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Barcelona Societat

Journal on social Knowledge analysis

Take Stand

The Covid-19 social crisis in the city of Barcelona, responses and lessons learned after the pandemic

In Depth

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Roots, mobilities and collective action during the pandemic and the **post-pandemic**: the right to the territory
Cities and non-discrimination. Theoretical, regulatory and practical considerations



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de Barcelona

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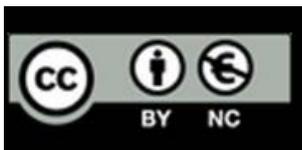
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Key words: Childhood, adolescence, demographic context, education, time, health, poverty, protection and violence

Childhood and adolescence in Barcelona in times of pandemic

Laia Pineda Rüeg^a and Elisa Stinus Bru de Sala^b

Throughout this paper we review the situation of children and adolescents in the city and highlight the most important aspects of the Key Data on Children and Adolescents in Barcelona report (IIAB, 2021), which analyses the main indicators in relation to the demographic context, education, time, health, poverty and protection and violence. Although we will have to wait and see whether or not the trends become consolidated in the coming years, the latest available data already reflect the impact of the crisis triggered by Covid-19 on the lives of children and adolescents in the city.

Introduction

This paper is based on the most relevant aspects of the Key Data on Childhood and Adolescence in Barcelona report (IIAB, 2021); an annual report that presents and analyses the data from the Integrated System of Indicators of Childhood and Adolescence in Barcelona (SIIIAB) of the 0-17 BCN Observatory, and which allows the follow-up of the diagnosis of the Barcelona Children's Plan 2021-2030. The SIIIAB was devised in 2017 and its current format contains more than 150 indicators organised into six key areas of children's lives (demographic context, education, time, health, poverty, protection and violence), which have been sourced from seventeen administrative registers and eleven surveys.

In times of crisis like the present, it is when the value of having systematised data over the last four years becomes more evident, given that without having a starting point it would not be possible to measure the extent of the crisis caused by Covid-19 in any great depth. It is worth remembering that the SIIIAB collects registration data on a yearly basis and survey data as often as they are produced. Therefore, the Key Data report 2021 shows the data for 2020, which begins to reflect the impact of the crisis caused by Covid-19 on the lives of children and adolescents in our city. For example, as was the case last year, it is still difficult to interpret the economic and child poverty-related results. We will therefore have to wait and see whether or not the trends observed in the 2020 data will become consolidated in the coming years.

A perspective that will take on special relevance next year, as we will have new editions of four of the SIIIAB's main surveys: The Survey of Subjective Well-being of Children in the city of Barcelona (EBSIB 2021), the Survey of Risk Factors in Secondary School Students (FRESC 2021)²³, the new Barcelona Health Survey (ESB 2021) and the second edition of the Barcelona Socio-demographic Survey (ESD 2020).

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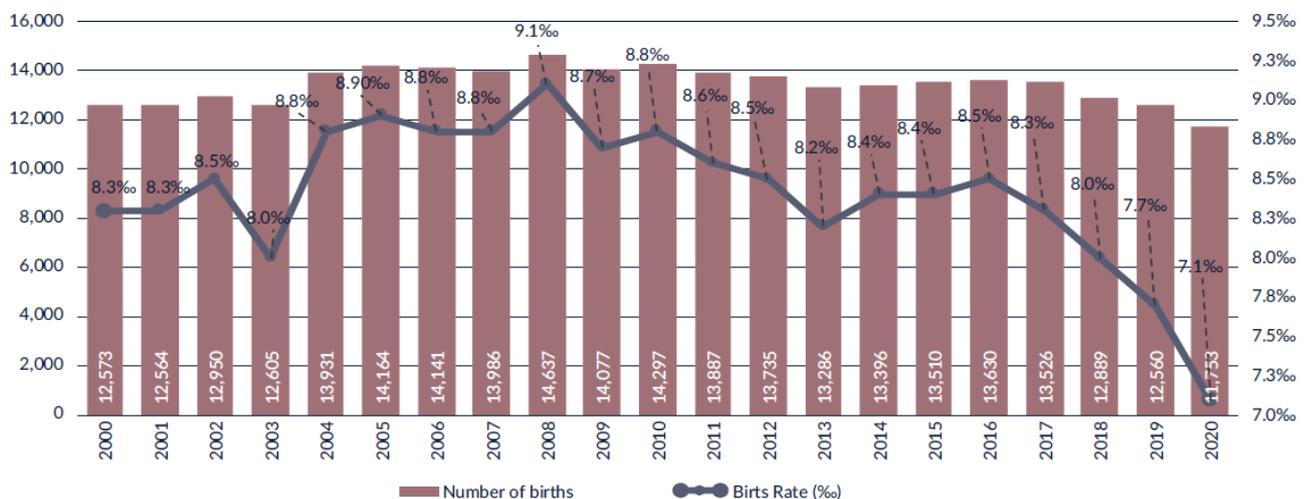
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23. Some of the 2021 data have already been included in this article, although all of them will be included in the next Key Data report for 2022.

1. Demographic, social and regional context of childhood and adolescence

In 2021, the city of Barcelona was home to 241,954 children and adolescents aged between 0 and 17 (representing 14.6% of the total population). They are unevenly distributed throughout the different districts and neighbourhoods of the city, mostly concentrated in the districts of Sant Martí and l'Eixample (29% of the total number of children and adolescents in the city). The main demographic trends in the child and adolescent population are the sustained fall in the birth rate since 2008, and even more so since 2016. In the last five years there has been a 13.8% drop in the birth rate, which has become even more pronounced since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (in 2020 it reached the second lowest level in the last fifty years). Out of the 73 neighbourhoods in the city, 63 have seen a decrease in the population aged 0-17 in the last year and only in ten has the population remained the same or increased. Furthermore, and in addition to the fall in the birth rate, the migratory movement is reinforcing the negative demographic trend in the 0-17 age group and is exacerbating the traits of a population pyramid that is showing an increasingly older society, to the point that in 2021 we have already reached the projected demographic scenario that had been envisaged for 2031, i.e., ten years early (Municipal Data Office, 2021).

Graph 1. Changes in the birth rate and the number of births. Barcelona, trend 2000-2020



Source: Prepared by the IIAB based on data from the registration and deregistration movements in the municipal population register. Department of Statistics and Data Dissemination. Barcelona City Council.

It is also worth highlighting the existence of a structural gap between the number of children had and the number of wanted children, with the result that the Spanish fertility rate is among the lowest in the world (1.23 children per woman). According to the latest studies on births and family models in Spain (Castro-Martín et al., 2021; OECD, 2022), the main barriers that make it difficult for many people to make their life and family project a reality are job insecurity and uncertainty about the future (which cause many young couples to postpone having children), the lack of institutional support for care responsibilities (with insufficient family policies) and gender inequality in the work and family spheres, in which the full integration of men in caregiving is still an unresolved issue.

In Barcelona, the majority of households with children are single-child families (54.4%) and/or families headed by two adults (possibly two-parent families). The number of single-parent families has remained very stable (12.8%), while the group "Other types of families" has grown steadily, a sign of the diversification of the types of families children and adolescents are born into and raised.

At present, different forms of cohabitation (other than the traditional two-parent or single-parent model) are already present in three out of every ten households with children and adolescents (Municipal Data Office, 2021).

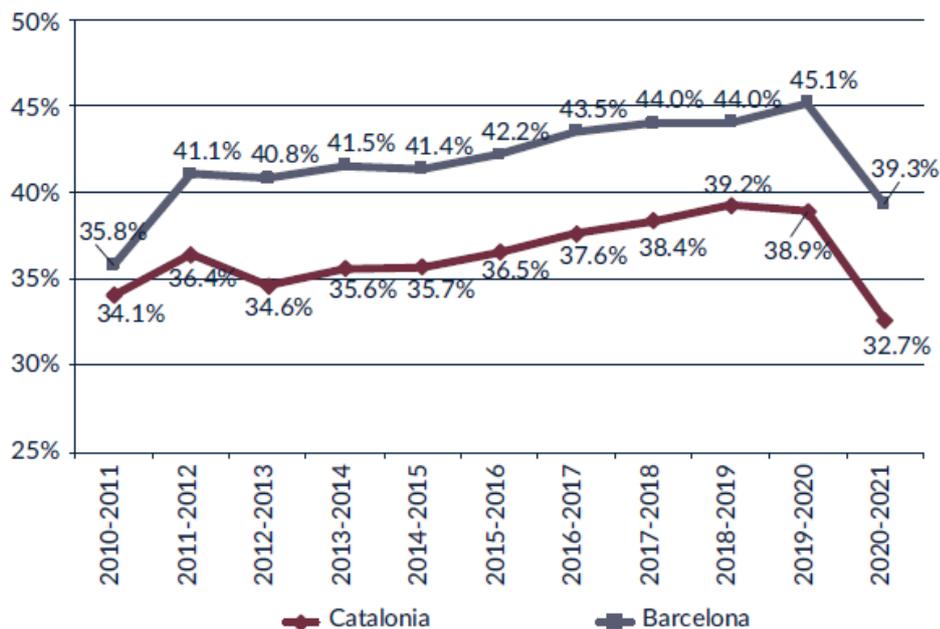
Despite the demographic decline of the 0-17 age group, as we like to point out, the reality of childhood and adolescence is not only of concern to children and adolescents themselves, but is also a major concern for all the people who care for them and live with them (23.8% of adults in the city). From this perspective, therefore, even today, four out of every ten residents in the city of Barcelona are children, adolescents or adults who live with them, care for them and share their daily lives, concerns and expectations with them (Municipal Data Office, 2021).

2. Education: early childhood and transitions to post-compulsory education

The challenges in the formal education of children and adolescents are clearly concentrated at the beginning and end of the educational path, with special emphasis on children in situations of economic and/or educational vulnerability.

Despite specific measures to support families with fewer economic resources, there has been a sharp change in the upward trend of the last ten years, with a drop in the enrolment of young children (0-2 years) of 5.8 percentage points in just one school year, representing an unprecedented drop (Barcelona Education Consortium and the Department of Education, 2010-2011 to 2020-2021). The demand for public nursery schools has increased in the last academic year (66.8%), but it still falls short of covering all the families who apply for public places (Barcelona Municipal Institute of Education, 2020-2021). It is worth noting, however, the various public policy measures that are moving towards recognising the 0-2 stage as a strategic educational stage and which should guarantee better coverage as of the next school year (European Child Guarantee, the Generalitat de Catalunya's measure for universal coverage of schooling from P2 and the Plan for early childhood education and care in Barcelona).

Graph 2. Rate of school attendance 0-2 (%). Catalonia and Barcelona, academic years 2010-2011 to 2020-2021



Source: Prepared by the IIAB based on data from the records of the Barcelona Education Consortium and the Department of Education. Indicators and Statistics Service. Statistics from Education, academic years 2010-2011 to 2020-2021.

With regard to continuity of studies once the compulsory schooling stage has ended, although the rates of school abandonment (AEP) have not broken the positive trend of recent years and a slight improvement can be observed, the focus should be placed on educational discontinuities. These discontinuities mean that, even today, one out of every ten adolescents does not graduate at the end of ESO [Compulsory Secondary Education] (with significant territorial differences) (Department of Education, 2019-2020) and that of the eight out of every ten who go on to post-compulsory studies without interruption (if we refer to the studies of the cohort of students born in 2001), only between five and six adolescents out of every ten finish their A-levels or equivalent studies at the ideal or expected age (Barcelona Education Consortium, 2021).

Studies and educational intervention programmes focused on understanding the "whys" for prematurely abandoning school and educational discontinuities (Tarabini, Jacovkis, Montes and Llos, 2021) consider educational guidance and the prevention of school disaffection (which must begin at the primary school stage) to be key to optimising the results and continuity of this educational stage. A better coverage of places in the Middle Level Educational Cycle (CFGM) is also key so that all students are guaranteed a place in their desired studies.

3. Children's time, out-of-school activities, public space and citizenship

Time is an issue that worries children a lot, both for the amount of time available and what use to make of it. Both aspects are among the least well valued in children's lives. The data indicate that children spend much more time on homework than on free play in the street, and that they have little time to relax, talk and have fun with the family, and little time to spend with friends after school (EBSIB²⁴, 2017).

The city's leisure infrastructure for promoting play and spending more time outdoors is well covered throughout the city, both in terms of proximity to homes and educational centres, but there is still a long way to go in terms of quality: improvements are needed in the diversification of leisure activities in play areas, in size, in naturalness and in accessibility. The Barcelona Public Space Play Plan is a pioneering public policy measure to promote and guarantee children's right to play, and should show improvements by 2030.

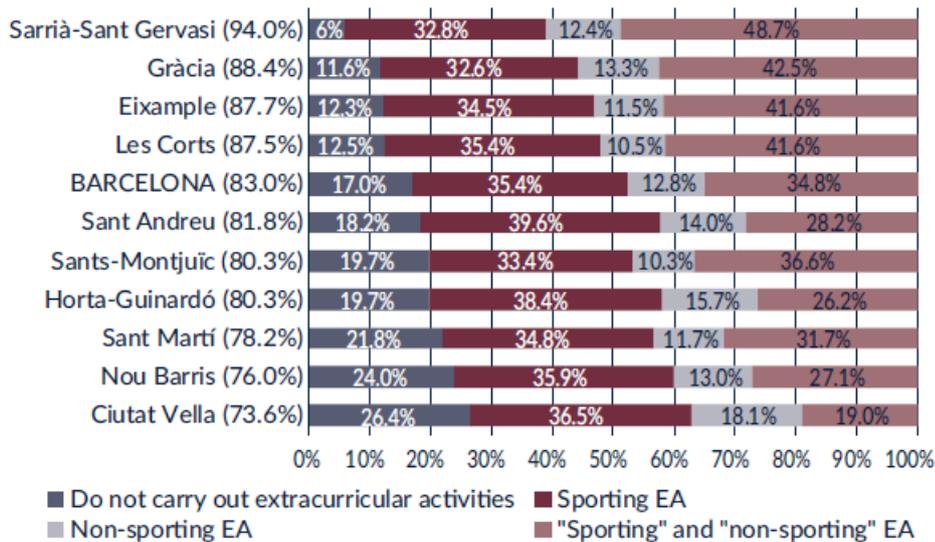
It should be borne in mind that having an open-air place to play safely close to home is one of the elements that most enhances children's satisfaction with the neighbourhood and also one of the elements that most contributes to children's well-being (IIAB, 2019). In addition, children in the city state that the feeling of safety in the neighbourhood needs to be improved and that the perception of friendliness and help from neighbours in the event of a problem has significant room for improvement, which would certainly translate into more children on the street (EBSIB, 2017).

On the other hand, the pandemic has made the role that public space can play in children's lives as an equaliser of opportunities more evident than ever (Cortés and Curcoll, 2020). The total lockdown at the beginning of Covid-19, as well as the reduced presence in the street and in social activities as measures to cope with the pandemic and, therefore, the greater amount of time spent at home, have made us more aware that there are many children and adolescents who live in small flats and/or without outdoor space, in poor living conditions and/or in situations of over-occupancy. For these three indicators, in which children are in a worse position than other population groups in the city, the importance for these children to have a friendly and safe public space where they can meet, play and interact with their peers, emphasises its potential to have an impact on their health and well-being.

As far as educational time outside school is concerned, most children take part in some kind of extracurricular activity (eight out of every ten do some kind of sporting and/or cultural activity), but with significant differences depending on the income of the area: in Ciutat Vella, three out of every ten do not do any, compared to one out of every ten in Sarrià-Sant Gervasi (Study of Sports Habits of the School-age Population of Barcelona City, Barcelona Institute of Sports, 2018). Unfortunately, the educational leisure opportunities in schools and associations are very unevenly distributed throughout the city and the lowest-income neighbourhoods are very deprived, because their existence is more a result of the social tradition of the neighbourhoods than of educational planning. Having said that, it is important to recognise the public effort in the availability of grants both in the field of sport and educational leisure, during the summer holidays and, more recently, with the new measure to support the provision of at least two extracurricular activities a week, which should guarantee access to children in vulnerable situations.

24. Subjective well-being survey for children in Barcelona (Institute for Children and Teenagers).

Graph 3. Children and adolescents (6-16 years) who take part in extracurricular sporting and non-sporting activities (%). Barcelona and districts, 2018



Source: Prepared by the IIAB based on a study of the sporting habits of the school-age population of the city of Barcelona. Barcelona City Council and Barcelona Institute of Sports (IBE).

Note: the grey label refers to children and adolescents who do both sporting and non-sporting extracurricular activities.

Knowledge of rights and having adults listening to them can be considered two interesting proxies for children to exercise their citizenship. The data show significant margins of improvement in both aspects: only half of the children say they know what their rights are, and three out of ten say that there are significant margins of improvement with regard to adults listening to them (EBSIB, 2017). Adults' listening to children's opinions and interests can be considered a practical step towards the exercise of citizenship, as children can only feel they are an active part of the society in which they live if adults listen to them and take into account what they say to them.

4. Physical, mental and emotional health of children and adolescents

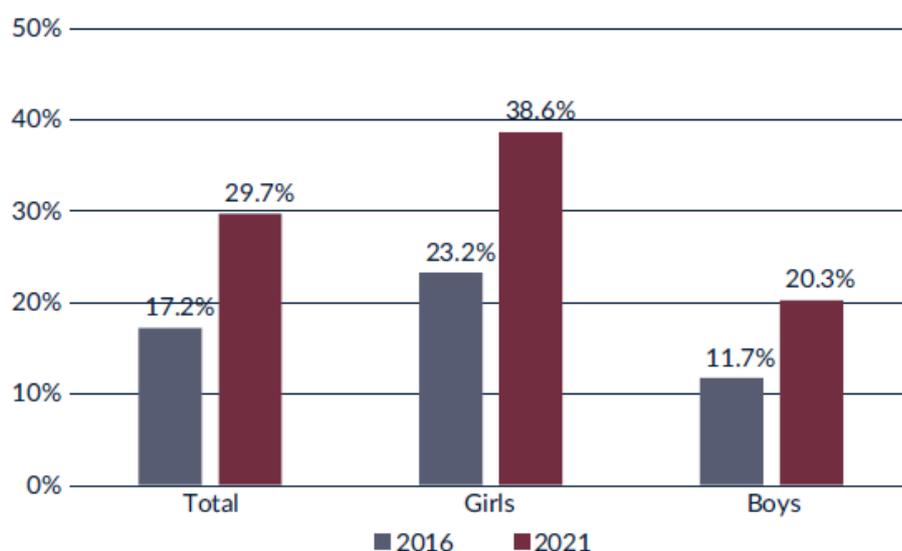
Health is one of the aspects of life most highly valued by children: 85% say they are very satisfied and only 4% say they are not very or not at all satisfied (EBSIB, 2017). Childhood is a stage of life in which good health is most common and to be expected, and a stage in which levels of mortality and illness are lower compared to other stages of life. However, the subjective experience of health or the best health indicators in childhood should not confuse us as to the importance of giving priority attention to the prevention and promotion of health in the first years of life. This is because many health problems in adulthood, whether physical or mental, develop throughout childhood and adolescence.

Hence the need to give the necessary importance to children's health habits: hygiene, rest, good nutrition and physical exercise. The available data show significant room for improvement, and one of the most worrying indicators in this first stage of life is the 26% of overweight children and adolescents (Department of Health, 2018). With regard to mental health, international research indicates that 50% of mental health problems in adulthood start before the age of 14 and 70% before the age of 18, as well as the fact that diagnosis and treatment of children is often delayed (WHO, 2003; Mental Health Foundation, 2015).

Specific studies conducted throughout the pandemic show a notable deterioration in mental health indicators: symptoms of depression and anxiety have increased among children and there has been a steady increase in eating disorders, temptation to self-harm and clinical decompensation among adolescents (Faros Sant Joan de Déu and UNICEF, 2021).

In this sense, the new data from the 2021 FRESC²⁵ survey show that the percentages of emotional distress and the risk of suffering a mental health problem have almost doubled compared to the 2016 edition, especially among girls and in the most disadvantaged socio-economic neighbourhoods. Specifically, two out of every ten girls surveyed are at risk of suffering from a mental health problem and four out of every ten show emotional distress. It is worth remembering that, in order to alleviate the emotional impact of Covid-19, Barcelona City Council set up the Mental Health Action Plan, included in the Mental Health Plan 2016-2022, with specific actions for the younger population.

Graph 4. Degree of emotional distress of adolescents, total and by gender (%). Barcelona, 2016 and 2021



Source: Prepared by the IIAB based on the FRESC survey (2016 and 2021), Barcelona Public Health Agency.

One of the new lines of analysis in childhood and health concerns the impact of environmental pollution, a particularly critical issue in densely populated and busy cities such as Barcelona. Exposure to air pollutants early in life (intrauterine and postnatal periods) and during childhood is a threat to neurodevelopment and an obstacle to children reaching their full cognitive potential. According to data from the latest report by the Barcelona Public Health Agency (ASPB, 2021), 35% of the city's population is exposed to levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) above the legal limit (40 µg/m³) and 100% to an excess of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5). The districts of Eixample and Sant Martí (which are the second and first districts with the highest concentration of children and adolescents respectively) are among the most affected. In the same report, air pollution has been linked to 19% of new cases of childhood asthma and 5% of new cases of lung cancer in children in the city. The overall reduction of traffic is seen as the most efficient way to breathe clean air and avoid negative effects on the health of children and the population in general.

5. Poverty, exclusion and inequalities in childhood and adolescence

At the present time, inequalities and poverty in childhood in the city are not easy to interpret with the available data, given that the latest survey data available for Barcelona (EMCV²⁶, 2019-2020) only partially capture the crisis due to the pandemic and, therefore, it is necessary to interpret them in an adjusted and cautious manner²⁷. However, we have an unequivocal historical perspective that alerts us to a trend towards a worsening of children's living conditions, the result of a traditionally weak welfare state model in terms of family policies and low investment in children (Martínez-Celorrío and Marín-Saldo to IIAB, 2018).

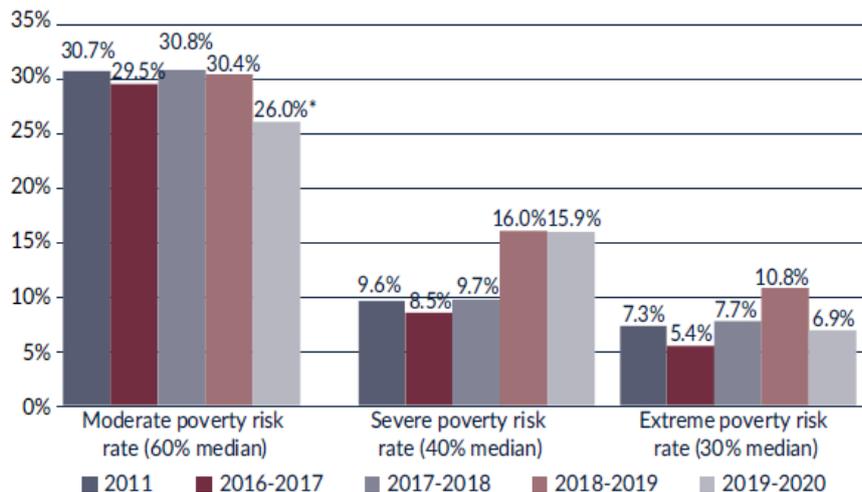
25. Survey of risk factors among secondary school students (Barcelona Public Health Agency).

26. Metropolitan statistics on living conditions (Barcelona Institute of Regional and Metropolitan Studies).

27. The scale of Covid-19 and the economic impact of a major health and social crisis will not be reflected in the EMCV until the 2020-2021 data (available at the end of 2022).

The percentage of severe child poverty stagnated at 16% in 2019-2020, income inequality among children has continued to widen (especially in the highest decile), and most indicators of material deprivation have worsened, especially in the area of housing, a factor that continues to be critical in the city of Barcelona (EMCV, 2019-2020). The imminent roll-out of the European Child Guarantee in Spain demonstrates the need to make a strong and definitive commitment to reverse the trend towards a worsening of the living conditions of children and adolescents in our country and our cities, a trend that has been going on for a long time and which we have still not recovered from since the great recession of 2008.

Graph 5. Risk of moderate, severe and extreme poverty among children and adolescents (%). Barcelona, 2011 and 2016-2017 to 2019-2020



Source: Prepared by IIAB based on the Survey of Living Conditions and Habits of the Population (ECVHP) - IERMB (2011) and Metropolitan Statistics on Living Conditions (EMCV) - IERMB (2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2019-2020).

*Note: the sharp jump in moderate poverty (4.4 percentage points) in just one year makes it necessary to treat this data with caution and wait for the data for the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 to confirm whether this is really the trend of the indicator.

Furthermore, last November 2020, the child poverty estimation model developed to address the lack of statistical data (Porcel, Navarro-Varas and Cruz, 2020) alerted us to the impact that the crisis caused by Covid-19 could have on increasing child poverty rates. According to this estimate, the moderate poverty risk rate could grow by between five and seven percentage points in just one year (from 30.4% in 2018-2019 to 35% or 37% in 2020). Meanwhile, emergency food aid to homes with dependent children and adolescents has sky-rocketed in the most vulnerable districts and is rising in districts of the city that have traditionally been more stable (Municipal Institute of Social Services, 2020). A scenario that would have made us think, from the outset, that a new crisis was just beginning in 2020.

Without having been able to obtain new child-specific data (neither from the poverty estimation model nor from the emergency food aid), we know that the social services of the city of Barcelona will serve 10.36% more people in 2021 than in 2020 and 22.56% more than in 2019 (the year before the Covid-19 pandemic). Among the total number of people attended in 2021, 24% were being attended for the first time or had not required assistance within the last year. Even so, it indicates the situation is getting worse. Although the €41.3 million in direct aid that Barcelona's social services managed in 2021 represents an exponential increase compared to 2019, it is also certain that this item has experienced a slight decrease compared to 2020, meaning that the reduction could be attributed to the termination of the extraordinary COVID Fund that Barcelona City Council launched in 2020, at the height of the pandemic; the improvement in the city's economic situation with an increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in parallel with a reduction in unemployment to 2008 levels; and also the extension of the Guaranteed Citizen's Income and the Minimum Vital Income to more of the city's citizens. In 2021, the 0-16 Fund will be renewed and will be assigned to 17,323 children between 0 and 16 years old (Municipal Institute of Social Services, 2021).

The various measures in place to combat child poverty (the 0-16 Fund, Guaranteed Citizens' Income, Minimum Vital Income and the new European Child Guarantee in Spain) require maximum commitment from all the administrations involved in order to reverse the under-investment in children and to improve, at once for all, the situations of poverty and deprivation in which thousands of children grow up in the city, which limit their maximum development and condition their paths not only during childhood, but also in adult life, in accordance with the dynamics of social reproduction of poverty: "child poverty is the main route of intergenerational reproduction of poverty: whoever has grown up in poverty will probably be poor as an adult" (Government of Spain, 2020:1).

6. Interpersonal relations, safety, violence and the protection of children and adolescents

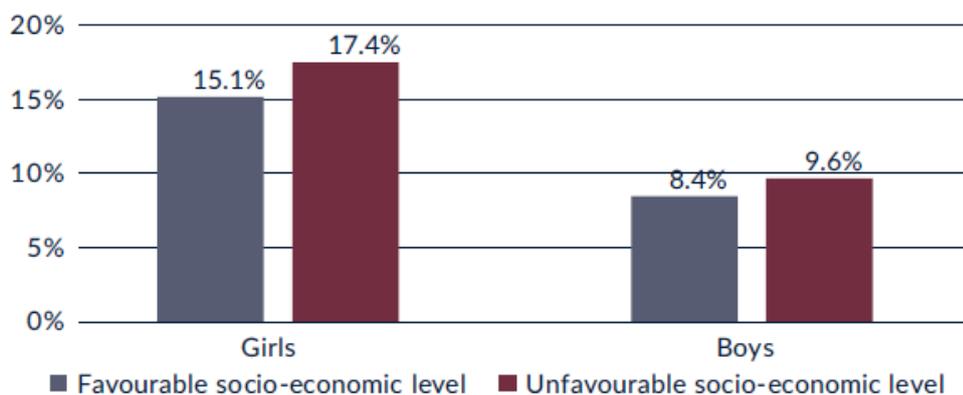
2021 has left us with two very important measures in the field of relationships, violence and safety: the approval of the LOPIVI, the new law for the protection of children against violence, and a measure by the municipal government of Barcelona to tackle unwanted loneliness that includes a specific focus on children and adolescents.

Lack of playmates, situations of school bullying, cyberbullying or peer group rejection are risk factors for loneliness during childhood, a phenomenon to which attention should be paid.

The Barcelona City Council's government measure to combat unwanted loneliness in 2020 has strengthened two important statistical operations (EBSIB and FRESC) in order to measure this problem to which, contrary to the social perception, children and, above all, adolescents are particularly vulnerable.

The results of the 2021 FRESC survey indicate that 17.4 % of teenage girls from low socioeconomic backgrounds feel lonely and of this figure 9.6 % are teenage boys. It is found that this feeling of loneliness in girls is almost twice as high as in boys and is higher in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Graph 6. Degree of loneliness of adolescents, by sex and socioeconomic level (%). Barcelona, 2021



Source: Prepared by IIAB based on the FRESC survey (2021), Barcelona Public Health Agency.

With the Framework Act on the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents against violence. (LOPIVI) (Government of Spain, 2021), the definition of violence against children as an object of the law has been granted and a significant step has been taken in the proactive approach to violence; in addition, the concept of good treatment (which is a legal obligation) has been defined and the notion of safe spaces has been introduced. In our city, we do not have any specific survey on violence during childhood and adolescence, but we do have different statistical operations that allow us to approximate the physical, emotional, sexual, psychological or, more recently, digital violence suffered by children.

The Youth Survey 2020 module on sexual violence in childhood is a good example, and we now know that one in ten children and adolescents have been sexually abused during childhood, more by adults known to them than not, and that girls are much more at risk than boys (of the 7.9%, 11.5% are girls compared to 4.4% boys). It has also allowed us to highlight the amount of sexual abuse suffered at the hands of peers (schoolmates, partners or boyfriends/girlfriends with whom they have dated, or even siblings). Although we cannot know whether this is due to the effects of stress factors deriving from the pandemic or whether it is due to greater social awareness of the need to report cases of abuse, in 2020, 333 reports of violence against children in the home were reported, the highest figure since 2011, marking a turning point in the improving trend of recent years (Department of the Interior, 2020). The 1,200 cases assessed and evaluated by Specialised Child and Adolescent Care Teams (EAIA) in 2020 also mark a peak in the upward trend since 2017 (932 cases) (IMSS, 2017 to 2020).

With regard to the monitoring of social risk and joblessness, a situation that makes children extremely vulnerable is that of children living in urban settlements (warehouses and plots) or in premises and other substandard housing of a settlement nature. In 2020, the Social Intervention Service for Families with Minors (SISFAM) provided assistance to 318 children and adolescents between 0 and 17 years of age in situations of substandard housing (Municipal Institute of Social Services, 2020).

With regard to children under 18 migrating alone, 2021 confirms a change in the trend that began in 2016, in which the proportion of these children migrating alone (mostly aged between 14 and 17) is gradually decreasing in relation to the proportion of young people migrating alone who are over 18 when they arrive in the city. For example, in 2018, only migrants under the age of 18 accounted for 83.8% of the total number of children receiving assistance (the majority), while in 2021, these migrants without family members accounted for only 31.9% of the total (the minority) (Municipal Institute of Social Services, 2018-2021).

7. Conclusions

Throughout the paper we have reviewed the situation of children and adolescents in the city and highlighted the most important aspects of the report Key Data on Children and Adolescents in Barcelona (IIAB, 2021), which analyses the main indicators in relation to the demographic context, education, time, health, poverty and protection and violence. Although we will have to continue observing whether or not the trends become consolidated in the coming years, the latest available data begin to reflect the impact of the crisis triggered by Covid-19 on the lives of children and adolescents in the city. The main areas affected by the Covid-19 crisis and the accompanying measures are the following:

- The slowdown in the population growth trend over the last five years has mainly been due to the falling birth rate: in the last five years there has been a 13.8% drop in the birth rate, even more pronounced since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (2020 marked the second lowest figure in the last fifty years), to which must be added the halt on the arrival of new immigrants to the city.
- In the field of education, there has been a sharp change in the school enrolment rate, with an unprecedented drop in school enrolment for young children (0-2 years) of 5.8 percentage points in just one year, reversing the upward trend of the last two years, probably due to the fall in family income and the risk of contagion.
- With regard to out-of-school educational time, although we do not have new data, the generalised increase in inequality could worsen the different dynamics according to the income of the area observed before the pandemic: in Ciutat Vella three out of every ten children do not do any extracurricular activity, compared to one out of every ten children in Sarrià-Sant Gervasi.

- In relation to health, there has been an increase in both emotional distress and the risk of suffering a mental health problem, especially among the most disadvantaged girls and in the most disadvantaged socio-economic neighbourhoods: two out of every ten girls surveyed are at risk of suffering a mental health problem and four out of every ten exhibit emotional distress, according to the new FRESC 2021. Both indicators have doubled compared to the data for 2016.
- While the inequalities are not easy to interpret with the available data, the percentage of severe child poverty stagnates at 16% in 2019-2020, income inequality among children has continued to rise (especially in the highest decile) and most indicators for material deprivation have worsened, especially in housing.
- As far as interpersonal relationships are concerned, the feelings of loneliness during adolescence, which are more present among girls and in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, should be highlighted. Although we cannot compare data with 2016, data for 2021 indicate that 17.4% of teenage girls from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds feel lonely, and this figure is 9.6% for teenage boys.
- As far as violence and social protection are concerned, although we cannot know whether this is due to the effects of the stress factors deriving from the pandemic or whether it is due to the increased social awareness of the need to report cases of abuse, 2020 saw the highest number of reports of violence against children in recent years (333 reports), and there was also a spike in the number of cases investigated and assessed by EIAs (1,200 in 2020), 14% more than the previous year.
- Finally, it should be pointed out that, although the number of children and young people migrating alone continues to grow (after the decline in 2020 due to all the confinement measures and mobility restrictions), a change of trend is confirmed in the ages of young migrants without family members, of which those aged between 14 and 17 are the minority (31.9%), and those over 18 are the vast majority (68.1%).

In light of these trends, we must continue to develop more and better policies to improve the lives and rights of children and adolescents in the city. And this should be done from the different spheres of government, in accordance with the competences and, as stated in Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, "to the maximum extent of the resources available to [the States]". Many of the necessary actions are aligned with municipal strategies and actions (included in the recently approved Barcelona Childhood Plan 2021-2030) such as the Plan for Early Childhood Education and Childcare, the new measure to support at least two extracurricular activities per week, the Mental Health Plan, the 0-16 Children's Fund and the recent government measure to combat unwanted loneliness.

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