

## **Poverty and Spatial Location along Industrialisation, Barcelona, 1787-1860**

Authors: Anna Cabré, Joana Maria Pujadas, Miquel Valls, Albert Garcia  
**Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics**  
**Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona**

### **Extended abstract**

The demolition of the walls around Barcelona started as late as 1854. In the enclosed space of what is today the old city, industrialisation took place. Barcelona was transformed from an important commercial and administrative centre into one of the densest manufacturing conglomerates in Europe. Along with some smaller Catalan towns, Barcelona became what has been named "the factory of Spain". In 1858, not less than 563 industrial establishments devoted to the different textile activities were located *intramuros*, mainly in the western and eastern parts of the city. Attracted by a flourishing labour market, successive migration waves caused the doubling of the population between 1787 (Censo de Floridablanca) and 1860 (first Census of the statistical era). This increase, from roughly 100.000 to almost 200.000 inhabitants, corresponds to a sustained annual average growth of around 1 per cent over 73 years, which is quite extraordinary considering the negative sign of the natural increase, conditioned by very high mortality rates and by a fertility which started its decline among the first in Europe, before 1850 in all probabilities.

Our present contribution focuses on the changes in the levels of poverty and its location along the process of industrialisation and population growth, observed through two cross-sectional images of 1787 and 1860. Comparisons are carried with the trends observed in other sections of the Grand Barcelona, industrial as well as agrarian parishes.

Our data comes from a source that is being used for the first time for statistical purposes: the "*Llibres d'Esposalles*" (Marriage accounting books) of the Archive of the Cathedral of Barcelona, a fiscal register covering the Diocese of Barcelona from 1451 to 1906. These data have started to be collected at the *Barcelona Historical Marriage Database*, recently created at the Centre d'Estudis Demogràfics - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and built by the authors.

Taxes on marriages were raised since the 15th century in order to contribute to the building and maintenance of the Cathedral of Barcelona. A central register, gathering the information sent by over 200 parishes belonging to the Diocese, was kept until 1906, when a new system of prepaid stamps glued to the marriage certificates put an end to a source of data which has miraculously survived to the many episodes of destruction that affected so many of the parish archives in the area and which is specially attractive by its simplicity and homogeneity. Along all of the 456 years, the same gradient of taxes has been maintained, though slight changes have been operated into the classification of categories and professions belonging to each level (7-8 levels, depending on

the socio-economic status of the husband). Therefore, the taxes paid can be used as indicators of social structure. In the present contribution we shall deal only with one category, those exonerated from paying taxes because of their extreme poverty. They were married *amore dei* or *gratia dei*, for free. Because of the taxing purpose of the classification and the centralized control of the tax-collecting system, we will assume that the defining criteria of groups must have been relatively homogeneous through time and space.

#### Main findings (see Table 1 and Maps 1, 2)

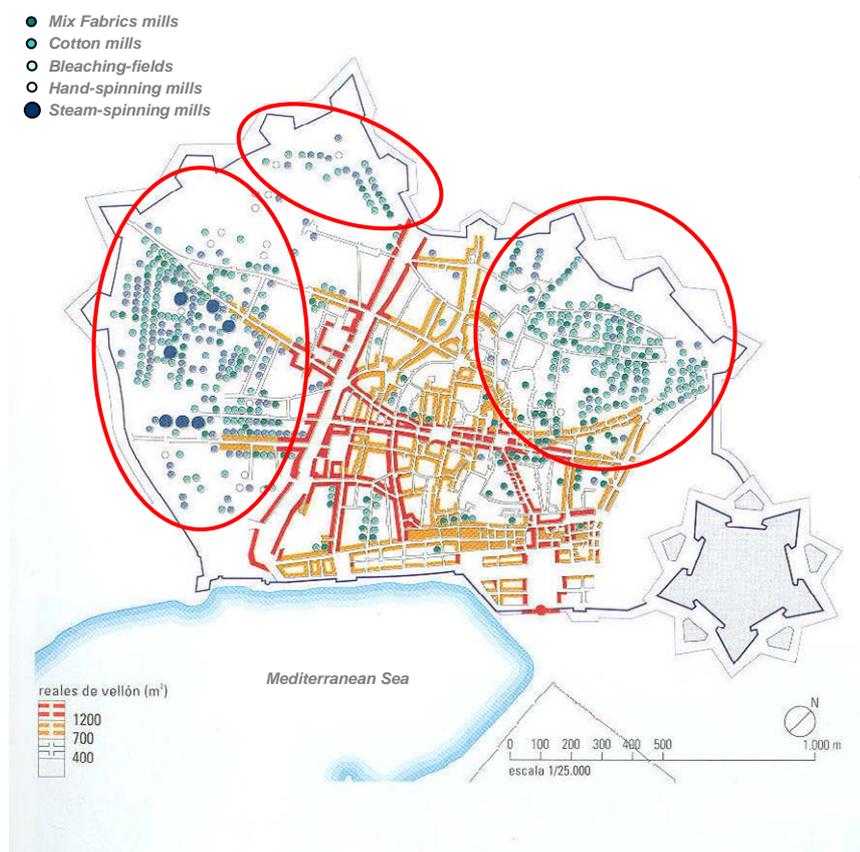
1. Poverty increased in the inner city along industrialisation: marriages *amore dei* represented 23% of marriages in 1787 and 29% in 1860.
2. Spatial concentration of poverty become higher: in 1787, none of the parishes exceeded 27% of paupers, while in 1860 in the old and new industrial areas (east and west), the poor were sometimes the majority. In all of the 7 (new) parishes covering these areas, the marriages *amore dei* represented at least one third of the total amount, and in two parishes they were more than 50%.
3. The parishes suffering the higher increases in poverty where also those having experienced, by far, the highest population growth, obviously linked to migration. The parishes with small population growth had levels of poverty equal to those of 1787.
4. The comparison with the 90 parishes of the Grand Barcelona throws interesting results. In 1787, poverty in Barcelona (23%) more than doubled that of the rest of the area, mainly rural (10%). In 1860, the ranking is reversed: Barcelona had 29% of poor, while the rest of the area had 37%.
5. Considering separately the four largest parishes of the area (Sabadell, Mataró, Badalona and Terrassa), all of them industrial, it appears that their poverty was similar to poverty in the industrial sections of Barcelona. The increase of poverty had been more acute, though.
6. Considering the rest of the Barcelona region, mainly rural parishes, both poverty and increase of poverty appear to be the highest.
7. Therefore, no matter how bad the living conditions might have been during industrialisation in Barcelona, in comparative terms its population can be considered as privileged. This finding seems to contradict the mainstream theory, which gives to our study a particular interest.

As this is a work in progress, we expect to be able to present some more results at the PAA 2011 and in an article prepared for publication. In particular, we can dig the information on occupations of the poor and explore the role of migration in the transfer of poverty between different areas.

**Table 1: Proportion of Marriages Amore Dei in the Region of Barcelona, 1787 and 1860.**

	<b>1787</b>	<b>1860</b>
<b>City of Barcelona</b>	23%	29%
<b>Industrial Parishes</b>	21%	35%
<b>Other Parishes</b>	23%	23%
<b>Region without Barcelona</b>	11%	37%
<b>Four large industrial parishes</b>	12%	37%
<b>Other parishes</b>	10%	38%
<b>Region of Barcelona</b>	18%	33%

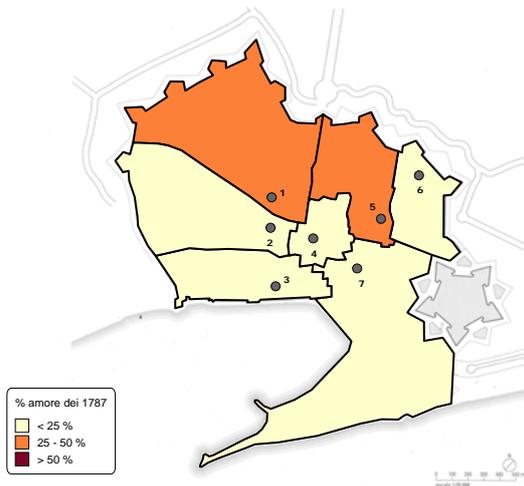
**Map 1: Cotton mills (1841) and price of land per metre square (1859)**



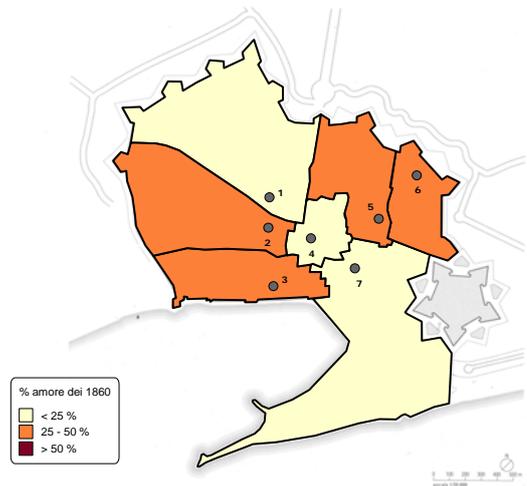
Source: Guàrdia, M.; García Espuche, A. (1994 - 1996): *Hacia un paisaje urbano*. In M. Guàrdia et al. *Atlas histórico de ciudades europeas. Península Ibérica*. Barcelona: Salvat..

**Map 2: Proportion of Marriages Amore Dei in the city of Barcelona, 1787 and 1860.**

**1786-88 ( 7 Parishes)**

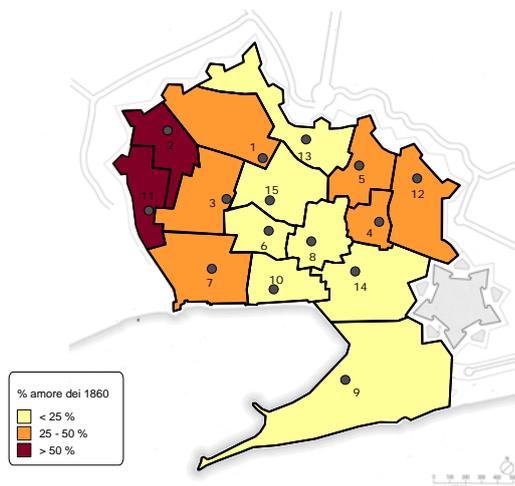


**1860-61 ( 7 Parishes)**



1 Pi, Santa Maria	4 Just, Sant	6 Pere, Sant
2 Jaume, Sant	5 Cugat, Sant	7 Mar, Santa Maria del
3 Miquel, Sant		

**1860-61 ( 15 Parishes)**



1 Betlem	6 Jaume, Sant	11 Pau, Sant
2 Carme	7 Josep, Sant	12 Pere, Sant
3 Agustí, Sant	8 Just, Sant	13 Anna, Santa
4 Cugat, Sant	9 Miquel del Port, Sant	14 Mar, Santa Maria del
5 Francesc, Sant	10 Miquel, Sant	15 Pi, Santa Maria del