

Who returned to Bogota's city centre? An approach to the population transition process before the arrival of COVID-19

¿Quién regresó al centro de Bogotá? Una aproximación a los procesos de transición poblacional antes de la llegada del COVID-19

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**Abstract:** After more than half a century of public investments and rescue plans for the central city, the question remains: who has returned to the city centre? To explore this, a cross-sectional study is proposed to analyse the demographic profiles of people arriving in the central city before COVID-19 emerged. Methodologically, the article compares data from official sources with a pilot survey conducted through social media, which not only offers an initial snapshot of the new residents of the central area but also prompts reflection on virtual methods, their scope, and limitations.

**Keywords:** city centre, historic city centre, return to the centre, population profile, gentrification.

**Resumen:** Después de más de medio siglo de inversiones públicas y planes de rescate del centro, queda la pregunta de quiénes fueron las personas que regresaron. Para responder a esta pregunta, se propone un estudio de corte transversal que muestra los perfiles poblacionales que llegaban a la ciudad central antes de la aparición del COVID-19. Metodológicamente, el artículo contrasta datos obtenidos de fuentes oficiales con una muestra piloto desarrollada a través de redes sociales, que no solo ofrece una radiografía exploratoria de los nuevos habitantes del centro, sino que también invita a reflexionar sobre metodologías virtuales, sus alcances y limitaciones.

**Palabras clave:** ciudad central, centro histórico, regreso al centro, perfiles poblacionales, gentrificación.

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The city centres of Latin America underwent rapid change in the first quarter of this century, mainly due to recovery policies and projects aimed at revitalizing historic districts. These efforts attracted significant new populations to central neighbourhoods and drew considerable real estate investment.

This period reached a turning point in 2019 with the arrival of COVID-19, which radically altered the dynamics that had characterised central city transformation since the early 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Therefore, this article examines, through a temporal cross-section, the main population trends observed in Bogota's central city during the first two decades of this century, to understand how population distribution has changed across the urban core.

## 1. POPULATION TRANSITION IN CENTRAL AREAS OF LATIN AMERICA

Studies of city centres in Latin America, especially those related to the idea of returning to the city centre, are closely linked to understanding gentrification processes. These approaches have often been influenced by a positivist view of the “gentrifying subject,” without fully examining the multiple layers of population profiles that have moved to the centre. Additionally, much of the literature focused mainly on the officially designated historic centre, ignoring that many of the urban dynamics shaping these spaces are closely linked to what happens in the pericentral areas (Díaz Parra, 2013; Sepúlveda, 2017).

Currently, there is broad agreement on the concept of gentrification, especially in recognizing that Latin America has unique territorial conditions for gentrification (Moriente & Botella, 2023: 11), which has led to the development of terms like “Latino gentrification” (Inzulza & Galleguillos, 2014). These frameworks emphasize processes such as economic disparities, social mixing, security issues, and tourism potential, among others.

It is important to note that within the region, specific cases like Mexico City, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro exhibit dynamics similar to those of global gentrification processes due to their integration into international capital flows. (Martínez Buelvas & Martínez Osorio, 2023). These dynamics include financialization, boutique urbanism, digital nomadism, and large-scale international tourism. Meanwhile, in much of the rest of the region, gentrification is primarily driven by local population movements.

Beyond these regional differences, it is still widely recognized that a prototypical “gentrified subject” exists, which is defined as:

“A middle-class household, usually without children, often single, primarily under 35 years old, employed in advanced service sectors, earning high salaries despite their age, and ethnically identifiable as part of the white Protestant group.” (Díaz Parra, 2013).

While this profile may be analytically useful, it does not fully answer the article's main question: *Who returned to the city centre?* It tends to homogenize the population under a single label, failing to consider factors such as consumer profiles and their connections to the services available in the city centre (Montenegro, 2019; Delgadillo, 2023).

Furthermore, gentrification dynamics involve complex interactions among stakeholders, including developers, government entities, and local communities, each of which significantly influences the process. These interactions are reflected in the varied population dynamics, as shown in Figure 1.

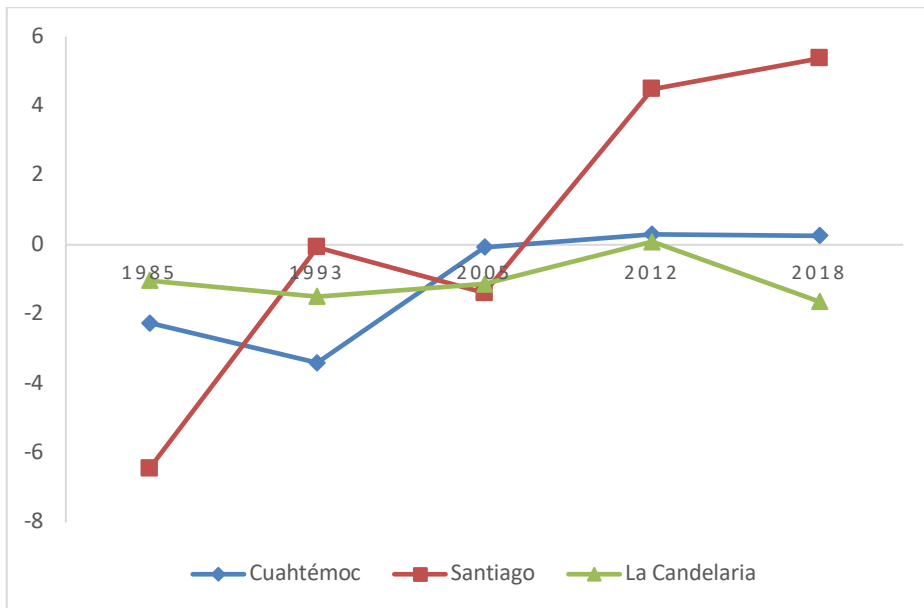


Figure 1. Population Growth Rates in Central Districts of Bogotá (La Candelaria), Santiago (Santiago), and Mexico City (Cuahtémoc) between 1980 and 2020.

Source: Own elaboration, for Bogotá, based on the censuses and surveys of 1973, 1985, 1993, 2005, 2012, and 2018. Taken from DANE website <https://www.dane.gov.co> (accessed: 01-26-2026); for Mexico City, based on the censuses of 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020. Taken from INEGI website <https://www.inegi.org.mx> (accessed: 01-26-2026); for Santiago, based on the censuses of 1970, 1982, 1992, 2002, 2012, and 2017. Taken from the INE website <https://regiones.ine.cl/> (accessed: 01-26-2026)

Contreras (2017) proposes a "taxonomy" of the population arriving in the central city, recognizing that this transition does not involve a single type of "gentry," but rather a spectrum of profiles ranging from "gentry to urban precarious" (p. 115).

This distribution is categorized into five types: pioneer gentry, successor gentry, transitory, decadent, and precarious. Each category is defined by five variables: residential choice, socioeconomic level, residential and professional trajectories, occupation, and preferences for urban amenities. These variables provide the analytical foundation for this article, particularly in its third and fourth sections.

## 2. ANALYSING POPULATION TRANSITION IN BOGOTA'S CITY CENTRE

The main objective of this article is to analyse population transition in Bogota's city centre before the arrival of COVID-19, focusing on the territorial aspect of the spatial distribution of population profiles.

To do this, the study compares statistical data from official sources, such as the two most recent population censuses (2005 and 2018) and Bogota's Multipurpose Surveys (BMS 2007 and 2017), with a sample collected in 2021 through social media platforms. This approach was primarily adopted due to mobility restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As noted in the introduction, the choice of this time frame reflects the arrival of COVID-19, which disrupted and reshaped the population trends observed during the first quarter of the century. Therefore, the period from 2000 to 2019 provides sufficient official data for comparative analysis, whereas from 2020 onward, no new population censuses have been conducted. Only demographic projections produced by Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE) are currently available. For this reason, the article emphasizes the pre-pandemic period.

Specifically, the survey methodology was designed in five stages, as follows:

- Defining an area of interest: Considering the interest in understanding Bogota's city centre, behaviour and in line with the analytical units provided by national censuses and BMSs, the area of interest was defined as the three localities that make up the central urban core: La Candelaria, which represents the historic centre; Santa Fe, representing the first pericentral ring, this locality includes, to the north, the financial subsector known as Centro Internacional, and to the south, the low-income neighbourhood called Las Cruces. Los Mártires, situated in the western pericenter, is divided between a northwestern sector known as Voto Nacional, which, before COVID-19, had a mainly commercial and industrial focus, and a southwestern residential, middle-class sector known as the Santa Isabel subsector (Figure 2).

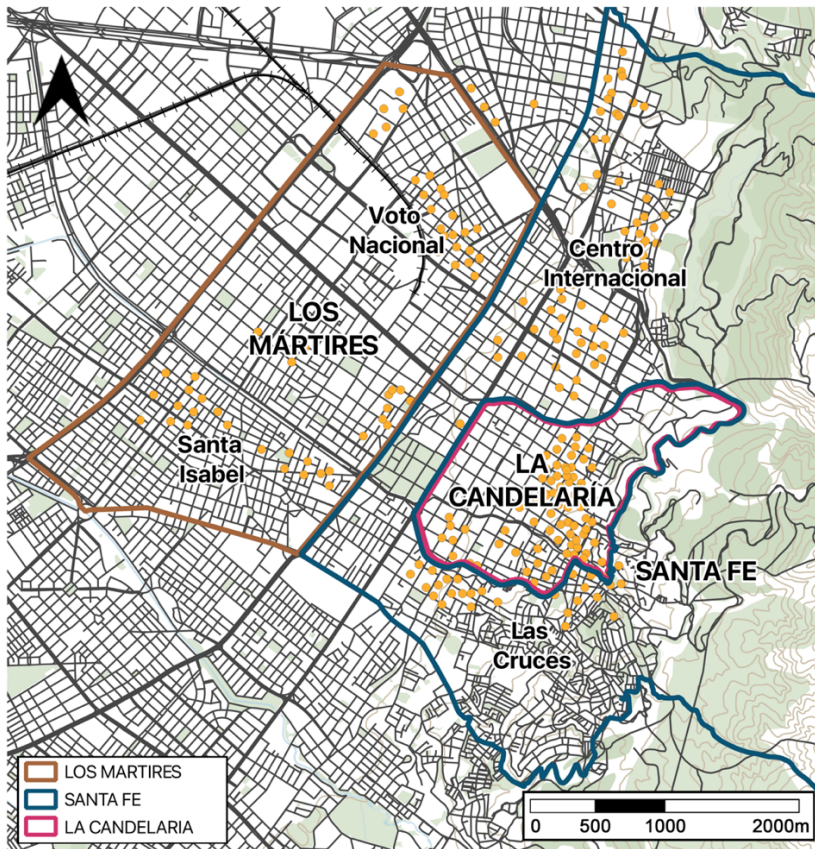


Figure 2: Bogota's city centre and its subregion divisions for this study.

Note: Orange markers represent the spatial distribution of the sample.

Source: Own elaboration based on GIS data from <https://datosabiertos.bogota.gov.co> (accessed: 01-09-2021)

- Design of the Google Forms Questionnaire: The questionnaire comprised 30 items across three sections. All respondents completed the general information section (10 questions). Based on a filter question, the form redirected participants to one of two sections: one for current city centre residents (20 questions) and another for individuals who had lived in the centre between 2000 and 2019 (20 questions).
- Snowball Sampling: The initial distribution method involved a snowball sampling exercise carried out through personal contacts living in the city centre. The form remained open for one month and collected 397 responses. However, after georeferencing the responses, it was clear that

- most were concentrated in the northern and central parts of the city centre, with the western and southern sectors being underrepresented.
- Facebook ADS: The second strategy involved distributing the survey via targeted Facebook ads for one month. This method enabled georeferencing in a specific area and age group, allowing the platform to send the survey link to selected users. In this case, Plaza de Bolívar was chosen as the central point, with a 2-kilometer radius targeting individuals aged 15 and older, who are the main Facebook users. Consequently, the analysis also excluded individuals under 15 years old when comparing survey data with census information. This strategy yielded an additional 306 responses, expanding geographic coverage across the study area.
  - Data Filtering: Using information from both strategies (703 surveys), two criteria were applied to filter the dataset. The first criterion was to verify respondents' ages, excluding individuals under 15 years old because they are underrepresented on Facebook, and are not frequent users of the app. The second criterion was to include only fully completed forms, resulting in 224 valid forms (Snowball: 117; Facebook Ads: 107). Once georeferenced, the sample was relatively homogeneous, with less than 5% variation among the subregions of the area of interest.

It is important to note that this sample (224 cases) is an exploratory survey rather than a statistically representative dataset. Its main purpose is to assess the methodological feasibility of combining social media tools with snowball sampling methods. However, this approach also introduces significant biases, such as unequal internet access and demographic differences in social media use. Therefore, rather than offering definitive conclusions, the goal is to stimulate discussion by comparing these findings with official data sources.

### **3. SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND HOUSEHOLD CONFIGURATION**

The variables used to measure gentrification depend on multiple factors, particularly those related to demographic changes and the access or supply available within a specific area (Bunten et al., 2023; 2), whether concerning commercial uses, services, or, as analysed in this article, housing.

Central city areas tend to be places where diverse population profiles coexist (tourists, workers, residents). However, those most affected by gentrification are precisely the residents of these neighbourhoods. Therefore, the population analysis presented below focuses solely on the city centre's inhabitants.

### **3.1. The sociodemographic profile of the “gentry” in Bogota’s city centre**

This section outlines the main sociodemographic characteristics of the survey sample, aiming to identify the population profiles currently residing in Bogota’s city centre, as well as those who lived there at some point between 2000 and 2019.

The variables analysed include educational attainment, marital status, and employment. These aspects are particularly relevant for understanding the demographic changes, population replacement, and socio-spatial transformation that have occurred in the central area over the past two decades.

#### **3.1.1. Educational attainment**

One consistent finding across various studies is that the "gentry" demographic is usually characterised not only by youthfulness, as evidenced by the increasing presence of young individuals in these areas, but also by higher levels of education and more skilled employment. These attributes confer greater purchasing power and engagement in more expensive consumption patterns than those of the local population.

The UNESCO and IESALC (2020) report emphasize the global trend of increasing access to university education, particularly among middle and upper-middle-class segments, which corresponds with demographic shifts in central urban areas. Since both the survey and the census-based analysis exclude individuals under 15 years of age, the educational categories considered were limited to: basic education, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels.

When examining Figure 2, which compares the changes between the 2005 and 2018 censuses with the survey conducted for this research, it is clear that across the three localities, there is an overall proportional decrease in the share of individuals with only basic education, along with an increase in higher educational attainment.

Nevertheless, the most notable finding is that Santa Fe has the highest proportion of residents with postgraduate education. However, when analysing the subdivision provided by the survey, a clear internal contrast emerges: in the northern sector, within Centro Internacional, there is a stronger presence of individuals with postgraduate education, whereas in the southern sector, Las Cruces residents are mostly educated at the basic level.

This division underscores the persistent challenges faced by southern subregions in closing the gap with their northern counterparts. Limited educational attainment in Las Cruces may be connected to historical underinvestment in public services and infrastructure, as well as limited access to quality educational institutions.

The implications of this divide are profound, suggesting that residents in these areas may face limited opportunities for upward mobility, further entrenching cycles of poverty and marginalization.

This pattern reflects broader urban socio-spatial inequalities that have long characterised the spatial distribution of educational attainment in Bogota (García & Mayorga, 2026). This concentration is not merely the product of individual educational achievement but is closely linked with the availability of resources, infrastructure, and networks that facilitate access to higher education.

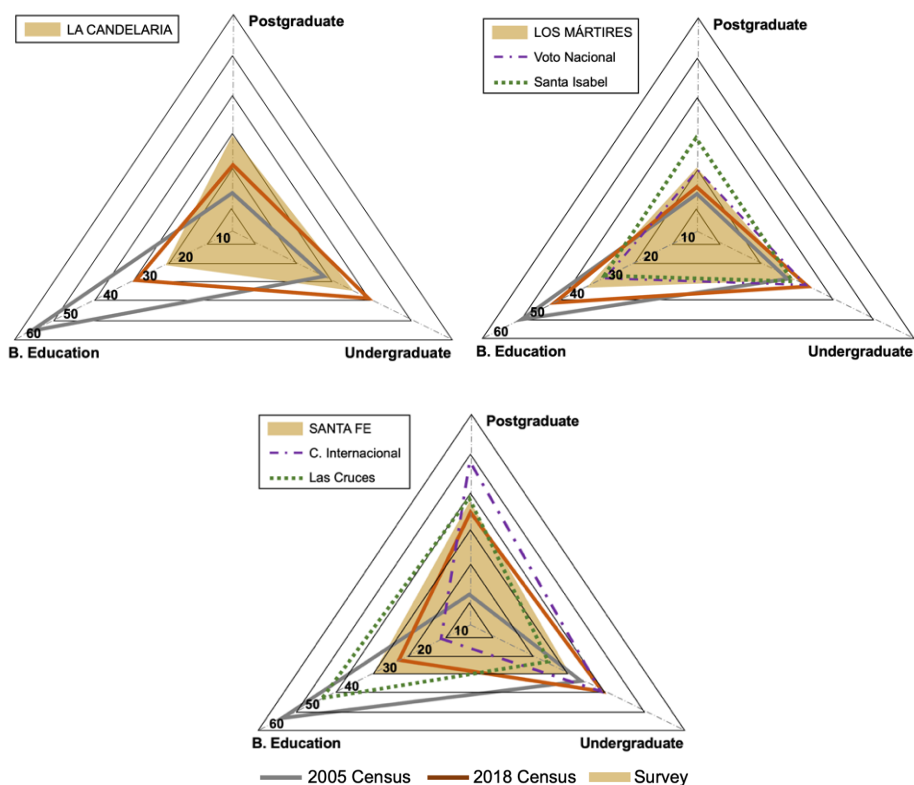


Figure 3: Percentage change in educational attainment among the population over 15 years old.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research and DANE

2005: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/censo-general-2005-1>

2018: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/censo-nacional-de-poblacion-y-vivenda-2018> (accessed: 21-01-2026)

### 3.1.2. Marital status

The sample analysed in this article shows that, on one hand, the proportion of single individuals in the central city is predominant, regardless of the sector in

which they reside. On the other hand, even within this trend, a significant portion of the population is engaged or in a relationship.

Analysing marital status across different subregions of Bogota's city centre provides important insights into the social fabric and household patterns of these areas. The predominance of singles aligns with broader urban trends, in which central areas often attract younger, unmarried people due to the availability of amenities, employment opportunities, and social activities.

However, even within this trend, data shows that a significant portion of the population is engaged or in a relationship (around 20%), highlighting that these central areas are not only for singles but also for those in committed relationships.

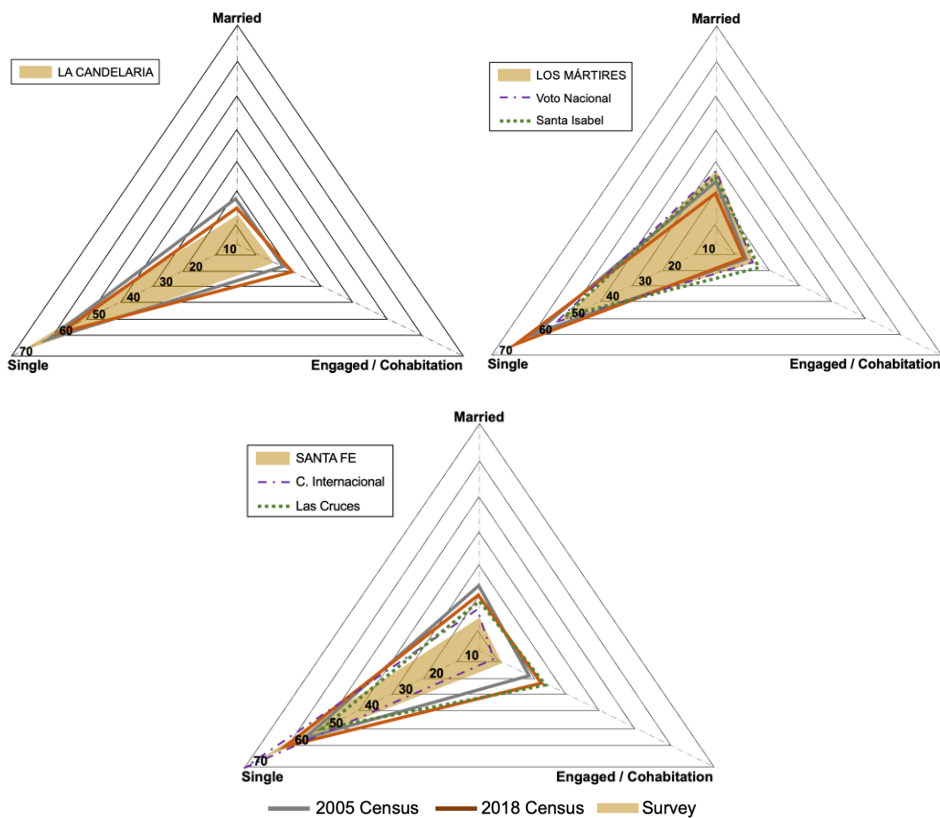


Figure 4: Percentage change in marital status among the population over 15 years ago/ Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research and DANE. 2005: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/censo-general-2005-1> 2018: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/demografia-y-poblacion/censo-nacional-de-poblacion-y-vivenda-2018> (accessed: 21-01-2026)

One notable finding is the representation of married individuals, particularly in Las Cruces. This area, which has a more residential character than other parts of the city centre, likely provides a more stable family-oriented environment, making it attractive to married couples. The presence of married individuals in this neighbourhood may also suggest that this subregion has preserved traditional family structure, even as other parts of the city centre have become livelier and more transient.

Additionally, the distribution of marital status in areas such as La Candelaria, Voto Nacional, and Las Cruces may reflect the socioeconomic conditions and cultural norms of these subregions. For instance, in subregions with higher concentrations of lower-income households, the decision to marry might be influenced by economic factors, such as the need for dual incomes or sharing housing costs.

In contrast, in more affluent areas like Centro Internacional, the decision to remain single may reflect a career focus and personal independence, often associated with higher education and economic status (Díaz Parra, 2023).

### 3.1.3. Occupation

The occupational status across the different subregions of Bogota's city centre reveals diverse economic activities and reflects the socio-economic stratification within the urban core. Regarding the proportion of students living in the city centre, it is notable that although universities in the area are primarily located in La Candelaria and the pericentral zone, only around 10% of respondents are university students who can afford the high rents.

This suggests that the high cost of living in the Centro constitutes a barrier to students, despite its proximity to educational institutions. The low student enrolment may also indicate that they prefer more affordable housing options in nearby areas, despite the convenience of living closer to their universities.

However, it is also noteworthy that Las Cruces has the largest student population, matching the proportion established in the EMB 2017. This could result not only from the family-based residential character described earlier, but also from the fact that housing in this area is significantly cheaper than in La Candelaria (Moreno Iregui, 2016).

The phenomenon of self-employment is also noteworthy, highlighting the varied economic landscape in Bogota's central areas. These independent workers can be divided into three main groups: those engaged in sex work, representing a significant portion of the Voto Nacional subregion; individuals involved in informal trade, typically located in sectors such as Santa Isabel; and a more contemporary trend of skilled professionals offering their services, potentially concentrated in the Centro Internacional. The presence of these groups

underscores the diverse and often informal nature of the local economy, particularly in areas where traditional employment opportunities may be limited.

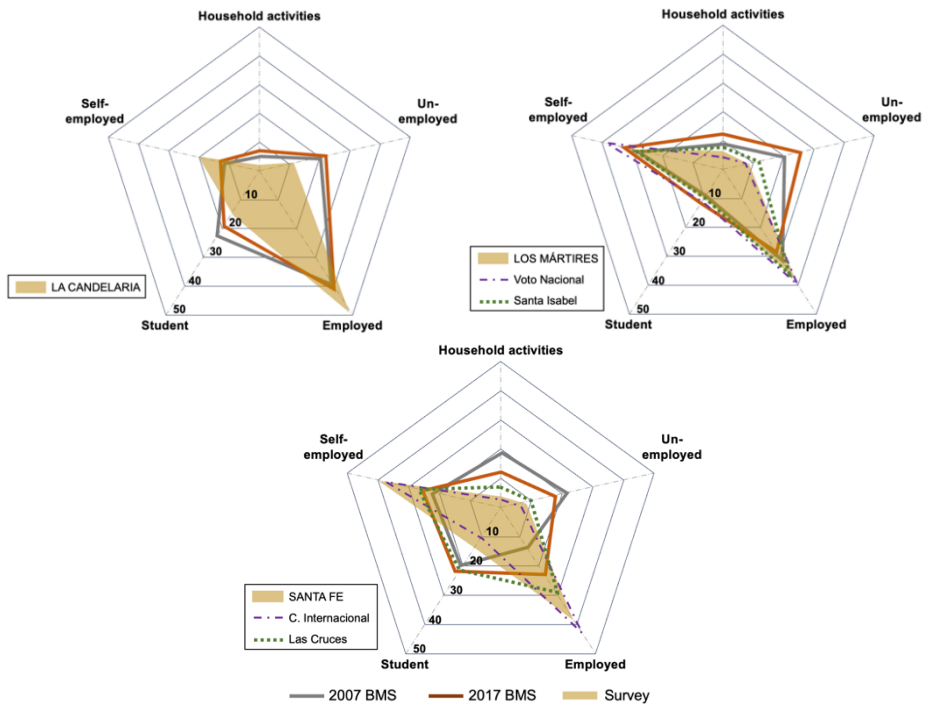


Figure 5: Percentage change in occupational status among the population over 15 years old.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research and DANE.

2007: <https://microdatos.dane.gov.co/index.php/catalog/189> ;

2017: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/pobreza-y-condiciones-de-vida/encuesta-multiproposito/encuesta-multiproposito-2017> (accessed: 21-01-2026)

This brief sociodemographic characterisation, based on three factors describing individuals aged 15 and older currently residing in the city centre, begins to confirm the presence of a gentrifying population in areas such as Centro Internacional. In this sector, it is relatively easier to find an employed individual with a postgraduate degree who is single or part of a young couple.

In contrast, in the southern sector, different groups emerge who do not fit as easily into the gentrifier profile: more traditional married families engaged in informal commerce, whose highest levels of education are often limited to basic schooling or undergraduate training. In the western sector, the profile appears more homogeneous, with middle-class workers holding undergraduate degrees, mostly employed or engaged in informal trade.

### 3.2. Changes in household configuration

Indicators of household composition are less frequently studied in gentrification research than the socioeconomic factors discussed earlier. However, as noted in the paper introduction, they are crucial for understanding population transition processes in the city centre.

Housing is undoubtedly one of the sectors most affected by gentrification, along with local commerce. The impact is most evident in variables such as residential mobility, tenure, rental prices, number of inhabitants per dwelling, and the types of relationships among cohabitants.

#### 3.2.1. Residential mobility

One of the most challenging indicators to study is residential mobility, particularly because intercensal periods tend to be long, and the population in the centre exhibits high mobility rates. Specifically for Bogota's city centre, data are available only for 2005 and 2018, which means many mobility practices are underestimated, as shown below.

At first glance, a notable feature is that most of the sample population has lived in the centre for relatively short periods, ranging from 1 to 5 years. This is a particularly relevant observation and responds to two main factors. The first is the high proportion of undergraduate students in the initial age bracket of 16 to 25 years. Additionally, young professionals are also moving into the centre, many of whom work in government offices that remain located in this sector. This statement is supported by the proportion of respondents who have lived in the centre for less than a year, primarily comprising these two population groups.

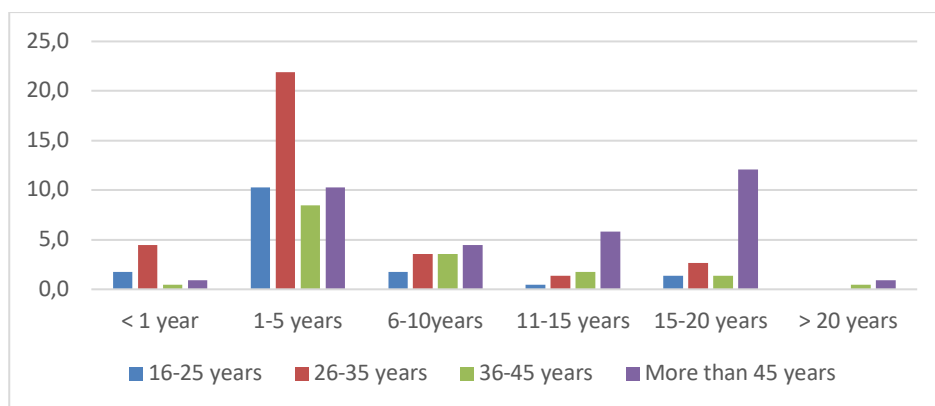


Figure 6: Relationship between respondent's age and their length of stay in the city centre. / Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research

Although the number of people who have lived there for 6 to 10 years is less representative, it is notable that the largest group in this bracket comprises individuals aged 36 to 45, who are often career public servants who have remained in the centre. Additionally, according to trends reported by Sepúlveda (2017) for Bogota's city centre, older individuals, typically aged 45 and above, are less likely to relocate than younger age groups.

Territorially, a key point to highlight is that most of the population aged 45 is located in the southwest, specifically in the Santa Isabel subregion. This corresponds to one of the areas that has undergone fewer transformations in the centre.

Meanwhile, the area with the highest concentration of young people is La Candelaria, where most universities are located. However, a more detailed analysis discussed in the conclusions shows that these areas have apparently received less government and private investment and have therefore proven less vulnerable to gentrification.

### **3.2.2. Tenure**

It is essential to understand the configuration of these new households as a complementary aspect of the transformation of the population profiles. This helps us to explore whether there has been a change in how people inhabit Bogota's city centre.

Undoubtedly, the central area is primarily occupied by tenants. In most sectors, over 50% of residents rent. However, Santa Isabel stands out as the only sector that retains the highest percentage of family-owned homes and has nearly equal proportions of renters and homeowners. Across these categories, in Voto Nacional, Santa Isabel, and Las Cruces, nearly 50% of the population lives in private homes, as these sectors are characterised by traditional residential neighbourhoods. This differs from La Candelaria, where, despite being Bogota's foundational sector, most of its population lives in rental housing (García & Mayorca, 2026).

At the same time that a significant number of people live in owned housing in this subregion, it should not be overlooked that a significant portion of other housing types are tenements. Although these were traditionally located in La Candelaria and Las Cruces, the area where they have remained most strongly is the western sector. Therefore, in the sample, a significant difference is observed relative to official EMB measurements, which do not capture this housing typology.

It is striking that, although the socio-economic profile typically associated with the Centro Internacional subregion aligns with expectations for gentrification, purchasing power, while higher, still does not match that of other areas, such as European cases, where gentrifiers may afford to buy large urban

properties. Thus, it is crucial to underscore these differences in the phenomenon between the Global North and the Global South (Díaz Parra, 2023).

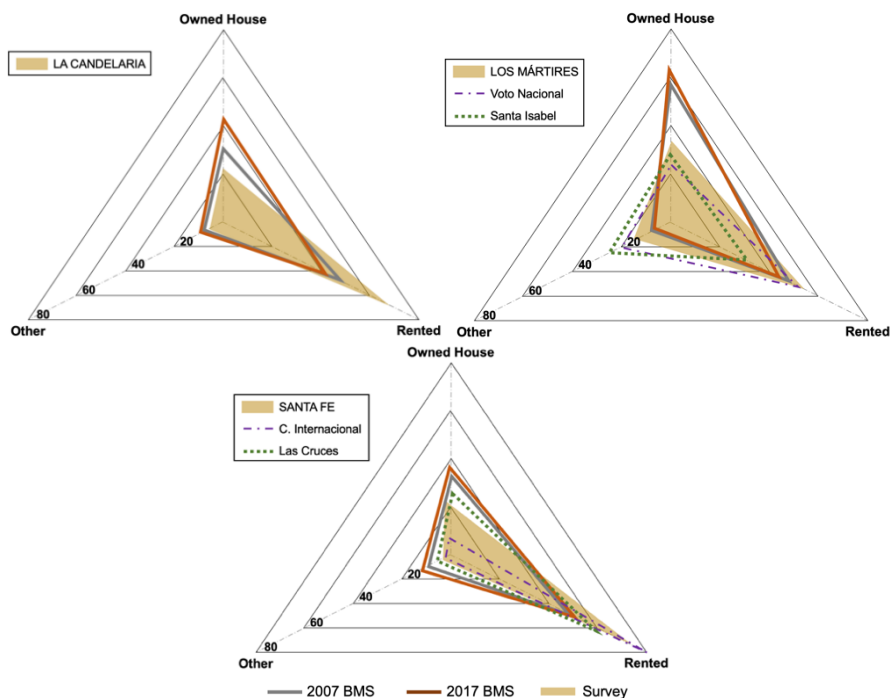


Figure 7: Percentage change in housing tenure among the population over 15 years old.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research and DANE.

2007: <https://microdatos.dane.gov.co/index.php/catalog/189> ;

2017: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/pobreza-y-condiciones-de-vida/encuesta-multiproposito/encuesta-multiproposito-2017> (accessed: 21-01-2026)

### 3.2.3. Rent Prices

Although Figure 8 should be interpreted as indicative only, due to the small sample size and limited statistical representativeness, it still reveals elements that reinforce socio-spatial segregation.

The first element that catches the eye in this figure is that, contrary to traditional models from the Chicago School of Urban Ecology, which argued that the centre (La Candelaria) is the location with the highest rental values, here it becomes evident that although La Candelaria maintained this condition during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, later developments altered this pattern. With the construction of new real estate projects and the development of the northern sector, this area underwent a significant transformation. As a result, in only a 20-year period, rental values increased by 100%.

This gap not only led to a sharp increase in prices within the same neighbourhood, but also expanded the difference between subregions: while between 2000 and 2004 the difference was approximately 400 dollars, by 2015-2019 it grew to 800 dollars. Thus, an exclusive space begins to emerge for certain population groups who can afford these rental prices.

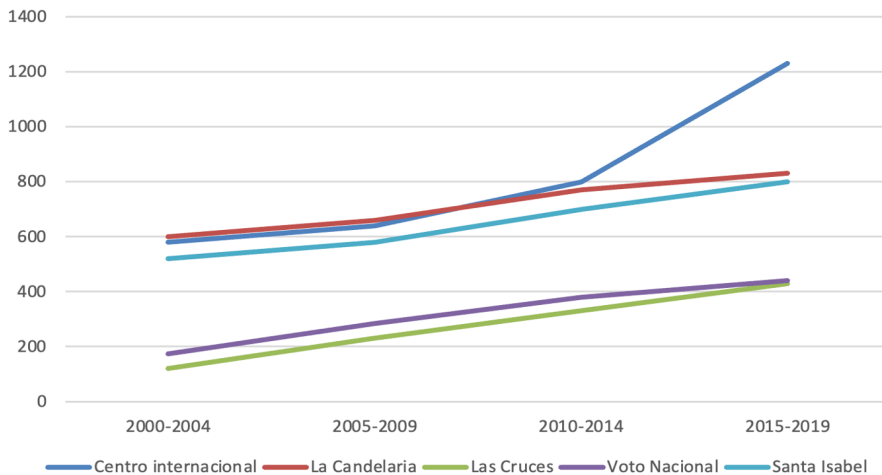


Figure 8: Rise in rental prices in the central city.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research

It is also notable that, unlike other Latin American cities where academics refer to a poverty pericenter surrounding the centre, Bogotá presents a small middle-class axis, with Santa Isabel situated there, offering more affordable prices than La Candelaria and the northern pericentral area.

### 3.2.4. Inhabitants in the household

Family structures are decreasing worldwide, which is why it is increasingly common to find households composed of fewer people. However, in the central areas of Latin America, it is still possible to find dwellings in which more than one family lives. Naturally, extended households are more prevalent in this variable. In studies such as those by Jeisson Cárdenas, Francisco Chau, and Jesús Otero (2019), the prevalence of two or three-room apartments is associated with larger household sizes.

While in sectors such as La Candelaria and Los Mártires, the differences in EMB data stay below 10%, indicating a marked presence of households with three or more cohabitants, the most significant divergence again occurs in Santa Fe.

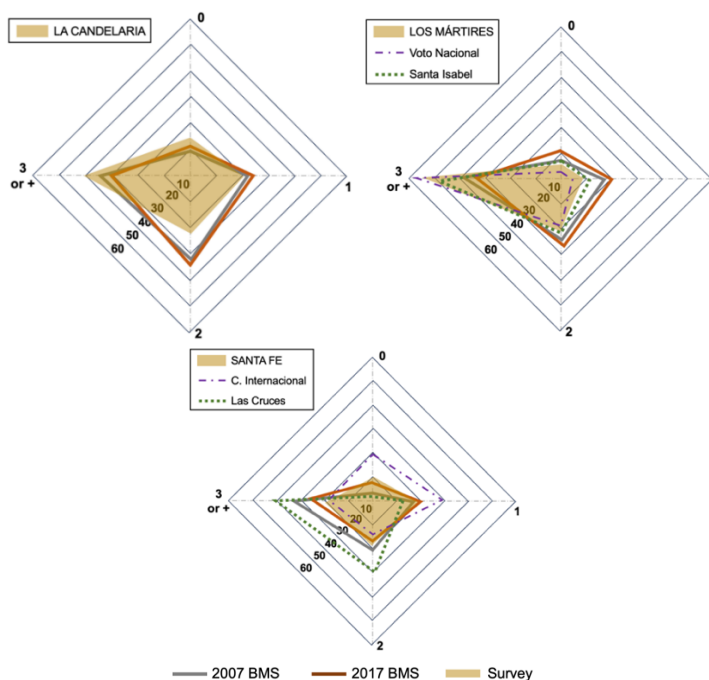


Figure 9: Percentage change in the number of cohabitants per dwelling.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research and DANE.

2007: <https://microdatos.dane.gov.co/index.php/catalog/189> ;

2017: <https://www.dane.gov.co/index.php/estadisticas-por-tema/pobreza-y-condiciones-de-vida/encuesta-multiproposito/encuesta-multiproposito-2017> (accessed: 21-01-2026)

Although the overall average matches official demographic data, within the Centro Internacional subregion, there is a strong tendency to avoid sharing housing or to live with only one additional relative. This pattern aligns with the new housing model currently being developed there. In contrast, Las Cruces tends to have larger households, fuelled by the persistence of tenement housing and family traditions of larger households. This becomes clearer in the analysis of the next variable.

### 3.2.5. Type of roommates

As with other variables examined in this study, censuses, or, in this case, the Bogota Multipurpose Survey, aim to measure the number of families living in a household. But there is no clarity regarding the nature of the relationship among these families. This is a key issue for this article, as it allows differentiation

between a traditional extended-family household and a precarious dwelling in which a large number of unrelated acquaintances cohabit.

In this sense, for example, the survey shows that in sectors such as Santa Isabel and Las Cruces, more than 60% of residents cohabit with relatives. A similar proportion is observed in Voto Nacional, where a significant share of the population cohabiting with tenants may be living in tenement housing.

La Candelaria is one of the sectors with a more evenly distributed range of roommate types, and, like other city centre in the region, it offers all kinds of housing arrangements.

Finally, Centro Internacional represents a particularly distinctive case, not only because it is the only sector in which nearly 20% of the population does not share housing, but also because almost 40% of households share housing with a partner. This corresponds to the description of gentrifying subjects as young, unmarried couples.

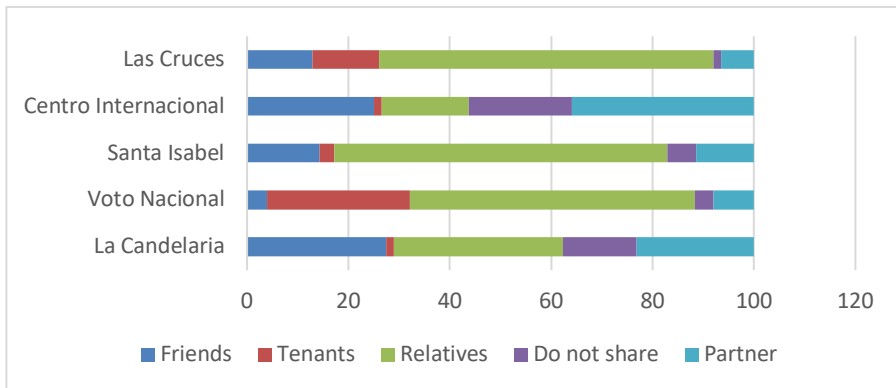


Figure 10: Relationship between subregions and the number of roommates.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research

The territorial distribution of these household characteristics highlights the complexity of gentrification in Bogota's city centre. While certain areas, like Centro Internacional, align with global gentrification trends, in which new residents are more likely to be single, highly educated professionals, other areas, such as Santa Isabel and Las Cruces, retain a strong presence of families.

This territorial analysis suggests that gentrification in Bogota, like in other cities, does not follow a uniform pattern but is shaped by local factors, including historical residential patterns, economic opportunities, and the availability of affordable housing.

Understanding these nuances is essential for developing targeted policies that address the specific needs of each subregion, whether by preserving the social

fabric in more traditional areas or by managing the influx of new residents in rapidly changing regions.

#### **4. AN APPROACH TO THE POPULATION TRANSITION OF THE CENTRAL CITY, AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PROFILE OF GENTRIFICATION TO PRECARIOUSNESS**

The previous sections aimed to question whether we could speak of a "gentrification" of Bogota's city centre, or whether, on the contrary, this assertion should allow us to understand that there is room not only to discuss the singular gentrifying subject, but also to discuss the different layers of population that have arrived in the centre, including the urban precarious.

In this context, and following the classification proposed by Contreras (2017), a matrix has been developed as a primary conclusion, serving as a snapshot of what has occurred in Bogota's central city and its distribution across the five proposed subregions.

Although Figure 11 is based only on survey data, it may serve as a foundation for future research exploring how gentrification is discussed in the city's central areas.

In this regard, a value was assigned to each response based on the variables studied in Section 3 of this article. The maximum value of 3 was given to characteristics that most closely matched the prototypical profile of the gentrifier, whereas a value of 1 was assigned to new inhabitants of the sector who diverged from that profile. This was implemented as follows:

The category socioeconomic structure comprises:

- Maximum Educational level (3pts: Postgraduate; 2 pts: Undergraduate; 1 pt: Basic education).
- Marital Status (3 pts: Single or engaged; 2 pts: Married; 1 pts: Divorced or Separated).
- Occupation (3 pts: Self-employed professional; 2 pts: Employee; 1pt: University student).

The category Household configurations are the following:

- Residential mobility (3 pts: Less than five years; 2 pts: Between 6 and 15 years living in the sector; 1pt: More than 15 years).
- Tenure (3 pts: More than 80% live in owned homes; 2 pts: Between 80-70% live in owned homes; 1pt: Between 70% and 60% live in owned homes).
- Rent prices (3 pts: More than USD 400; 2 pts: Between USD 400-300; 1pt: Between USD 299 and 200).

- Number of inhabitants in the same house (3 pts: Does not share; 2 pts: Shares with one person; 1pt: Shares with two persons),
- Type of roommate. (3 pts: Does not share, 2 pts: Partner; 1pt: Friends).

The aggregated scores were disaggregated across the five sectors of the study area to determine the percentage of the population in each of the categories proposed by Contreras (2017). It is important to emphasize that Figure 11, created from the sample gathered for this research, illustrates the sociodemographic distribution in Bogota's city centre.

	Pioneer gentry (24-20 points)	Successor gentry (19-15 points)	Transitory (14-10 points)	Decadent (9-5 points)	Precarious (Less than 5 points)
Centro Internacional	As shown, one of the most gentrified sectors, meeting nearly all the criteria proposed in the theoretical framework, is located in this area. (52,5%)	Although the majority of the population in this zone could be classified as 'pioneer gentry,' there is also a significant presence of 'successor gentry,' particularly in the older housing developments. (39,5%)		Due to the high socioeconomic status of this area, there is only a minimal presence of new decadents or precarious. Even profiles such as students are rare in this subregion. (2,3%)	
La Candelaria	Although it cannot be argued that group has a definitive presence in the area, pioneers and successor gentries, in La Candelaria there are still traditional inhabitants who partially fit this profile, including tourists, university students, and public employees. (21,5%)		Most likely in La Candelaria, particularly among students and young professionals residing there, these categories are strongly represented. (48.3%)	However, La Candelaria still contains some deteriorated areas, particularly along the southern and southwestern edges where decadents arrive. (20,1%)	The gentrification process in this sector has displaced most precarious residents from the area (5.6%)
Santa Isabel	The analyzed data do not allow us to conclude that there is a strong presence of pioneer or successor gentries in these subregions. (7.2%)		Most neighborhoods within this sector remain traditional areas with low levels of urban and housing deficiencies (60.3%)	The specific locations within these subregions where precarious residents remain are limited and spatially concentrated (32.5%)	
Voto Nacional	The analyzed data do not allow us to conclude that there is a strong presence of pioneer or successor gentries in these subregions. (7.2%)		A small, underrepresented group with this sector consist of migrants seeking affordable housing while they establish themselves in the city. However, in some cases, they end up remaining under precarious conditions. (39.9%)		Probably the largest concentration of urban precarious is likely found around this 'low-rent cone', characterized by resident with low educational attainment and housing structures composed of multiple households. (56.9%)
Las Cruces	This is not suggest that gentries are entirely absent from these neighborhoods, particularly in Las Cruces, where its direct connection with La Candelaria is fundamental. However, these groups still do not reach the purchasing power of those defined as pioneer gentries. (15.2%)	Due to its close relationship with La Candelaria, and with new projects emerging along the southern border of the historic centre, some successor gentries have begun to arrive. (-21.3%)	A group that clearly fits within the category of transitory residents includes students, as well as public sector employees identified in one of the analyses. (-23.5%)	Although Las Cruces sector is historically one of the city's earliest working-class neighborhoods, its population often summed to be predominantly precarious, has experienced social mobility that has allowed many residents to overcome several structural deficiencies. (40%)	
	<b>HIGH PROPORTION</b> ( > 40 of the sample)	<b>MEDIUM PROPORTION</b> (40- 20% of the sample)		<b>LOW PROPORTION</b> ( < 20 % of the sample)	

Figure 11: Relationship between subregions and different layers of population.

Source: Own elaboration, based on a survey made for this research

Here, the northern subregion is experiencing significant gentrification. Conversely, La Candelaria serves as a point of articulation between the sociodemographic conditions of the south and north, resulting in greater population layers. However, a significant portion of the precarious inhabitants remains in the south. Despite this, its connection with La Candelaria, there is intense pressure from the arrival of some successor gentries.

As a particular case, the western sector of the historic centre presents an inversion of the typical 'north-south' structure. In this case, the Voto Nacional subregion, which has historically included areas of prostitution, drug trafficking, and significant urban deterioration, is reflected in its classification by having a high number of precarious individuals (Cardeño Mejía, 2017). Meanwhile, in the southwestern area and at the socioeconomic level of the central city, there is a strong presence of what Contreras (2017) defined as the 'transitory' category, which in these neighbourhoods correspond to families from traditional middle and working-class backgrounds.

## 5. FURTHER INSIGHTS

Key findings highlight the emergence of a new urban demographic in Bogota's city centre, characterised by higher educational attainment, increasing professional diversity, and shifting household configurations. These transformations reflect broader global trends related to urbanization, individualization, and the revitalization of central urban spaces.

Furthermore, the spatial distribution of population profiles across the central city underscores the importance of attending to localized dynamics and historical trajectories when analysing gentrification processes. While some areas experience rapid socioeconomic transformation driven by both public investment and private redevelopment, others exhibit resilience or resistance rooted in community networks, affordability constraints, and the ongoing presence of cultural and heritage-based identities.

From a methodological perspective, combining official census data with this pilot survey effectively fills the significant information gaps common during long intercensal periods, when dynamic population changes often go unnoticed. By bridging these gaps for the period after the last census and accounting for structural shifts caused by COVID-19, this approach offers a different strategy to capture current urban mobility. This methodological feasibility enables an exploratory yet rigorous "snapshot" that is particularly relevant to current international discussions on urbanism and gentrification, where traditional statistics often fail to reflect real-time socio-spatial changes.

In this sense, the evidence suggests that gentrification in Bogota cannot be understood solely through the lens of a single "gentrifying subject." Traditional approaches often mistake all new arrivals to the city centre as prototypical

gentrifiers; however, our findings reveal a more complex layering of population. Beyond the common narrative of a “return to the centre”, demographic changes show that many original inhabitants have not come back. Here, pioneer and successor gentrifiers coexist with transitory residents, traditional middle-class working households, and precarious urban sectors. Recognizing this diversity is key to moving beyond the binary of “gentrifiers versus displaced,” allowing for a more nuanced understanding of how different social groups inhabit and transform the urban core.

Moving forward, policymakers and urban planners must adopt holistic approaches that balance economic revitalization with social equity and cultural preservation. This is especially important for the *Plan Especial de Manejo y Protección*, (PEMP) of Bogota's city centre, which serves as the key regulatory and management framework for this area. Instead of focusing solely on conserving the built heritage, the PEMP must incorporate social factors that prioritize the inhabitants who embody and sustain this heritage. Promoting inclusive growth strategies, such as rent regulation, protection of affordable housing, and support for communities, is essential. By shifting the focus from urban aesthetics alone to the socio-cultural fabric of residents, Bogota's city centre can transcend the risks of exclusionary gentrification and become an inclusive, diverse urban hub in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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