

# 30

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### Foreword

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In the latest issue of the *Barcelona Societat* journal, the number 29, we focused on the situation of Barcelona in the post-pandemic era. What had happened after the outbreak of Covid-19, and what was the city's and its residents' situation three years after that phenomenon? The central article by Laia Claverol, Manager of the Area of Social Rights, Global Justice, Feminisms, and LGTBI at the Barcelona City Council, painted a truly bleak picture but highlighted the central role that various municipal public institutions and agencies had played in responding to the extreme needs that a significant part of the population had faced as a result of the pandemic. The article concluded by stating that “without close and empowered administrations, it is difficult to find suitable solutions designed to improve the living conditions of the city's residents”. Fortunately, the pandemic has ended, and though experts warn that new ones may come in the not too distant future, the social urgency has given way to the so-called “new normal”. However, in this new scenario, the role of public administrations remains crucial to improving the living conditions of our fellow citizens.

In this new edition of the *Barcelona Societat* magazine, issue number 30, we aim to address some of the factors or areas that significantly affect and determine these living conditions. While it is true that the most dramatic and immediate consequences of Covid-19 have passed, many situations of vulnerability, exclusion, and dependency unfortunately persist, along with the challenges and opportunities in the hands of public administration to address them. What are these new vulnerabilities and what form do they take today, ask Ismael Blanco from the Institute of Government and Public Policies of the Autonomous University of Barcelona and Ricard Gomà from the Institute Metròpoli? For both authors, responsible for the Tribune article, the social contract outlined in the new context is threatened by new logics of social inequity and spatial fracture (material cleavage that opposes equality and inequality), community fragility (relational cleavage that confronts community belonging and disconnection from it), and cultural discrimination (relational cleavage that confronts socio-cultural recognition and discrimination). The authors focus precisely on the intersections between these three cleavages or gaps, emphasizing that it is in them where the main risks of exclusion today are materialized in real territories. Faced with these three threats (and their interconnections), a new ecosocial agenda needs to be deployed, which implies, at the same time, deepening the mechanisms and channels of democratic participation and proximity politics. In other words, more power is needed in the hands of the people and close to the people; a challenge in which municipalities and local entities can and should play a more prominent role.

A second factor that affects living conditions more significantly is access to and maintenance of housing. Carles Donat, head of the Metropolitan Housing Observatory of Barcelona, provides a very exhaustive analysis of the residential needs of the population, the situation of the housing

stock in the city, and the unfortunate accessibility crisis experienced by a large part of the city's inhabitants. For the author, this crisis is characterized by four major factors. Firstly, the stagnation of households in the city during the period 2011-2021. Then, the stagnation of the available housing stock, particularly primary housing and rental housing. Thirdly, the evolution of the housing market and the increased cost of access to it. Finally, the economic effort made by households to access housing and the reasons why these households decide to change residence. For Donat, these indicators have a particularly harsh impact on a growing number of residents, especially those living in rental properties.

However, the city is not just the place where we reside. It is also the space where we inhabit, enjoy, work, consume, or stroll, ultimately where we constantly move and transit. In this sense, Carlos Moreno from the French University of Panthéon Sorbonne presents and defends his conception of the "15-Minute City". The 15-Minute City is based on an urban planning model that seeks to redesign cities so that all essential services and facilities are accessible in reduced proximity, resulting in shorter and faster commutes and the least possible carbon emissions. According to Moreno, this is a model of urban mobility that goes beyond mere traffic management, integrating accessibility and proximity to services, prioritizing the human scale, sustainability, and social cohesion. The author examines strategies for its implementation and the challenges it poses, emphasizing the role that technology and community participation must play.

Moreover, cities are not only the places where we reside and the spaces we traverse, but they also constitute the interpersonal relationships we build in our day-to-day lives. How can the promotion of healthy and equitable relationships in formal education contexts positively impact our health? This is the question posed by Lluís Forcadell-Díez, Olga Juárez, Daniel G. Abiétar, María José López, and Glòria Pérez from the Barcelona Public Health Agency, Pompeu Fabra University, the CIBER Center for Epidemiology and Public Health, and the Biomedical Research Institute of the Hospital de Sant Pau. Their article aims to address the social determinants of health according to the relational models in formal education settings. They analyse "structural determinants" (such as oppression or different socio-historical contexts) and "intermediate" determinants (such as individual, psychosocial, behavioural, and community aspects) that, together, affect health through relational patterns that can lead to issues like low self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression, or violence. Socio-educational intervention can and should promote healthier and more equitable relationships, necessitating action in areas such as educational policies, educational projects in educational institutions, organization and governance of these institutions, training of educational teams, and community spaces.

Cities are also spaces where energy policies take root more strongly, as they are where productive and distributive models, as well as consumption patterns and dynamics, come into play and combine. Cristina Castells Guiu from the Barcelona Local Energy Agency asks to what extent cities are the key to realizing the energy transition. As she explains, cities are key players in advancing the energy transition. At the same time, however, they also exemplify the limits of the current energy model characterized by dependence on fossil fuels, high-energy prices, and the social inequalities that all this generates. Therefore, cities are fundamental players in the energy transition, as both the city itself and its inhabitants must play a very prominent active role. Castells' text analyses and proposes the framework of the Barcelona Climate Agreement, which, within the Millennium agreements, must contribute to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030. One of the key factors to achieve this goal is local generation of renewable energy, for example, through heating and cooling networks, highlighting the role that citizen participation plays in this regard. Another fundamental area of action in the hands of cities is the energy retrofitting of buildings to achieve greater efficiency and comfort. The author concludes by emphasizing the need to promote an energy culture that drives effective and collective changes in the urban space.

Another aspect that determines the degree of vulnerability and social exclusion suffered by a significant part of the city's residents is socio-labour inclusion. In the Experiences section, Sebastià Riutort, Ana Vicente, and Núria Beltran from the Metròpoli Institute and the Area of Social Rights, Health, Cooperation, and Community of the Barcelona City Council present and analyse the pilot project "Amunt!," an integrated and comprehensive care program to promote socio-labour inclusion.

This was an experimental project that, in collaboration with the Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security, and Migrations, aimed to test and evaluate a new socio-labour service that, by implementing a more integral and integrated care model, improved the inclusion of people in the city benefiting from the Minimum Living Income. Through a "one-stop" service, the project established a single methodology for the entry and monitoring of users to access a set of diverse actions based on three interconnected actions: a comprehensive reception and diagnosis of the person; their assignment to one or more actions tailored to their profile, needs, and interests; and personalized support to help them carry out their socio-labour inclusion itinerary. What this pilot demonstrates is that, to improve the social inclusion of individuals, it is necessary to address their personal and family realities, as well as their interests and needs comprehensively, ultimately granting them a more active role in designing their work plan.

However, when we talk about vulnerabilities and risks of exclusion, we cannot overlook the group that, due to reduced physical and bodily mobility, often sees its opportunities, life plans, and fundamental rights curtailed. When implementing their life plans, individuals with reduced mobility face a significant obstacle in transport services. Sergi Morera and Laura Trujillo from the Municipal Institute of Persons with Disabilities analyse the current situation of the special transport service available in the city of Barcelona and explain some of the key elements to consider in a future proposal for the transport of people with reduced mobility with special transport needs in the city.

In a context of limited resources, both in terms of budgetary allocation and the shortage of available vehicle fleets, and with high and growing demand, the provision of this service has become exclusive. The transport service for people with reduced mobility is an exclusive resource (the fact that one user consumes it excludes another from accessing it), which, therefore, poses a fundamental challenge: how to design a service allocation process that guarantees a viable and equitable service? The authors propose advancing awareness of a responsible use of the service, which is why there should be progress in regulations that promote co-responsibility on the part of citizens. In this regard, Morera and Trujillo conclude that supramunicipal planning, regulation, and management would benefit both the effectiveness and efficiency of the service and also improve the level of provision of this crucial service for the citizen sector of our city.

There are many topics to discuss, and each one is as complex as it is necessary to address. We hope that this issue 30 of the *Barcelona Societat* magazine provides useful and interesting data, information, and reflections to confront these issues, both now and in the future.