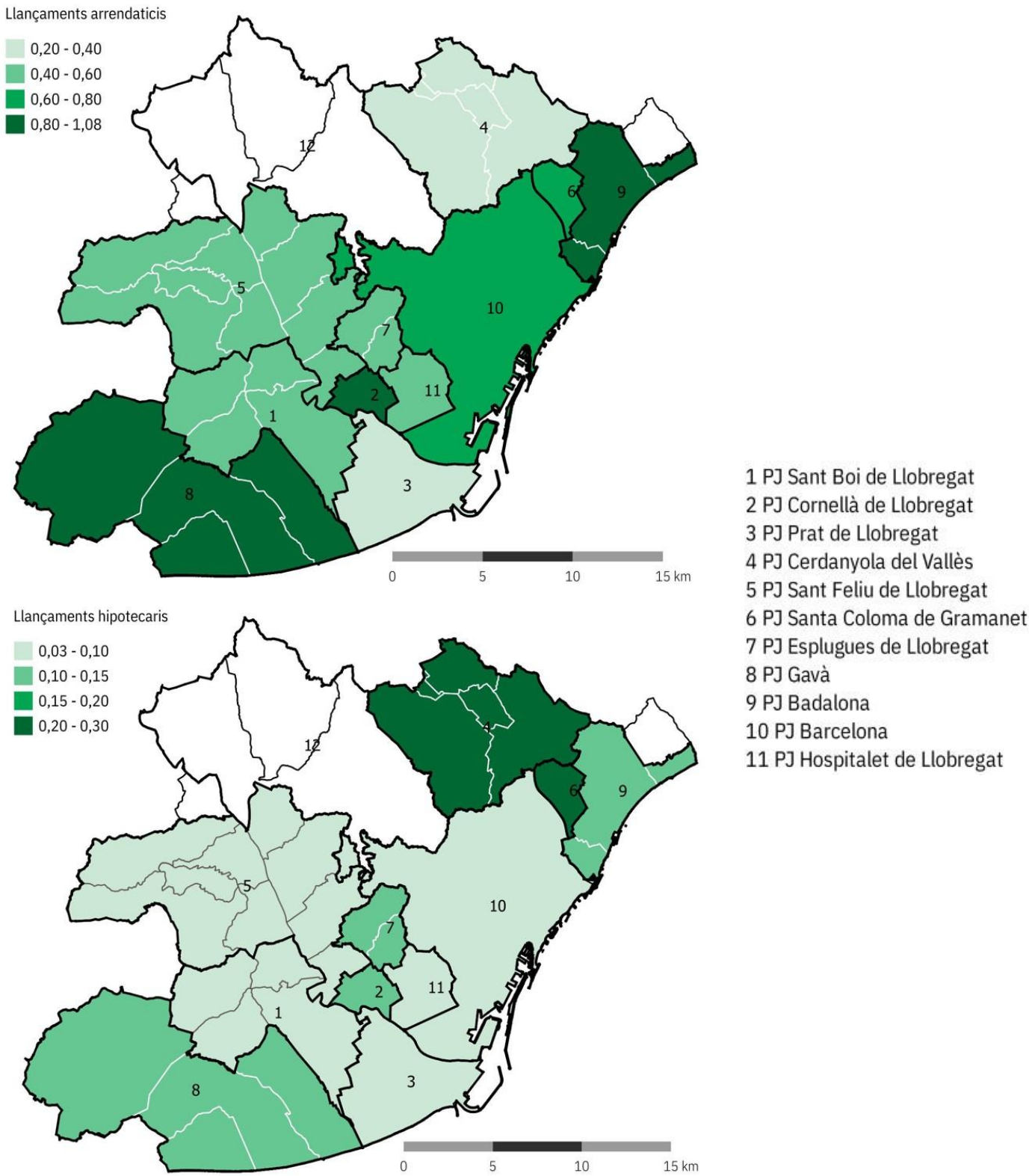
An analysis by territory of these data show that the courts that practiced most evictions in 2022 were in the municipalities of Badalona (1.43 evictions per 1000 inhabitants), Gavà (1.28), Santa Coloma de Gramenet (1.03) and Cornellà (1.03). At the other end of the spectrum, the courts practicing fewest evictions were those of Prat de Llobregat (0.34 evictions per 1000 inhabitants), Cerdanyola del Vallès (0.57) and Esplugues de Llobregat (0.65).

On the other hand, in terms of types of evictions, the courts with the greatest proportion of evictions due to the incompliance of the Rent Law were those of Gavà (1.08 per 1000 inhabitants), Badalona (0.88), Cornellà (0.83) and Barcelona (0.80) (Figure 3.3). The courts with most evictions due to mortgage non-payment in 2022 were those of Santa Coloma de Gramenet (0.28), Cerdanyola del Vallès (0.20), Cornellà (0.19) and Badalona (0.16) (Figure 3.4).

⁶ In addition there were 605 forced evictions (10.5%) included in the category 'Other causes' in the judicial data.

Figure 3.3 and 3.4. Court-ordered evictions due to non-compliance of the Rent Law or mortgage non-payments in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area in 2022.

Source: General Council of the Judiciary *Effects of the crisis on judicial organs.*



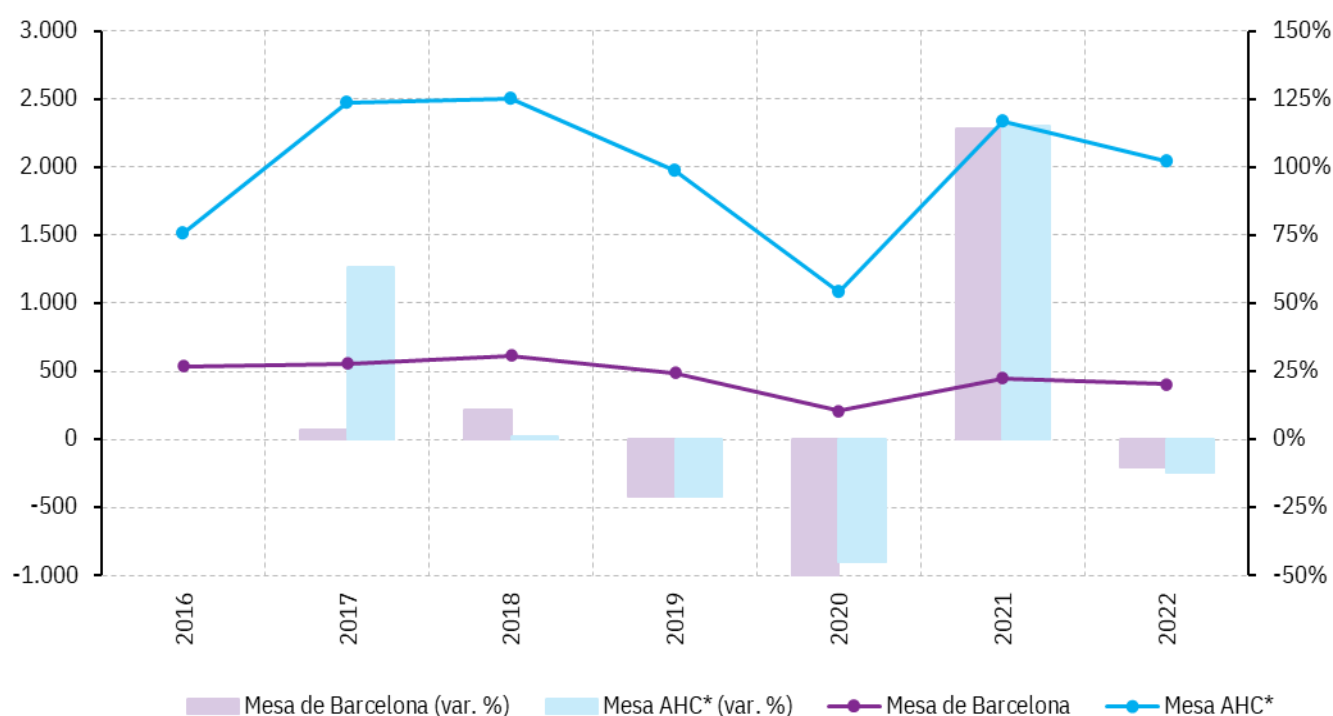
3.2 Residential exclusion: the emergency housing boards

Another source of statistical information on residential exclusion comes from the emergency housing boards that deal with cases of vulnerable people or families in moments of economic or social crisis who require housing but have no means of paying. Some of these cases are due to evictions like those discussed above while others may be the result of other situations leading to exclusion.

In Catalonia there are currently 12 emergency housing boards, 11 in municipalities with their own boards and one run by the Catalan Housing Agency (for all the remaining municipalities). The data analysed below are from the Barcelona board and from the Housing Agency board.

Figure 3.5. Cases dealt with by the emergency housing boards in Barcelona and Catalonia* in 2016–2022.

Source: Barcelona Housing Consortium and Catalan Housing Agency.



***Note:** These figures do not include the 11 municipalities that have their own boards, for which data are currently unavailable: Badalona, Cornellà de Llobregat, L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Lleida, Martorell, Sabadell, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Sant Cugat del Vallès, Terrassa and Vic.

Of all the data from the emergency boards, the number of new cases (i.e. the number of people or households needing housing) is an indicator of how the difficulty in accessing housing and/or paying for it, combined with other social and economic factors, lead to situations of extreme residential exclusion (i.e. homelessness). According to the figures, in 2022 there were 403 new cases taken up by the Barcelona board and 2,046 by the Catalan Housing Agency board (Figure 3.5). This

relatively high number of cases can be linked, despite efforts in recent years, to the structural lack of affordable housing in the Barcelona metropolis (Donat et al., 2021) that could be employed urgently to solve many crisis situations.

Within this context, it is worth noting that in 2022 there was a slight slowing down in the number of cases referred to the boards and, for example, in Barcelona the number of new cases fell from 450 to 403 (10.4% fewer), while in Catalonia this figure dropped from 2,334 to 2,046 (12.3% fewer). Within the context of a crisis of access to housing, aggravated by inflation, this fall should be interpreted as a result of the social policies described above. Nonetheless, we should still bear in mind that the number of cases that reach the boards reflect only some of the cases of residential exclusion – i.e. those that go through official channels – and that there are other cases that, for whatever reason, are not brought to the attention of the boards.

4. Conclusions

The housing market and its impact on the requirements for accessing housing, together with residential exclusion in the Barcelona metropolis in 2022, are the two main subjects discussed in this report. Logically, these two subjects are closely linked and both are affected by the particular context in which the vast majority of restrictions provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic have been removed, as well as by rising inflation and, since mid-2022, a notable rise in interest rates. All in all, despite efforts in recent years, this is occurring to a backdrop of a structural deficit in affordable housing stock, where housing benefit payments and legal regulations designed to combat residential exclusion are to some extent becoming established and strengthened.

Bearing this in mind, **the housing market in the Barcelona metropolis in 2022 was characterised in general terms by an intense growth in the number sale-purchase operations and a slight fall in the number of new rental contracts.**

Sale-purchases now exceed pre-Covid-19 figures and are at their peak since the end of the property boom in 1996–2007. In the city of Barcelona there were 17,545 such operations in 2022 (6.2% more than in the previous year), 20,344 (9.6% more) in the rest of the metropolitan area and, finally, 32,832 in the rest of the province representing a growth of 2.1%). It should be added that since the final trimester of 2022 there has been a significant fall in operations – coinciding with the acceleration in growth in interest rates – that will surely continue in 2023 due to the impact that interest rates will have on sale-purchases.

The number of new rental contracts fell in 2022 at all territorial scales. There were 47,927 new rental contracts signed in the city of Barcelona, 16.1% fewer than in 2021. In the rest of the metropolitan area there were 27,072 new contracts (5.4% fewer) and in the rest of the province 41,159 (3.7% fewer).

Despite this decline, which occurred only after a significant increase in new contracts in 2021, the number of new contracts signed is now similar to the maximums recorded in 2018 and 2019. As well, this high number of new contracts has been sustained within a context, it should be remembered, in which, exceptionally, contracts that were expiring were mandatorily extended. This will undoubtedly have had a negative incidence on the number of new contracts signed.

There was an increase in 2022 in the sale-purchase prices of new and used housing, as well as in rental accommodation, at all territorial scales. The average price of new housing in the city of Barcelona increased in 2022 by 18.4% and reached 5,170.9 €/m². In the rest of the metropolitan area, the average price of new housing grew by 1% to 3,231.9 €/m², while in the rest of the province it increased by 3.9% to 2,263.2 €/m². In the case of used housing, in general prices rose but more so at certain territorial scales. For example, in Barcelona, the average price of used housing rose by 4.5% to 4,267.7 €/m². In the

rest of the metropolitan area the average price increased by 1.7% to 2,722.6 €/m², while in the rest of the province it rose more notably by 4.2% to an average price of 2,062.2 €/m².

Average rents in 2022 increased significantly at all territorial scales and reached historical maximums. In Barcelona the average monthly rent increased by 11.8% to 1,026.9 €, while in the rest of the metropolitan area it rose by 6% to 820.4 € and in the rest of the province by 6.4% to 675 €. These increases occurred across most of Catalonia and, compared to 2019 (pre-Covid-19), average rent prices increased in 199 out of 239 municipalities for which data are available in the province of Barcelona, and in all 10 districts in the city.

These increases in the average cost of housing (buying and renting) contrast with the evolution of average household income, which in 2022 only grew by 2.6% in the city of Barcelona and Catalonia as a whole. Thus, the structural crisis of access to housing has become aggravated. **If we consider the increase in the city of Barcelona since 2000, whilst household incomes have risen by 64.9%, the average price of new housing has risen by 190.1% (2.9-fold more), used housing by 164.5% (2.5-fold more) and rents by 151.5% (2.3-fold more).**

In Catalonia as a whole (in 2000–2022), whilst household income rose by 57.7%, the average price of new housing rose by 171.9% (3-fold more), used housing by 122.9% (2.1-fold more) and rents by 114.2% (two-fold more).

This uneven evolution in household income and average housing prices leads to an increase in the efforts people have to make to access housing. As a reference, a household with a net annual income of 25,000€ (the case of half of all young working people in the Barcelona metropolis) would have to devote over 30% of its income to buying a house or even to renting in most of the metropolitan area. Specifically, **in terms of rent, in 2022 half of all young people in the metropolis could not afford average-priced housing in 132 of the 244 municipalities for which data are available, nor in any of the 10 districts in the city of Barcelona.**

Logically, this acceleration in the price of housing is one of the causes of residential exclusion in the Barcelona metropolis and as operates dynamically in combination with – despite recent efforts – the structural deficit in the stock of affordable housing. Despite these twin trends, the indicators used to measure two elements of residential exclusion have shown more positive – i.e. declines – evolutions in 2022.

Thus, **in 2022 5,222 forced evictions were performed, 8.7% fewer than in 2021.** Most of these evictions (74.1%) derive from the incompliance of the Rent Law, while only 15.4% are due to mortgage non-payments. **As well, in 2022 there was a slight drop in the number of cases referred to the emergency housing boards** and, specifically, new cases brought to the Barcelona board fell from 450 to 403 (10.4% fewer), whilst the Catalan Housing Agency board attended 2,334 such cases in contrast to the 2,046 in the previous year, a fall of 12.3%.

This fall in the number of evictions and cases referred to the emergency housing boards can be attributed to a number of factors. However, it is probable that one of the most significant causes of

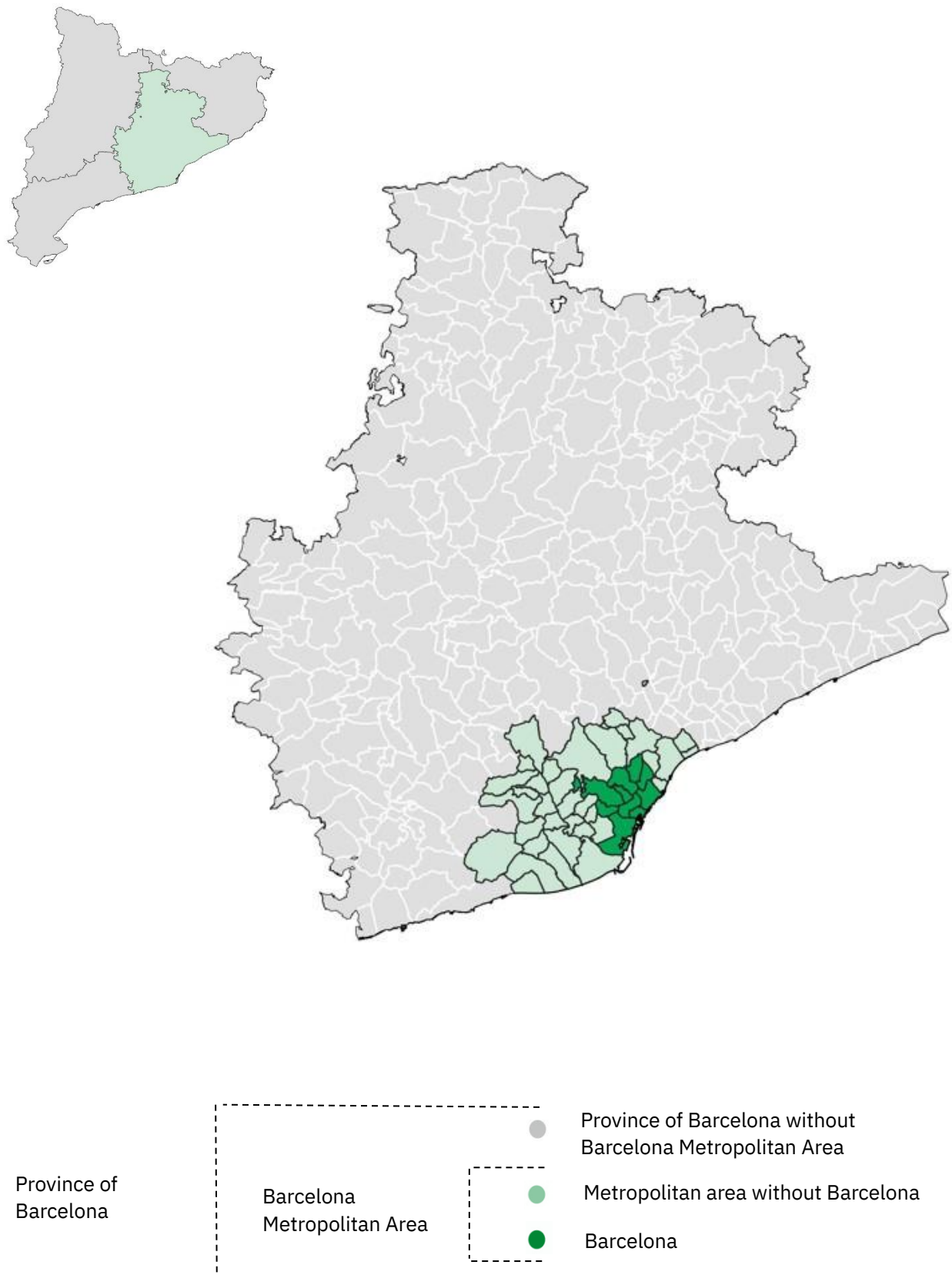
these falls is the maintaining and strengthening of exclusion-prevention policies via legal regulations and greater expenditure.

Whatever the cause in this improvement in these indicators, the number of evictions and cases dealt with by the emergency boards is still very high. These two indicators, as this report has noted, only quantify part of all evictions and fail to take into account those situations of exclusion that do not pass through official channels.

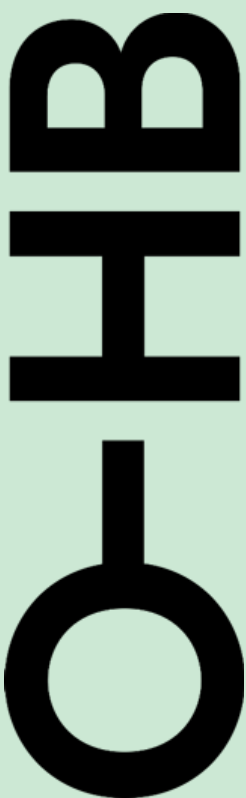
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Annex: territorial scales



Observatori Metropolità de l'Habitatge de Barcelona



Ajuntament
de Barcelona

Àrea
Metropolitana
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Diputació
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Generalitat
de Catalunya

AMB EL SUPORT DE:
Associació de Gestors
de Polítiques Socials
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