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New Trends in the Structuring of Andalusia

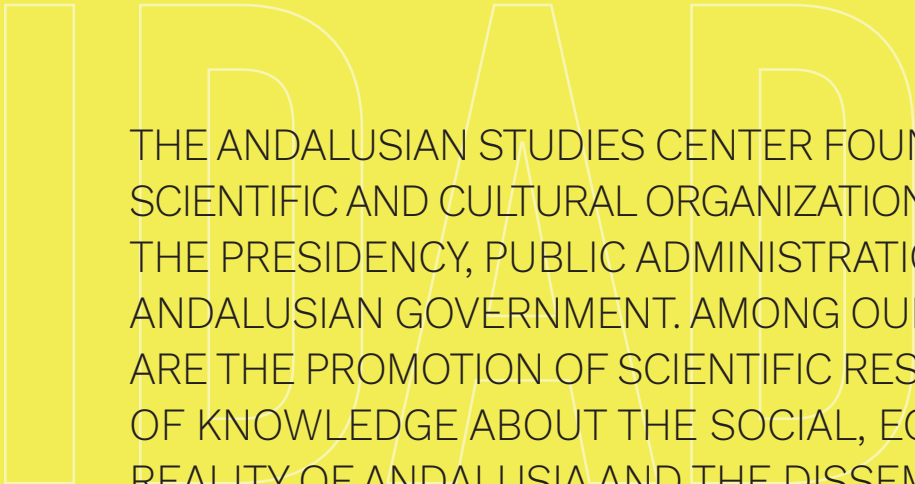
Territory, Population and
Family in the 21st Century



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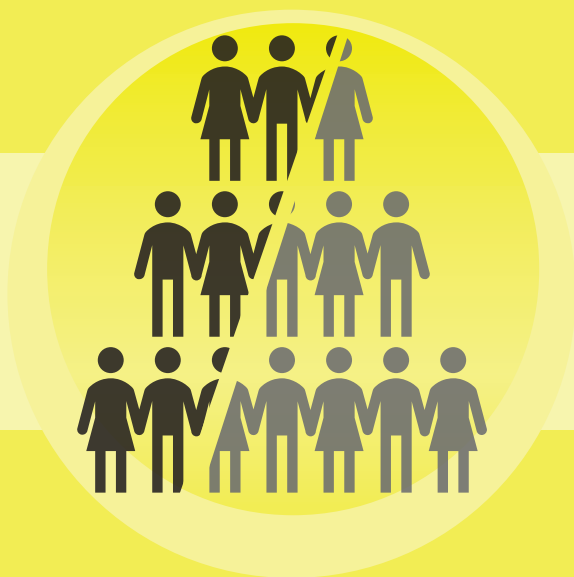
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New Trends in the Structuring of Andalusia

Territory, Population and
Family in the 21st Century

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1. Introduction

Andalusia is heading towards a new model of society following the trends of the new information and knowledge societies (Torres, 2015). This phenomenon represents an important change both in our values and in our social and economic structures. One of the most visible aspects of this transformation concerns the dynamics of the population and its distribution throughout the territory. There are at least two major global trends in which both our country and Andalusia are immersed. On the one hand, the effects of the so-called *second demographic transition* (Van de Kaa, 1987), which predicts a decrease in mortality accompanied by a collapse in fertility as characteristic phenomena of the most industrialized societies, and, on the other hand, the tendency of the population to concentrate in large and well communicated urban communities, supported by new technologies and interconnected with centers of economic dynamism, services and opportunities. The development of these highly interrelated cities, in a context of globalization, would give rise to the so-called network society (Castells, 1996).

The impact of these two trends can already be seen in our autonomous community, the most highly populated in Spain, which has seen its population increase by approximately 1.1 million since the beginning of the 21st century. However, this growth has not been homogeneous, as 54% of Andalusian municipalities have fewer inhabitants today than in 2000 (IECA, 2020). The trends point to higher concentrations of population in the provincial capitals and a decrease in medium and small municipalities. These changes in geographic distribution are also accompanied by demographic changes associated with longer life expectancy, a gradual decline in fertility and a decrease in the number of individuals per household. All these indicators, which are not uniformly reflected throughout the territory, are evident in the households and in the Andalusian families themselves, which are becoming true «laboratories» catalysts of social transformation.

The aim of this booklet in the *Actualidad* collection of the Andalusian Stud-

ies Center is to present the trends in the Andalusian panorama, which are shaping the new characteristics of Andalusian social reality. On the basis of these trends, we can reflect on the change of cycle in which we find ourselves. This is the best way to understand our weaknesses and the important demands that as a society we will face in the future, but also to be able to see the new opportunities that this situation will bring.

This booklet has been structured in five sections, together with the introduction and conclusions. The first section presents the demographic evolution experienced by the Andalusian population by territory, taking into account the new structural networks that are emerging by geographic area. The second section delves into some of the most significant features of our population structure, such as fertility, aging and the impact of these variables on household composition. The third section focuses on families and their main needs in terms of emancipation and the reconciliation of work and private life. The fourth deals with the analysis of the rural population, from the difficulties of defining it within an increasingly global society, to the characteristics of this new Andalusian rurality. The fifth section reviews the impact of migration on our community and its role as a key factor in the configuration of new cities. The booklet ends with some conclusions by way of reflection.

This text is intended to give a global vision of the Andalusian situation. The authors are aware that each of the sections dealt with could have given rise to a monographic study, but they sought to provide a more general overview. The text was written in an effort to make it straightforward and easy to read for all audiences, with descriptive but enlightening information to facilitate discussion. The authors would like to thank the director and managers of the Andalusian Studies Center for their invitation to participate in this collection.

2. Evolution and transformation of the Andalusian population

The Andalusian population has experienced considerable growth since the beginning of the 20th century. Throughout the past century, the population in Andalusia doubled, with the number of people registered in our community rising from 3.5 million in 1900 to just over 7.3 million inhabitants in 2000 (INE, 2020). Currently, the Andalusian population is 8.4 million (IECA, 2020). This population expansion has not been homogeneous in three fundamental aspects: the growth rate in each period, the reasons that have generated this population increase and the territories where it has taken place.

Until the end of the 1950s, the growth rate was between 4.8‰ and 12.9‰ per year, values which, although higher, can be considered similar to the trend shown in the rest of Spain (Table 1). In the 1960s, despite the fact that the balance between births and deaths was the highest on record (+937,793), the population increased by only 51,000 due to the extraordinary emigration that the Andalusian community had to endure during this period. It is estimated that between the 1950s and

1970s some two million people left Andalusia mainly for other Spanish regions and European countries (Recaño, 1998). At this stage, the Andalusian reality was clearly different from what was taking place in the rest of the country, where notable population growth was recorded.

From the 1970s to the end of the 20th century, growth was around 7‰ per year. Since 1990, migratory movements sustained continuous population growth, reaching an average annual rate of 13.9‰ in the first decade of the 21st century. Since 2010, and due to the effects of the economic crisis, population growth has stagnated, due to both a low number of births and a more stable migration balance. In 2012, Andalusia reached the highest number of inhabitants in its history with 8,449,985 people registered. The latest official data as of January 1, 2019 report a total of 8,414,240 inhabitants in Andalusia. The continued decline in the birth rate, which has increased since 2008, led to the first negative birth rate in our history in 2018, when 1,777 more people died than were born (INE, 2019).

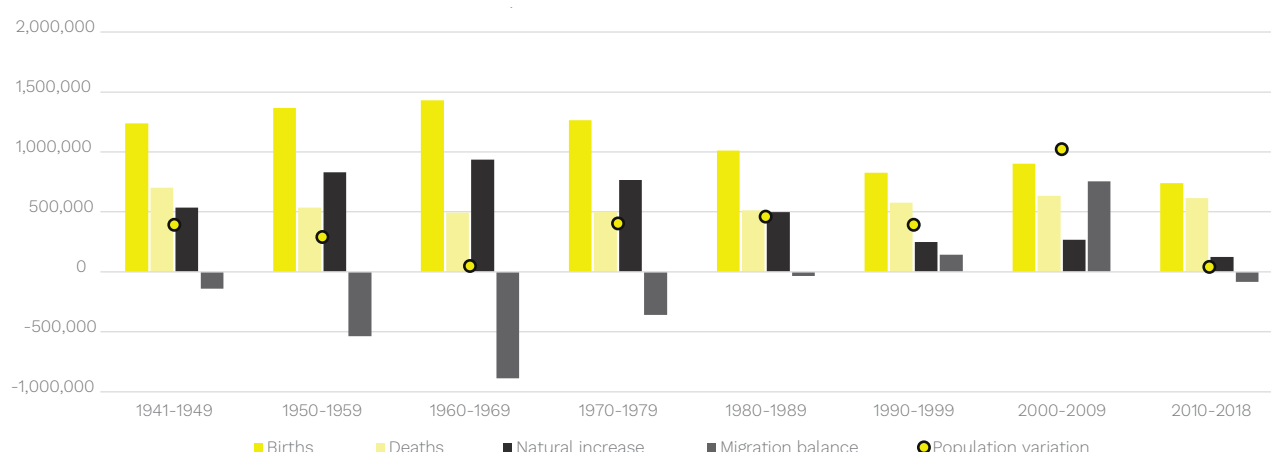
The factors that plot the population curves are the relationship between births and deaths and migratory movements (Figure 1). Although Andalusia shares a certain similarity with the rest of Spain, it has experienced asynchronous behavior with respect to other communities. Nevertheless, the current population trend is very similar to that of other Spanish regions.

Table 1. Evolution of the Andalusian population 1900-2019

Year	Population in thousands	1900 = 100%	Period	Variation in thousands	Mean annual growth rate (‰)	
					Andalusia	Spain
1900	3,545	100.0				
1910	3,800	107.2	1900-1909	256	7.0	7.8
1920	4,222	119.1	1910-1919	421	10.6	7.8
1930	4,627	130.5	1920-1929	405	9.3	8.8
1940	5,254	148.2	1930-1939	627	12.9	9.4
1950	5,647	159.3	1940-1949	393	6.8	6.6
1960	5,940	167.6	1950-1959	293	4.8	8.9
1970	5,991	169.0	1960-1969	51	0.8	10.1
1981	6,441	181.7	1970-1980	450	6.6	10.1
1991	6,941	195.8	1981-1990	500	7.5	3.3
2000 (*)	7,340	207.1	1991-1999	399	6.2	4.5
2010 (*)	8,371	236.2	2000-2009	1,031	13.9	16.2
2019 (*)	8,414	237.4	2010-2018	43	0.6	0.0

Source: own elaboration from the INE Censuses (1900 to 1991).

(*) Municipal Register (2000 to 2019).

Figure 1. Evolution of the population in Andalusia (1941-2018)

Source: own elaboration from the INE Censuses (1941 to 1991), Municipal Register of the IECA (2000 to 2018) and Vital Statistics.

As in the rest of Spain, since the beginning of the 20th century there has been a notable territorial expansion of population centers (Esteve, *et al.*, 2017). This growth in urbanization ended in the 1930s and 1940s. The economic crisis of this era, the civil war and the post-war period led to a large settlement of the population in the territory, which stimulated considerable natural growth in rural areas. From the 1950s and 1960s, we witnessed the great rural exodus of the population, prompted by the overpopulation of the rural world in the previous period (Esteve, *et al.*, 2017). In Andalusia, this emigration to other territories was considerable, as can be seen in Figure 1. This resulted in a minimal increase in population from 1960-1969.

While the positive natural population balance has been gradually decreasing to the present day, the migration balance shifted from predominant emigration to notable immigration that culminated in the early years of the 21st century (Aza-gra, *et al.*, 2007). From the 1980s onwards, rural-urban migration decreased considerably. The consequences of the oil crisis of the 1970s had contracted the lure of population towards the main European countries; in addition, falling employment reduced the migratory attraction to the city for the rural population, previously decimated by the previous rural exodus. In this period the expansion of the metropolitan areas begins.

2.1. Structural networks of the Andalusian population

The third fundamental aspect in the analysis of the demographic evolution of a given territory is its relationship with its space. According to data from the World Bank¹ (2020), in 1960, 33% of the world population lived in urban areas, and in 2018, more than 55% lived in and around cities. It is estimated that by 2050 this figure will reach 66% of the total population. In the European Union, 75% of inhabitants live in urban areas. In Spain, in 2019, 80% of the population lived in urban areas², occupying less than 20% of the territory. Andalusia registers similar data to that of Spain, with 80% of inhabitants living in urban areas. The population in Andalusia has been growing, but not in all territories. In 2019, Andalusia had 785 municipalities, 16 more than in 2000.

Table 2 presents the evolution of the number of municipalities in Andalusia according to size. Municipalities with a population between 1,000 and 10,000 inhabitants are pivotal in the population trend. Since the beginning of the century, municipalities with less than 500 inhabitants

¹ The World Bank Group: Urban Development. <http://www.bancomundial.org/>.

² Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) [National Institute of Statistics] defines urban municipalities as those with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

have increased considerably, rising by more than 20 units, although those with between 20,000 and 30,000 registered inhabitants have also increased, adding 15 new units. The population is dwindling in the small municipalities; in addition to the low birth rates throughout the community, these small towns have fewer potential parents due to an aging population, coupled with growing masculinization. As will be seen below, in most cases these small towns face great difficulty in attracting future migrants.

Medium-sized municipalities continue to attract inhabitants who come either from large cities where the price of housing is higher and act as dormitory towns or from small neighboring municipalities that do not offer the necessary services or job opportunities for their population.

Approximately one in four Andalusians lives in a municipality that has lost population since 2000. In 55% of the municipalities of Andalusia, the population has fallen since the beginning of the century, while in Spain this figure reaches 63%. The official population figures resulting from the revised municipal census of 1 January 2019 (INE), indicate that more than 66% of Andalusian municipalities have fewer than 5,000 inhabitants, and in them live just over 10% of the population, occupying approximately 51% of the Andalusian territory.

That a municipality has less than 5,000 inhabitants does not, or should not, pose a problem, provided that it has sufficient economic and social infrastructure (Hansen, 1965). By economic infrastructure we mean transport, telecommunica-

Table 2. Number of municipalities by size of municipality in Andalusia

	Less than 100 inhab.	From 101 to 500 inhab.	From 501 to 1,000 inhab.	From 1,001 to 2,000 inhab.	From 2,001 to 3,000 inhab.	From 3,001 to 5,000 inhab.	From 5,001 to 10,000 inhab.	From 10,001 to 20,000 inhab.	From 20,001 to 30,000 inhab.	From 30,001 to 50,000 inhab.	From 50,001 to 100,000 inhab.	More than 100,000 inhab.	Total municipalities
2000	2	88	101	136	91	107	114	70	22	16	11	11	769
2019*	2	108	102	109	85	105	103	73	37	16	17	12	785 (769)
Variation 2019-2000	0	+20	+1	-27	-6	-2	-11	+3	+15	+0	+6	+1	

Source: own elaboration based on the Municipal Register of Inhabitants (INE, 2020).

(*) On 1 January 2019, there were 785 municipalities in Andalusia, 16 more than in 2000. For a better understanding of the evolution in the size of the municipalities, these 16 municipalities have been added to their places of origin in the year 2000. This allows a direct comparison to be made.

Table 3. Population losses in Andalusian provinces/municipalities 2000-2019

Territory	Nº of municipa- lities and total population		Nº of mu- nicipalities with less than 5,000 inhab.		Nº of municipalities <5,000 inhab. with population loss (2000-2019)							
					Municipa- lities with loss > 0% and % of <5,000		Municipa- lities with loss > 5% and % of <5,000		Municipa- lities with loss > 10% and % of <5,000		Municipa- lities with loss > 20% and % of <5,000	
Almeria	103	716,820	82	79.6%	54	65.9%	46	56.1%	36	43.9%	16	19.5%
Cadiz	45	1,240,155	13	28.9%	7	53.8%	6	46.2%	4	30.8%	1	7.7%
Cordoba	77	782,979	52	67.5%	42	80.8%	35	67.3%	23	44.2%	10	19.2%
Granada	174	914,678	133	76.4%	94	70.7%	80	60.2%	66	49.6%	36	27.1%
Huelva	80	521,870	60	75.0%	42	70.0%	39	65.0%	29	48.3%	10	16.7%
Jaen	97	633,564	69	71.1%	65	94.2%	60	87.0%	45	65.2%	16	23.2%
Malaga	103	1,661,785	75	72.8%	43	57.3%	34	45.3%	23	30.7%	6	8.0%
Seville	106	1,942,389	44	41.5%	27	61.4%	18	40.9%	14	31.8%	4	9.1%
Andalusia	785	8,414,240	528	67.3%	374	70.8%	318	60.2%	240	45.5%	99	18.8%
Spain	8,131	47,026,208	6829	84.0%	4,894	71.7%	4,530	66.3%	4,067	59.6%	3,016	44.2%

Source: own elaboration based on data from the Municipal Register (INE, 2020).

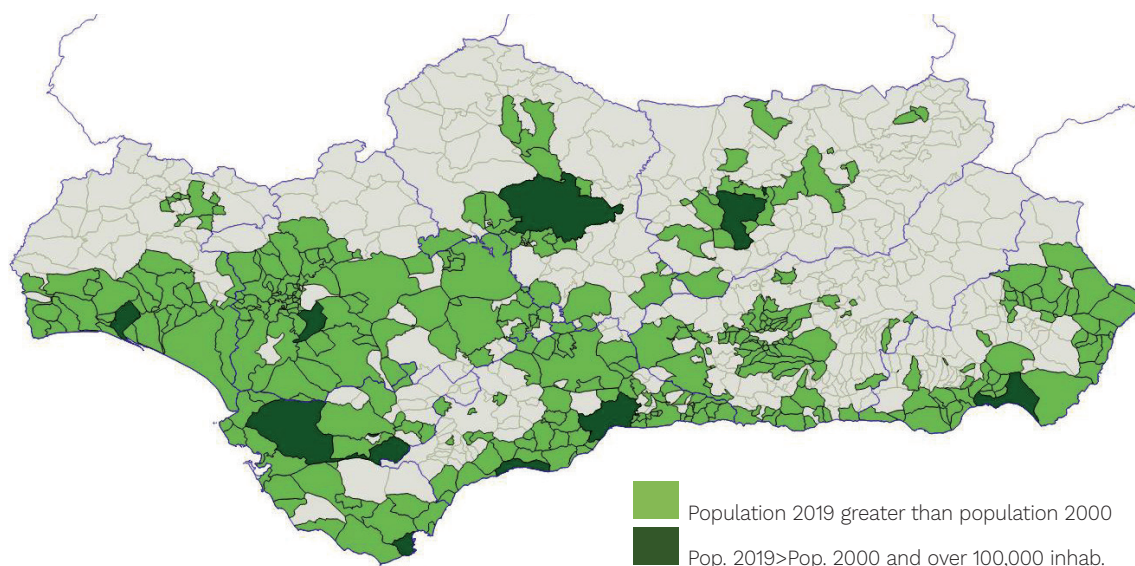
tions, local public services for water, gas and electricity supply and others, and by social infrastructure we mean mainly educational and health centers (Jaén and Piedra, 2008). An interesting aspect to analyze is to detect how this figure has fallen below 5,000 inhabitants and what repercussions this may have on facilities. Taking bordering territories as a reference and analyzing the general trend, a first step is to measure the net loss of population that occurs in these territories in a given period of time. For this analysis, we used the figures from the beginning of the century and those municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants in Andalusia (Table 3).

In Spain, 84% of municipalities have less than 5,000 inhabitants; in Andalusia, these municipalities represent 67.3% of the total. Since the beginning of the century, 70.8% of Andalusian municipalities with fewer than 5,000 inhabitants have lost population, a figure equivalent to that of Spain with 71.7%. Cordoba with 80.8% and Jaen with 94.2%, are the provinces most affected by population loss in municipalities with less than 5,000 inhabitants since the beginning of the century, a trend much higher than the regional and national average.

The increase in the Andalusian population by just over one million inhabitants, which represents an increase of 14.6%

over the last century, has not been uniform throughout the territory and has benefited some areas to the detriment of others. This increase has mainly occurred in coastal towns, provincial capitals and their area of influence as well as in larger municipalities (Map 1). The Guadalquivir valley and the entire Mediterranean and Atlantic coastline are the fastest growing areas of the Andalusian community. The Sierra Norte de Huelva and Seville, Valle del Guadiato, the region of Los Pedroches, most of the province of Jaen, the Alpujarras of Granada and Almeria, the regions of Guadix, Baza and Huescar and other mountain areas are the territories that are not in good demographic health. Nevertheless, all these aspects must be analyzed considering the changes that have occurred in the Andalusian population structure.

Map 1. Andalusian municipalities with an increased population since 2000



Source: own elaboration based on data from the Municipal Register of the National Statistics Institute and the National Geographic Institute (INE-IGN, 2020).

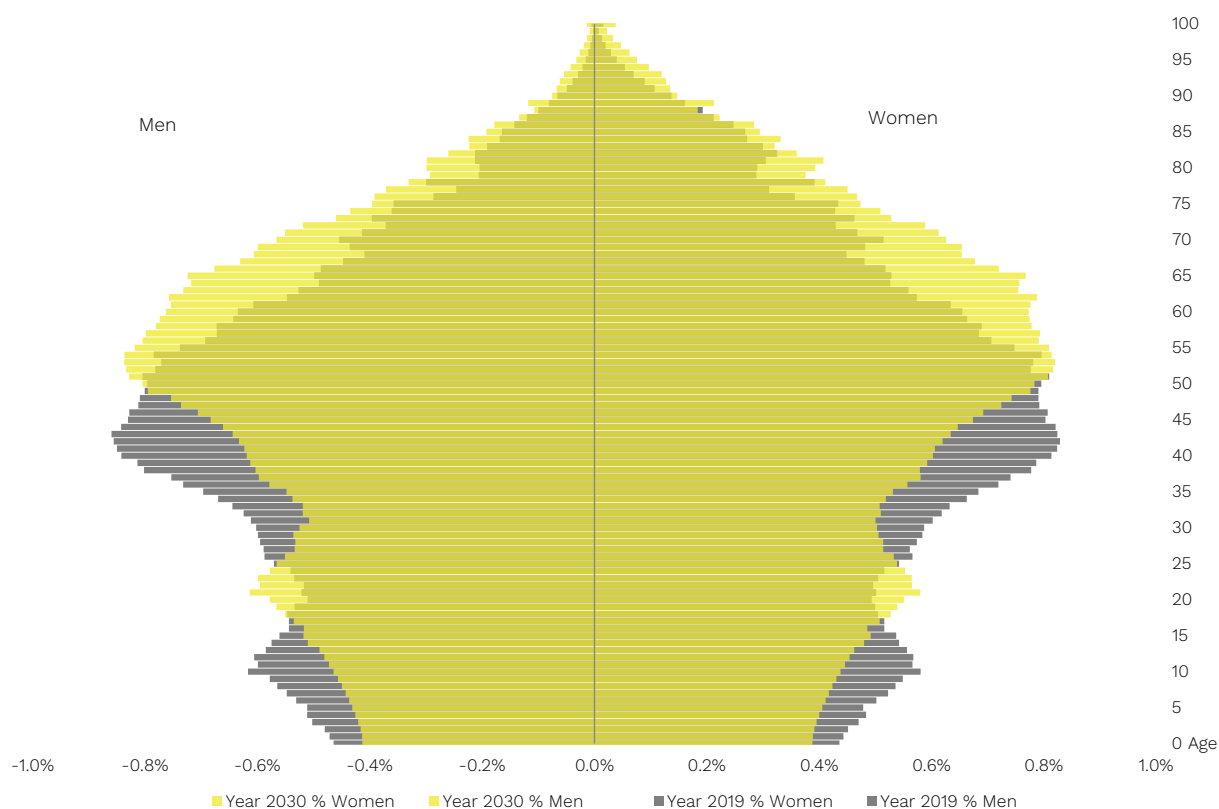
3. Population structure: the present and the future of Andalusia

The demographic evolution of Andalusia, similar to that of the rest of Spain, and of advanced countries in general, is characterized by an increase in life expectancy at birth. This fact undoubtedly represents the achievement of these societies, which reflects both improvements in welfare and health systems and in quality of life. The Andalusian population pyramid of the 1970s provided the ideal structure for the socio-economic development of the region, with a broad birth base and large cohorts of working-age people, which allowed for the mass emigration of Andalusians into and out of Spain (Recaño, 1998) and reduced generations of older people (Figure 2).

The demographic evolution from the 1980s to the present day, however, points to the gradual aging of this pyramid. In 1980 the average age of the Andalusian population was 31.9 years, and today it stands at 41.8 (2019). This is a ten-year increase in the average age, which nonetheless is still below the national average (43.4 years). This rapid transformation is highly significant and far-reaching, with very important social effects on the new scenarios that lie ahead. Demographic projections indicate that the year 2040 will be an important turning point for Spain and Andalusia; our country will reach the highest life expectancy in the world (half of the children born will live to be 100 years old), but the total population will gradually begin to decline.

The analysis of the Andalusian population pyramid points to the evolution of the *baby-boom* generations (born between 1958-1977) and two cohorts that are especially relevant in the current structure: one is the generation born in the 1990s, where in Andalusia (also in Spain) there is a significant stagnation in fertility (1.28 in 1998);

Figure 2. Andalusian population pyramid 2019-2030



Source: IECA; Projection of the Population of Andalusia and Provinces 2016-2070.

and the other is the present day, with a similar figure of 1.32 children per woman. The effects of this generational decline are very important in order to understand the Andalusia of the future. The analyses of the rates of dependence of older and younger people allow us to assess this effect on the population structure.

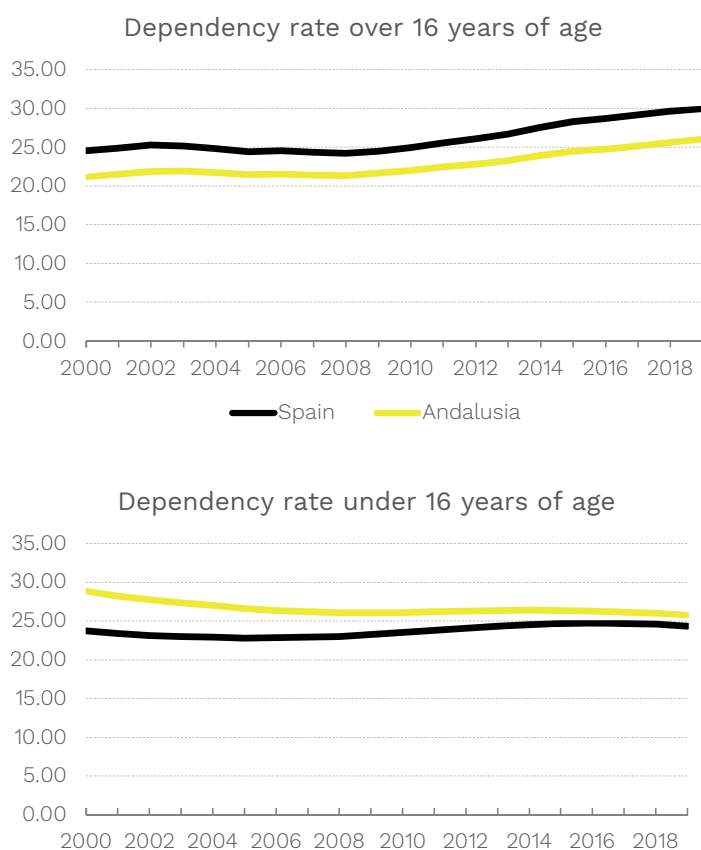
The dependency rate of older people in Andalusia is currently at an all-time high; this indicator shows that for every 100 people of working age (16 to 64) there are 26 people over age 64, whereas in 1980 there were 17. In Spain, this figure is even higher and currently stands at 30 people. The evolution of this rate (Figure 3) shows that we tend to have older generational cohorts, which implies a higher demand for care. This figure runs parallel with the child dependency rate, which also indicates that for every 100 people of working age there are only 26 people under age 16, whereas in 1980 there were 53. Nationally this figure is 24 people. The evolution of both indicators points to a population

stagnation that may lead to a lower potential for a working age population, while at the same time having to sustain important cohorts of the older population. This situation has prompted an intense debate among demographers and economists to explain this new scenario and its relationship with pensions and care needs (Miret and Zueras, 2018).

This demographic effect must be analyzed considering two interrelated factors, the first in relation to the unemployment rate and the second referring to geographic distribution according to the size of the municipalities. It could be expected that a reduction in the number of young people would leave occupational gaps in the structure that would lower unemployment (Requena, 2005). However, the evolution of unemployment in Andalusia, despite the decline in high rates due to the economic expansion phase at the beginning of the century (reaching 12.2 in 2006), has been reversed since the crisis of 2008 (where it reached 36.3 in 2013) and currently stands at 21.8 (third quarter, 2019). This situation is particularly serious in the case of young people under age 25, who should benefit most from the population decline, but who nevertheless have an unemployment rate of 43.7 (having reached 65.1 in 2012). The link between labor supply and employment demand continues to be a challenge to achieve in our autonomous community; and this challenge must be addressed in light of demographic projections, future needs, and the new opportunities of the information and knowledge society towards which we are heading.

The evolution of the older and younger population across the territory reveals another important clue about the composition of the cities and towns in Andalusia. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of older and younger people with respect to the territory in which they live. When the municipality of residence is smaller, the percentage of people over the age of 64 is higher, and the number of children and adolescents is lower. Intermediate cities (between 10,000 and 100,000 inhabitants) are the most balanced in this sense, as both curves intersect. This is a very important consideration for the organization of current and future social services. In cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants there is again an important imbalance due to the smaller number of children com-

Figure 3. Evolution of dependency rates in Andalusia and Spain



Source: own elaboration based on Population Structure Indicators (INE).

pared to the elderly. The structural aging of these cities is coupled with the search by older people to reside in large municipalities with better services.

In order to understand the changes in the Andalusian population structure and its territorial distribution, three aspects need to be considered: first, the transformations in the fertility indicators, where fundamental changes have taken place to shape the Andalusia of today; second, the new cohorts of generations of older people that represent a challenge at present and above all for the new society that is to come; and third, the analysis of how all these indicators reflect the changes in the composition of households, which are experiencing first-hand the apparently silent but especially profound socio-demographic transformations.

3.1. Transformations and trends in Andalusian fertility

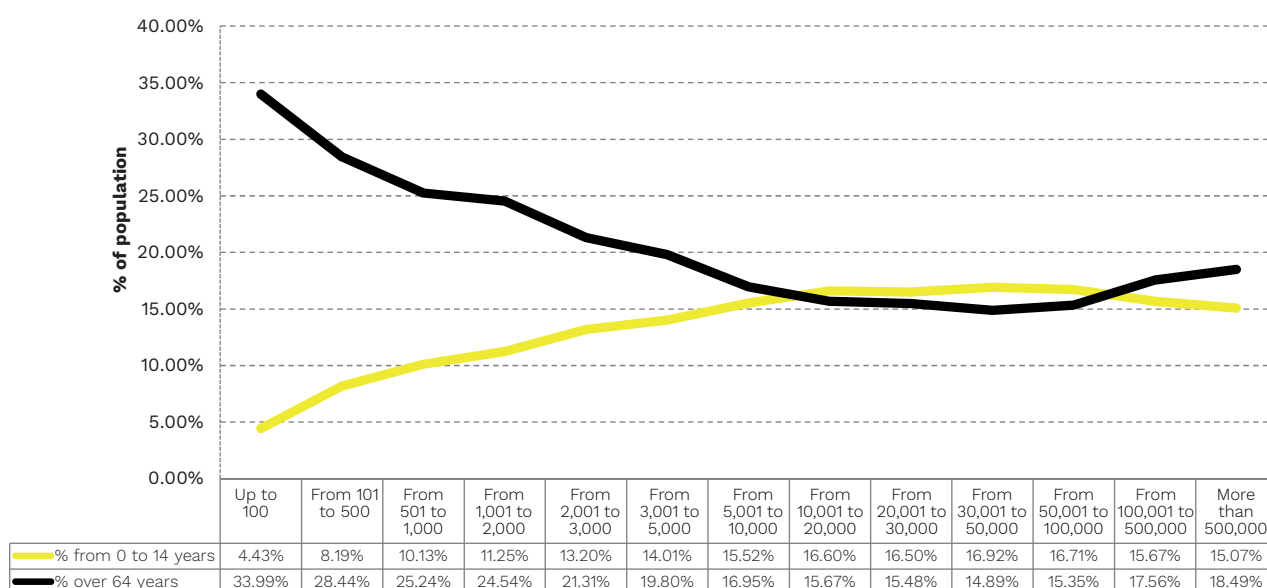
Andalusia, similar to the regions of the rest of Europe, has experienced a significant drop in fertility in recent decades. This trend is very significant in our country where the average number of children per woman is currently much lower than the European average and among the lowest in the world (1.26 in Spain and 1.32 in Andalusia). Our autonomous community is the third best indicator for the total of communities in the rest of Spain, where

some regions such as the Canary Islands (0.98), Asturias (1.03) or Galicia (1.05) are positioned with a much higher drop in fertility (INE, 2019).

The analysis of the evolution of this indicator for Andalusia runs parallel to what has occurred in the rest of the country, with a slight delay in our autonomous community, but with similar direction and speed. In 1980, Andalusian women had 2.72 children per woman, also slightly higher than the national average (2.21), but already on the decline. Since the 1970s, the fall in fertility has been continuous and very rapid, reaching historic lows in 1998 (1.13 for the whole of Spain and 1.28 for Andalusia). Since that date, this indicator has risen, driven primarily by improvements in employment, the reduction in the delay of having the first child and the arrival of young immigrants with higher fertility (Castro and Martín, 2016). During this time, Andalusia managed to improve fertility, reaching 1.56 children per woman in 2008 (Spain at 1.44). However, the effects of the significant economic recession brought with them another gradual decrease that continues to the present day.

To explain the phenomenon of decreasing fertility, demographics have traditionally emphasized the delay in the age of motherhood, which has increased directly and continuously since the last quarter of the 20th century. In 1980, Andalusian women had their first child at an average

Figure 4. Percentage of population by age range and size of municipality



Source: own elaboration from INE data.

age of 24.6 years, but this figure is now 30.3 years old and is tending to increase. Having the first child late increases the probability of having few children (Esping Andersen, 2013). To this must be added the number of women who forgo motherhood, which is growing every year; it is predicted that one in every four women born in Spain in 1975 will reach the end of their reproductive age without having had any children (Esteve, *et al.*, 2016). Having reduced generational cohorts, such as that of Andalusians who were born during the 1990s, decreases in absolute terms the number of people of childbearing age in the future (fewer potential women of childbearing age). In addition, there are difficulties in forming stable partnerships from the age of 30 onwards, an important factor revealed by the recent fertility survey (INE, 2018).

From the sociological perspective, it is important to emphasize cultural factors; in our country, having children does not currently bring social prestige, but rather it is identified with a loss of freedom for the parents (Ayuso, 2020). This is compounded by the poor support of our welfare system, which continues to consider children a private matter, whose support depends almost exclusively on the parents and/or their family network (Ayuso, 2019). The difficulties of work-life reconciliation must also be interpreted from this cultural viewpoint, underpinned by significant gender inequality and a lack of joint responsibility among parents, which is particularly detrimental to women's expectations and career development.

The effect of the drop in fertility is increasingly noticeable in Andalusia. However, it is not homogeneous between regions nor has it evolved homogeneously over time (Table 4).

Regionally, in 1975 four Andalusian provinces had more than three children per woman: Cadiz (3.52), Huelva (3.05), Malaga (3.07) and Seville (3.24). Jaen was by far the province with the lowest fertility rate (2.71), this decline having begun several decades earlier. Currently, the best data are presented by the province of Almeria, with 1.62 children per woman, above the Andalusian and national average, and very different from the rest of the provinces. Huelva has the lowest rate (1.25) but very similar to Malaga, Jaen and Granada.

Table 4. Evolution of the cyclical fertility index by province

	1975	1985	1995	2005	2015	2018
Spain	2.77	1.64	1.16	1.33	1.33	1.26
Andalusia	3.09	2.01	1.36	1.46	1.40	1.32
Almeria	2.98	2.08	1.43	1.56	1.62	1.62
Cadiz	3.52	2.16	1.37	1.50	1.37	1.29
Cordoba	2.82	1.97	1.37	1.41	1.37	1.29
Granada	2.90	1.97	1.41	1.44	1.39	1.28
Huelva	3.05	2.06	1.35	1.39	1.36	1.25
Jaen	2.71	2.05	1.49	1.40	1.32	1.27
Malaga	3.07	1.88	1.26	1.46	1.34	1.26
Seville	3.24	2.01	1.36	1.47	1.42	1.35

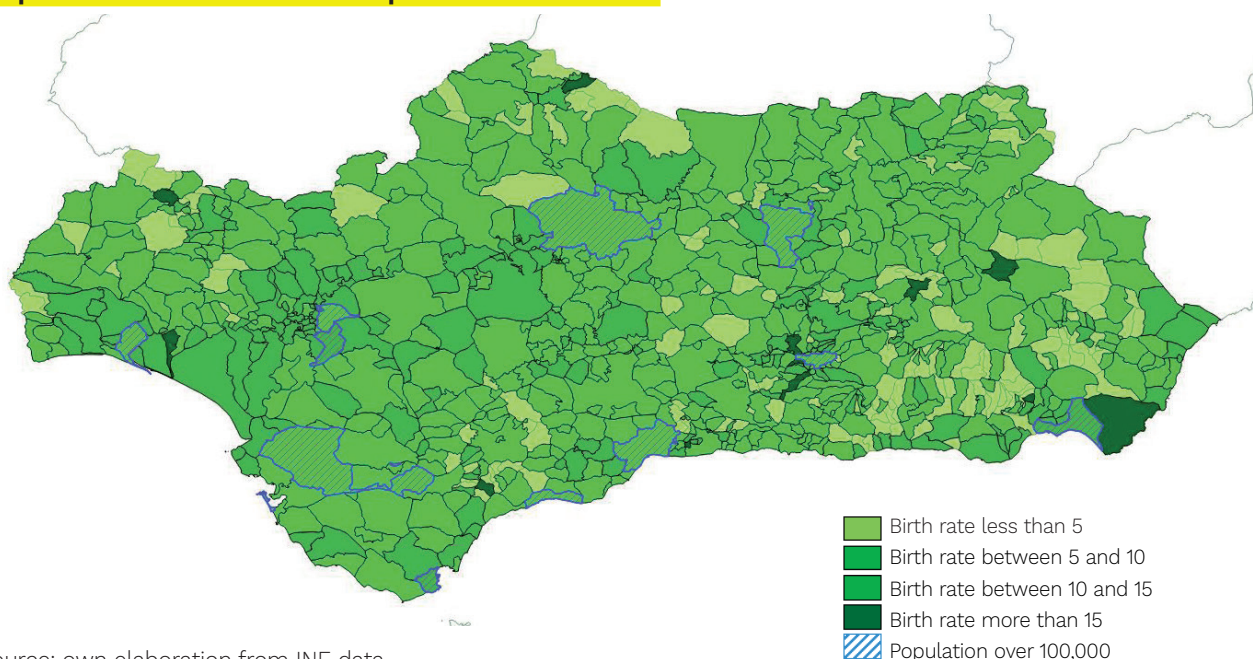
Source: own elaboration from INE data.

The analysis of the birth rate by region shows this same trend but with some peculiarities within each province (Map 2).

The birth rate measures the number of births per one thousand inhabitants; the average in Andalusia is 8.45 and in Spain this figure is 7.94. It is considered that this rate should be around 12 to 15 births per thousand to ensure the replacement rate. The distribution at the municipal level shows that in Andalusia there are regions with a rate of less than five, especially in inland areas, such as the mountains of Granada and Malaga, or the municipalities of northern Huelva, Cordoba and Jaen. The province of Almeria shows the greatest contrasts, with the coastal area having the highest levels recorded in Andalusia and some inland municipalities in significant demographic decline. Surrounding the cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants are usually municipalities with higher birth rates than these, revealing the mobility strategies of the young generations, particularly with regard to housing prices (Feria, 2015).

3.2. The challenge of aging

Spain in general and Andalusia in particular are adapting reliably to the theory of the second demographic transition involving a constant fall in fertility, which in many cases is not desired, but also a great success as a society by raising life expectancy to levels that are difficult to predict for our grandparents' generations and giving rise to the so-called *Age of*

Map 2. Birth rate in the municipalities of Andalusia

Source: own elaboration from INE data.

Longevity. As a result, life cycles are altered, with a delay in all stages, from infancy, youth, schooling, childbearing, and also in aging. Spain together with France are leaders in life expectancy for people over 65, «the old age of 40 years ago is not reached now until the age of 74» (Pérez and Abellán, 2018:30). Some authors believe we are in a phase of over-aging, as the proportional weight of the older generations is increasing and the number of centenarians is rapidly rising (Gómez Redondo, 2011).

Spain has one of the highest life expectancies at birth in the world (83.2 years), although somewhat lower in Andalusia (81.8 years) (Figure 5). Life expectancy has continued to increase in both men and women in all Andalusian provinces due first to the rapid decline in infant mortality and second to the continued survival of those over the age of 65. Andalusian women currently have a life expectancy of 84.4 years, and in some provinces, such as Cordoba, this figure exceeds 85 years, when in 1975 this indicator stood at 75.8 for all Andalusian women, and Cadiz was the province with the lowest life expectancy. Current life expectancy for men is 79.1, compared to 69.8 in 1975. Cordoba and Malaga provinces have the highest life expectancy in Andalusia.

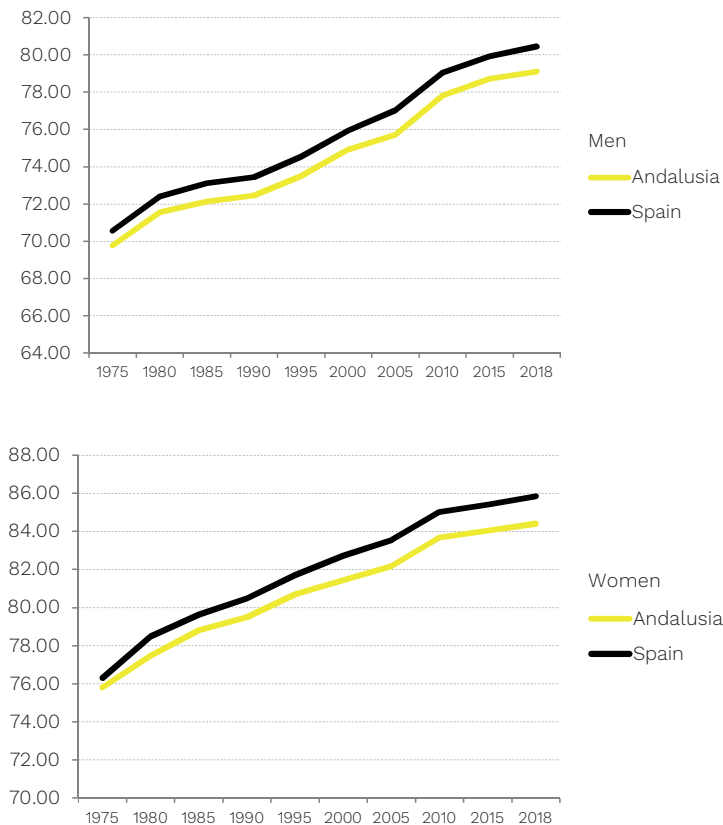
Our autonomous community has a life expectancy below the country's average,

but it presents better figures in relation to the aging index, which takes into account the number of people over age 64 for every 100 people under age 16; in 2019 the figure for Andalusia according to the INE was 101, ranking third in Spain after Murcia and the Balearic Islands, far from Asturias (219 people) and Galicia (198 people). This improvement in the index is due to our better comparative position with regard to fertility.

Aging indicators should also be analyzed in terms of their distribution across the territory, especially with a view to planning for current and future needs in rural areas. These indicators must be analyzed with caution, because as we have seen above, the very geographical mobility of the older population must be noted, which also tends to be concentrated in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The aging of the rural population has nothing to do with the high or low birth rate; it is important to remember that the largest rural exodus in Spain occurred during the 1960s during the *baby boom* (Pérez and Abellán, 2018).

The emigration of young people from rural areas is a process that took place throughout the 20th century in our country, leading to a loss of population in these areas. Andalusia is currently experiencing a significant drop in population in municipalities of less than 10,000 inhabitants,

Figure 5. Evolution of life expectancy in Andalusia and Spain



Source: own elaboration from INE data.

with an accelerated aging process in these nuclei. In nearly 400 municipalities, more than 20% of the population is aged 65 or over, and in 200 cases the percentage of people over 64 exceeds 25% (Map 3). Their distribution throughout the territory indicates a sea of Andalusian aging, especially in the eastern area, where the inland provinces of Almería, Granada and Jaén meet the Sierras de las Alpujarras, Valle del Almanzora, Montes Orientales and Sierra de Segura, where a greater number of municipalities are located with more than 25% of inhabitants over 64 years of age. To these must be added Sierra Morena in the north of Córdoba province and Sierra de Aracena in Huelva.

The sociodemographic situation of Andalusia reveals that we are witnessing one of the most important challenges in our recent history as we have to face, just as the rest of the advanced societies, a scenario of a greater aging of the population, with a growing urban concentration, and a significant depopulation in the territories most distant from the big cities. This scenario,

which will increase in the coming years, will bring with it important demands for care by the population, an increase in very significant territorial differences, and the need to anticipate structural reforms to maintain our welfare system.

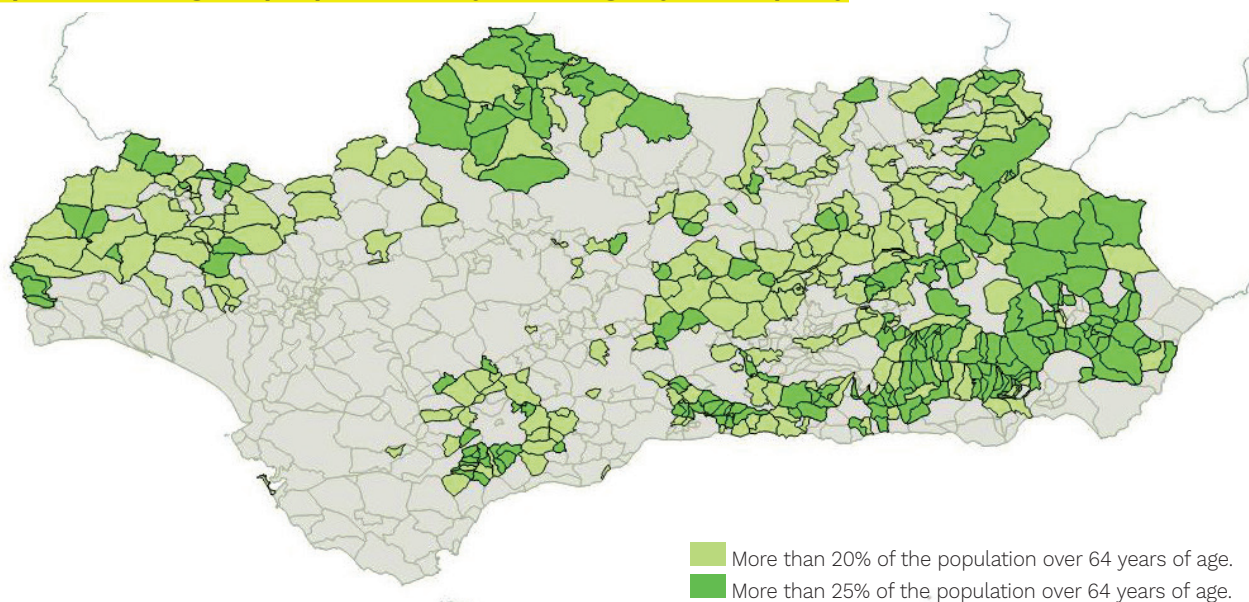
3.3. The structure of Andalusian households

How do these trends of lower fertility and longer life expectancy affect Andalusian households? Andalusia is influenced by both sociodemographic phenomena at a slower rate than the rest of Spain, but in the same direction. Households are the form in which society is organized, together with their distribution by territory and place. Analyzing the influence of these trends on household composition, both the number of individuals per household and the social characteristics that shape them³, are fundamental to understanding Andalusian society itself, its current features and its future needs.

In 2006, Professors Bericat and Martín-Lagos carried out a study on the structure of households in Andalusia following the thesis of *social individualization*. A little more than a decade later, many of the features that both authors pointed out have been reinforced, which are in line, both in intensity and in direction, with the main demographic trends for the rest of the country (Domingo and Cabré, 2015). From a theoretical perspective, the individualist theories must be reinterpreted taking into account the effects of this new information and knowledge society, and our own Andalusian culture based on strong ties of sociability.

Data from the Andalusian Institute of Statistics and Cartography (IECA) for the period between 2011 and 2019, indicate a

³ The same household may represent very different social and family typologies depending on the gender, age, educational level, economic level or relational capital of its members. A single-person household of a young person is not the same as that of an older person, nor is one in which all members are dependent or non-dependent, nor is one in which all members are working or unemployed. Similarly, it is not the same to live in rural areas as in urban areas.

Map 3. Percentage of people over 64 years of age by municipality

Source: own elaboration from INE data.

gradual increase in the number of Andalusian households, exceeding three million (3,229,700) (Table 5). During these years the increase was 5.3%. This includes an increase in single-person households (4%), followed by two-person households (2.3%) and, to a lesser extent, three-person households (0.1%); the remainder (four or five members or more) continue a gradual decline that began in the 1970s. Family households also decrease in favor of non-family households, although families still represent approximately three out of every four Andalusian households (74.2%).

The structure of Andalusian households reflects the effects of the increased life expectancy of the population, the increasingly intense nuclearization of new families, and the pluralization of forms of family life. Single-person households now account for 23.7% of Andalusian households, 54% headed by a woman and 46% by a man, with little change in this gender balance in recent years. The proliferation of individuals living alone is mainly due to the increased aging of the population, but also to the break-ups of couples that lead to the division of households. However, both in Andalusia and in the rest of Spain, it is not common for these households to be headed by young people, due to our *family* culture of emancipation (Jaime and Echavarren, 2013; Moreno Mínguez, *et al.*, 2012).

The growth trend of single-person households in Andalusia should be interpreted in light of two factors: on the one hand, despite the increase in these households in recent years in Andalusia, our autonomous community lies below the Spanish average (25.5%), and far from Nordic countries such as Norway or Denmark, where these households represent 45.8% and 44.1%, and also from Germany (41.5%), France (36%) and the United Kingdom (29.9%) (Eurostat, 2019)⁴. On the other hand, this phenomenon should not be automatically linked to individualism, since it depends on the various ways in which this solitude is experienced (Morente and Barroso, 2015; López Doblas, 2018).

Within family households, nuclear couples tend to decrease, although they still

⁴ Source: Eurostat (www.epdata.es).

⁵ The project directed by the professors of the University of Jaen Felipe Morente and Inmaculada Barroso entitled «Perfiles, entornos e identidades de la sociabilidad que viene: Geosociología del hogar unipersonal en España» [Profiles, environments and identities of the coming sociability: Geosociology of the single-person household in Spain] (CSO2015-670066-R), studies in depth the single-person households in Andalusia and Spain, linking these together with demographic factors to the new forms of sociability that emerge as a result.

Table 5. Evolution of number of household members (2011-2019)

Number of household members	Period									Variation 2011-2019
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
Single-person	19.7%	20.4%	21.2%	22.3%	22.8%	23.1%	23.3%	23.2%	23.7%	+4.0%
Men	8.9%	9.5%	10.1%	10.4%	10.3%	10.9%	11.1%	10.8%	10.9%	+2.0%
	45.3%*	46.6%*	47.5%*	46.9%*	45.4%*	47.3%*	47.7%*	46.7%*	45.8%*	+0.5%
Women	10.8%	10.9%	11.2%	11.8%	12.4%	12.2%	12.2%	12.4%	12.9%	+2.1%
	54.7%*	53.4%*	52.5%*	53.1%*	54.6%*	52.7%*	52.3%*	53.3%*	54.2%*	-0.5%
2 persons	26.1%	26.8%	27.4%	27.8%	27.9%	28.1%	28.2%	28.3%	28.5%	+2.3%
3 persons	20.7%	20.9%	20.9%	21.0%	21.0%	21.1%	21.2%	21.2%	21.2%	+0.5%
4 persons	20.5%	20.6%	20.4%	20.2%	20.3%	20.2%	20.2%	20.3%	20.2%	-0.3%
5 or more pers.	7.6%	7.3%	7.0%	6.8%	6.7%	6.6%	6.5%	6.4%	6.4%	-1.2%
TOTAL (thousands)	3059.1	3100.3	3134.7	3168.3	3185.6	3200.8	3209.1	3210.5	3229.7	+5.3%

Source: own elaboration through the Andalusian Institute of Statistics and Cartography and the INE Active Population Survey.

(*) Percentage of male and female households with respect to total single-person households.

represent 84.6% of these households (Table 6), while single-parent families with dependent children tend to grow (from 4.8% to 5.2%) as do other family households (from 11.8% to 12.9%). Two out of every three nuclear couples have children, although this family model continues to decline. In 2011, they accounted for 45.2% of Andalusian households, while in 2019, this figure dropped to 41.3%. The drop in the number of couples with children must be linked to the delay and decrease in fertility (Esteve, *et al.*, 2016), which goes hand in hand with an increase in the number of couples who do not have children, either by choice or because largely due to postponing motherhood they are unable to have children (Seiz, 2013). Within this group, there is also an increase in the number of older childless couples as a result of the «empty nest» phase (when children leave the family home) as a consequence of increased life expectancy.

Households composed of single-parent families with dependent children and other family households have tended to grow in recent years. Single-parent households are primarily headed by women (87.2%), and this is a trend that has been maintained for decades both in Andalusia and in the rest of Spain, despite the increasingly active role of men in the domestic sphere (Avilés, 2015) and the greater impact of shared custody as a result of break-ups (Solsona, *et al.*, 2020). In Andalusia, some small signs of change can already be seen in this regard; from 2011, the growth trend of single-parent families

headed by a single mother is 8.1% and by a single father is 11.9%.

The category of other family households includes those with several nuclei and have evolved heterogeneously over time. Both single-parent households and other family households are affected by economic cycles (Castro, *et al.*, 2015). Finally, non-family households with dependents are relatively few, representing 12.8% of total non-family households; however, they have doubled since 2011 when they accounted for 6%.

The structure of Andalusian households shows similar trends to the rest of Spain, which, analyzed over time, indicates a significant change in the organizational structures of society. This demographic earthquake (Beltrán, 2002), which occurs silently, can only be understood in view of the analogous revolution within the sphere of family values in Spain (Ayuso, 2020).

Table 6. Evolution of household typology in Andalusia (2011-2019)

Household typology	2011		2019		% Variation 2011-2019
Family households	76.9%		74.2%		-2.7%
Couple	65.9%	85.8%	62.8%	84.6%	-3.1%
With children	45.2%	68.6%	41.3%	65.7%	-3.9%
Without children	20.7%	31.4%	21.6%	34.3%	0.9%
Single parent with dependent children	3.2%	4.8%	3.3%	5.2%	0.1%
Single mother	2.6%	83.0%	2.9%	87.2%	0.3%
Single father	0.4%	12.2%	0.4%	12.8%	0.0%
Others (family households)	7.8%	11.8%	8.1%	12.9%	0.3%
Non-household families	21.9%		25.8%		3.9%
Single person	20.8%	89.9%	23.7%	92.0%	2.9%
Women	11.4%	54.7%	12.9%	54.2%	1.5%
Men	9.4%	45.3%	10.9%	45.8%	1.5%
Others (non-household families)	2.3%	10.1%	2.1%	8.0%	-0.2%
With dependents	0.1%	6.0%	0.3%	12.8%	0.2%
Without dependents	2.2%	94.0%	1.8%	87.2%	-0.4%

Source: own elaboration through the Andalusian Institute of Statistics and Cartography and Exploitation of the INE 2019 Active Population Survey.

4. Andalusian families and demographic change

Approximately three out of every four Andalusian households are considered family households (74.2%), one of the highest percentages in Spain, only behind Murcia (75.8%), which suggests that the processes of family change are somewhat slower in our community, but equally significant. As in the rest of the country, this change is influenced by both structural and cultural factors that have very quickly affected the form and culture of the Spanish family (Ayuso, 2019). Andalusian families have experienced dynamics of change linked to a greater tendency towards the individualization of family life, a privatization in family behaviors and an understanding of the family in an increasingly emotional way (García Calvente, et al., 2010). The explanations for the development of these trends should be sought in multiple factors including: the greater presence of post-materialistic values, the development of a more urban culture and lifestyles, the increase in the average educational level of the population, which

is particularly significant in the case of women, a more important role for women in the public sphere, especially in the labor market, and the development of the welfare state, among others.

The impact of these trends can be seen in various indicators associated with the family in Andalusia. From the household perspective, *nuclearization* is taking place, with the loss of several generations living together in the same household, a reduction in the number of children and an increase in single-person households. In addition, there is a trend towards the de-institutionalization of marriage, which can be seen in the decrease in the number of marriages, where the gross marriage rate has fallen from 6.46 per thousand in 1980 to 3.54 in 2017 (IECA, 2020); there has also been an increase in registrations of unmarried couples from 5,361 couples in 2010 to 7,371 in 2018 (95% heterosexual)⁶ (IECA, 2020) as well as the important growth in the number of births outside

6 In Andalusia, de facto unions have been regulated since 1996 (Decree 3/1996 of 9 January), replaced by Decree 35/2005 of 15 February, which establishes and regulates the Register of De facto Couples. However, from a sociological perspective, the number of common-law couples is higher than officially registered as these couples often don't legalize the situation.

marriage in Andalusia, which was 3.02% in 1980 and 48.76% in 2017 (IECA, 2020). As various authors have stated, marriage in the biographies of the new generations «has gone from being a first course to an optional dessert» (Martínez Pastor, 2009).

The number of divorces has also grown significantly, especially when analyzed in relation to the number of marriages over time; in 1998 there were 13 marriage dissolutions per 100 marriages, and in 2017 this figure rises to 58 (IECA, 2020). To this process must be added the proliferation of different forms of family life that traditionally had less legitimacy and visibility, such as homosexual families, single-parent families, reconstituted couples, couples living apart together (LAT), weekend marriages, and couples without children by choice (García Calvente, *et al.*, 2010).

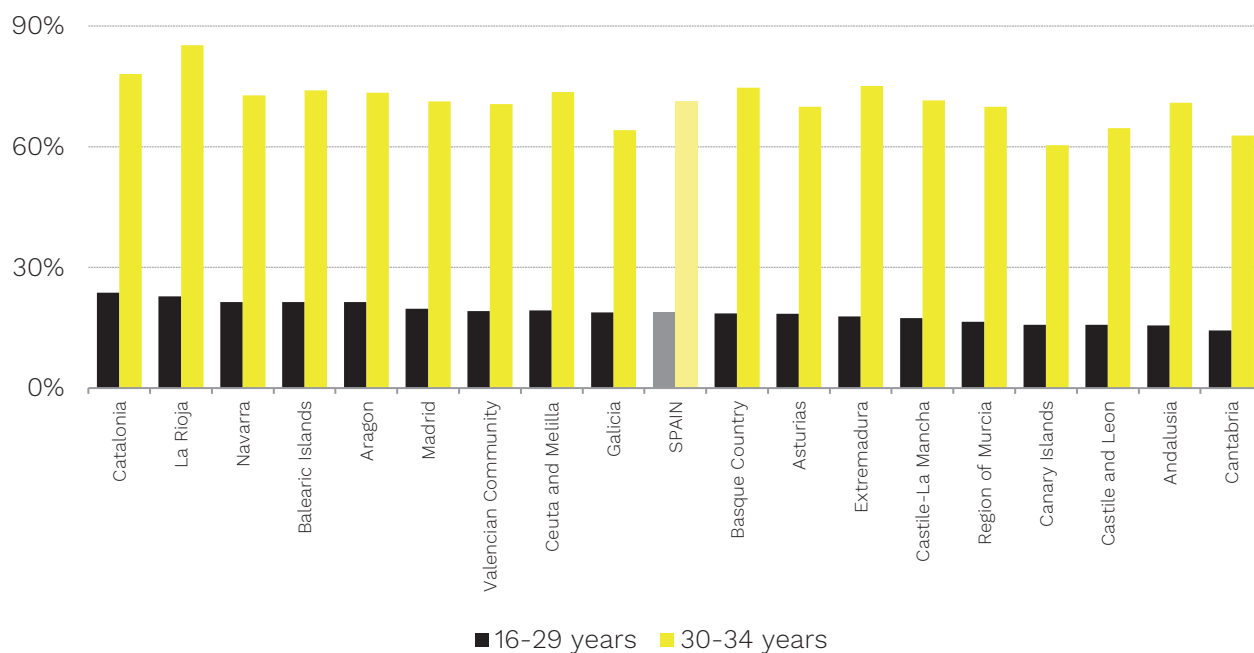
Despite all these transformations, the family continues to be a highly valued institution for Andalusians and continues to play a fundamental role in our welfare system. Family support networks (Fernández and Tobío, 2007), the frequency of contacts between family members and friends, and the very assessment of Andalusian sociability are key aspects for understanding the characteristics of our region and behavior in different areas such as the economy, geographic mobility or quality of life. Currently, two aspects are particularly relevant in the analysis of families: on the one hand, the delay in the age of emancipation, and on the other, the difficulties in reconciling work and family and/or private life.

4.1. Keys to the formation of new families: emancipation

A major problem faced by young Andalusians is the difficulty in becoming emancipated from their parents' home and consequently the possibilities of forming their own families. The average age of emancipation in Spain is 29.5 years, with men (30.5) being older than women (28.6) (INE, 2019). Our country ranks last in the European continent in this aspect, only surpassed by Italy (30.1) and Serbia (31.3). In Spain, 44% of young people between the ages of 18 and 34 live with their parents, while in Portugal this figure is 45%, in Italy (49%) and in Greece (57%) (Eurostat, 2020).

In Andalusia, by the second quarter of 2019, only 15.1% of young people (between the ages of 16 and 29) resided outside the family home, the second lowest rate at the national level, surpassed only by Cantabria (Figure 6). According to the report issued by the *Emancipation Observatory* (Spanish Youth Council, 2019), the reasons for this situation can be found in the unemployment rate in this population, which, despite the notable reduction in the last year, stands at 33.8%, a percentage much higher than the national average. Only three out of ten young people are working, and the vast majority of them are on temporary contracts. In addition, the rise in the price of housing for purchase and for rent makes this residential emancipation very difficult.

Young Andalusians experience their emancipation as a transition process in which family, economic and couple situations are combined (Moreno Mínguez *et al.*, 2012). The latest social report on Andalusian Youth (Jaime and Echavarren, 2013), describes this process in different phases following the proposal of Fernández and Morente (2002): *complete emancipation*, *work emancipation*, *precarious emancipation*, *eventual emancipation* and *complete dependence*. The results are shown in Table 7, which indicates that by 2011, when this survey was carried out, half of Andalusians were completely dependent on their families of origin (50.6%). Only 19.1% had achieved *work emancipation*, that is, financially independent but living in the family home. A further 9.6% lived with friends or colleagues, although they depended on their family of origin (*eventual emancipation*), and 3.2% fit into the *precarious emancipation* model. Men were the most completely dependent on their families, but also the most emancipated in terms of work, while women were associated with precarious and eventual emancipation. Those living in provincial capitals were more completely emancipated than those who lived in towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants and intermediate towns between 20,000 and 50,000 inhabitants. Work independence was much more common in smaller towns. By province, the greatest dependence appeared in Huelva and Cadiz, and the greatest complete emancipation in Cordoba and Malaga.

Figure 6. Residential emancipation rate of the population aged 16-34 years

Source: Emancipation Observatory. Spanish Youth Council (1st quarter 2019: 18).

4.2. Internal and external challenges of work and family reconciliation

Balancing work life with family and/or private life is another major challenge facing Andalusian families. This reconciliation must be interpreted in two ways, first, at a macro level, analyzing the role of the family together with the working world and our welfare system and second, at an internal level, concerning the relationship of joint responsibility among family members. Both facets of reconciliation are equally important in addressing the new scenarios that families will face. The analysis of reconciliation helps to explain aspects such as the lack of children, gender inequalities and the potential for care in an increasingly older population.

From the perspective of the relationship between families and the welfare system, three tools are available to governments to improve work-family reconciliation among their citizens: direct financial aid, services for families and family allowances. Calculation of all these types of assistance for the 38 countries of the OCED ranks Spain in 34th place, just ahead of

countries such as Greece or Turkey, where government assistance for reconciliation is even lower⁷. Within our country there are also important differences by autonomous community, both in relation to the amounts and accessibility of economic aid. Andalusia is characterized by a low level of protection for families, a low level of resources and intermediate accessibility (Redondo, 2018).

In our autonomous community, an intense incorporation of women into the labor market has taken place⁸, which has been coupled with a decrease in time spent on domestic work, mainly due to fewer family members in the home and to new technologies (Ajenjo and Garcia, 2014). Nonetheless, the demand for services and protection for families remains very important. It is expected that the increase in the number of dependent people will be a challenge for families and the State in the coming years, for which it is essential to be aware of the existing

7 OECD Family Database <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>

8 The Activity Rate of Women in Andalusia increased from 38.9% in the first quarter of 2002 to 50.2% in the fourth quarter of 2019 (INE).

Table 7. Types of emancipation in Andalusia

%	Complete emancipation	Work emancipation	Precarious emancipation	Eventual emancipation	Complete dependence
Men	16.3	20.2	1.2	8.8	53.5
Women	17.6	18.0	6.4	10.4	47.7
From 14 to 17 years	0.1	5.4	0.3	0.9	93.3
From 18 to 21 years	3.2	16.3	1.8	16.3	62.3
From 22 to 25 years	17.8	26.9	3.7	14.6	37.0
From 26 to 30 years	45.9	26.1	9.1	4.2	14.7
Less than 5,000 inhabitants	15.0	25.5	4.4	2.9	52.2
From 5,001 to 10,000 inhabitants	17.7	23.8	4.8	1.4	52.4
From 10,001 to 20,000 inhabitants	16.4	16.9	4.2	2.7	59.8
From 20,001 to 50,000 inhabitants	15.0	23.0	3.0	4.7	54.4
More than 50,000 inhabitants	16.8	20.3	4.1	3.8	55.1
Provincial capitals	19.1	12.4	3.3	25.3	39.8
Almeria	18.1	22.2	5.0	8.5	46.2
Cadiz	17.1	21.9	3.0	4.3	53.8
Cordoba	18.7	19.3	2.6	10.2	49.1
Granada	14.1	17.1	3.5	15.7	49.6
Huelva	15.8	18.8	4.3	4.6	56.4
Jaen	14.4	18.4	4.1	14.4	48.8
Malaga	18.2	18.4	4.0	8.6	50.8
Seville	17.9	17.2	4.1	10.6	50.3
Total	16.9	19.1	3.8	9.6	50.6
(N)	(3,186)	(3,186)	(3,186)	(3,186)	(3,186)

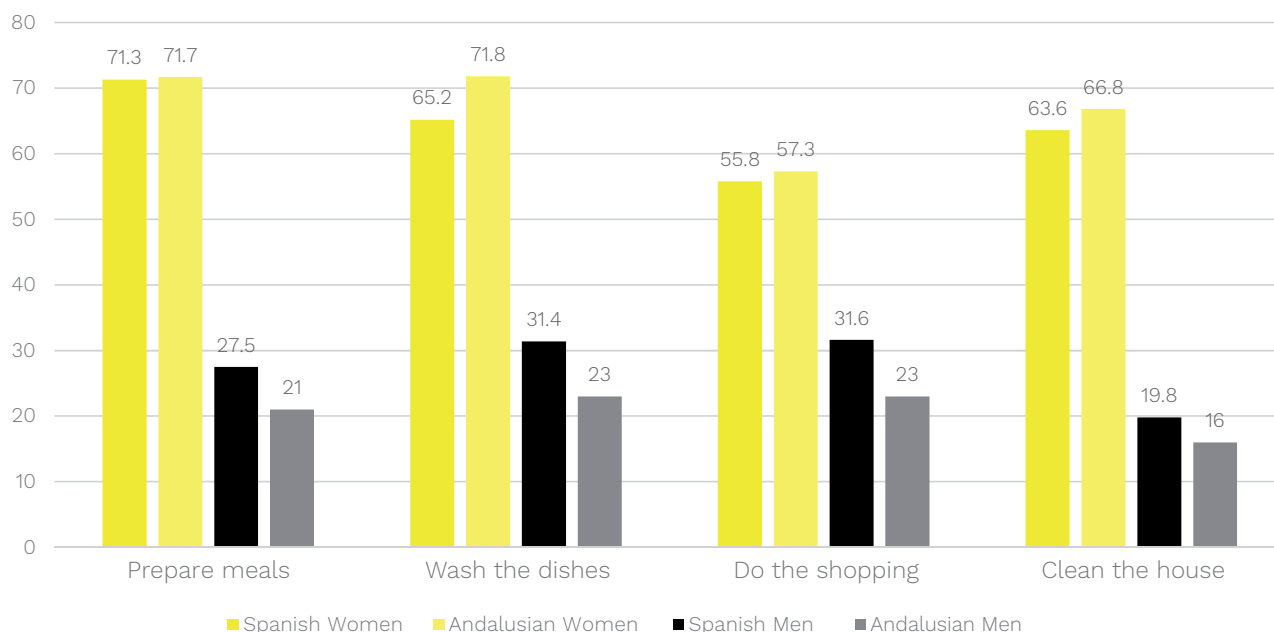
Source: Study of Youth in Andalusia (Andalusian Studies Center. 2013: 161).

family culture in Andalusia. In our country, despite the need for family policies, there is no active demand in this area, largely due to the strengthening of our family networks and the fact that these issues are considered to be private rather than public (Ayuso, 2019).

The challenge of reconciliation must also be analyzed at the internal family level, where it is very important to advance towards greater joint responsibility between partners. Studies of time use showed very large differences within Andalusian households (Gálvez and Marcenaro, 2008). Despite slow improvements in the direction of greater joint responsibility in this

regard (Ayuso, 2019), one of the latest CIS barometers in which the couple is asked about domestic tasks shows that significant differences remain (Figure 7). Women carry all the weight both in Spain and in Andalusia, particularly in tasks such as washing dishes or preparing meals. Changes in this area are also essential but must be culturally driven.

In our autonomous community, an intense incorporation of women into the labor market has taken place, which has been coupled with a decrease in time spent on domestic work, mainly due to fewer family members in the home and to new technologies

Figure 7. Performance of domestic tasks in the home according to sex*

Source: own elaboration from study 3.175 (CIS, 2017).

* Sum of percentages «always you» and «usually you». The percentages for Andalusia should be analyzed with caution due to the smaller sample size.

5. Andalusian rurality in the 21st century

The analysis of the population must be undertaken bearing in mind its relationship with the territory. Andalusia has historically shown a relatively low population density, especially when compared with other Spanish and European regions leading contemporary economic development (Díaz, *et al.*, 2009). Until the middle of the 20th century, almost 70% of the active Andalusian population was engaged in agriculture, a figure that stands at around 10% at the beginning of the 21st century, which shows the importance of the rural sector in our social structure (Parejo, 2009).

To approach Andalusian rurality, we must begin by distinguishing between rural and urban. This dichotomy is easy to establish at the extremes, although it is difficult to determine a point of separation between them (Larrubia, 1998). Traditionally, two approaches have existed to delimit rural and urban areas. On the one hand, the association between rurality and agrarianism emerges, where the rural world was identified with agrarian activity, of a secondary nature and relative backwardness, and

whose main function was to provide resources to the urban nucleus; on the other hand, rurality was linked to low population density, with this criterion being used mainly by public institutions and organizations (Entrena-Durán, 1998; Larrubia, 1998).

Rural has been defined on many occasions as the absence of that which is urban; that is, the urban context has been defined with greater or lesser precision, and from there on the rest has been considered rural (Johnson, 1980). Pierre George (1983) argues that the criteria for distinguishing between rural and urban are imprecise since a numerical discrimination associated with the size of localities and populations is used.

In Andalusia, as in other regions of Spain, it is very difficult to apply a generic definition that is in line with the reality of the territory. The European Union, through the European Network for Rural Development, offered Member States a definition of rural areas proposed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)⁹. This definition did not

⁹ The OECD defines rural areas as those where more than 50% of the population lives in rural municipalities. A municipality is rural when its population density is below 150 inhabitants/km².

achieve the expected success as it was not compatible with the different realities in the Member States.

The evolution of the Andalusian rural areas has been remarkable. The characteristics of these areas 60 years ago are completely different from the current situation, which continues to evolve. Since the 1990s, there has been a change in social considerations and the functions attributed to the rural environment. A process of revaluation of rural culture and a revitalization of the associated spaces has occurred, where there is a tendency towards disaggregation and tertiarization that translates into diversification and multifunctionality of rural spaces (Entrena-Duran, 2012). Not all territories, however, share the same characteristics and opportunities.

5.1. Characteristics of the administrative units in Andalusia

Rural areas are facing a wide range of economic, environmental and social challenges. The European Union, member states, autonomous communities and other political-administrative levels are continuously promoting programs aimed at the development of rural areas (Cañete, *et al.*, 2018). One of the issues presented in the drafting and implementation of these programs is the delimitation of rural areas. Through Regulation 2017/2391¹⁰, the European Union describes the categories of territorial units for statistics:

- NUTS0 (corresponding to Nations)
- NUTS1 (corresponding to non-administrative Geographic areas in Spain)
- NUTS2 (corresponding to Autonomous Communities and Cities in Spain)

¹⁰ M10-Regulation (EU) 2017/2391 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2017; Amendments to Regulation (EC) No 1059/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 May 2003 on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics, *Nomenclature des Unités Territoriales Statistiques* and LAU, *Local Administrative Units*.

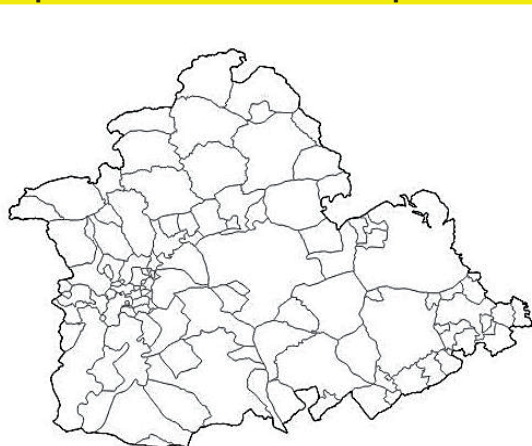
- NUTS3 (corresponding to Provinces, Island councils and Town councils in Spain)
- LAU¹¹ (corresponding to Municipalities in Spain).

Andalusia's territories and municipalities offer unique characteristics with respect to other autonomous communities in the country. This territorial arrangement of the Andalusian community is of great importance when classifying the municipalities (LAU), provinces (NUTS3) and the autonomous community itself (NUTS2) according to the most widely used criteria of rurality.

Andalusia is the most populated autonomous community in Spain, and is the second largest in terms of size, behind Castile and Leon. Many of the criteria that have been developed to define rural territories use the population density or the number of inhabitants per municipality. Andalusia currently has 785 municipalities (LAU), for a population of nearly 8.4 million inhabitants, with an average size per municipality of 111.6 km². In contrast, Castile and Leon, with a slightly larger surface area, has almost three times as many municipalities as Andalucía, totaling 2,248, with a population that is 3.5 times smaller (INE, 2020).

It can be said that the municipalities of Andalusia are large; only the Principality of Asturias and the Region of Murcia have higher average surface area values. The relationship between the number of municipalities in a province, the population and the surface area they occupy, allows for comparisons that help to better understand the typology of the municipalities in Andalusia (de las Heras, 2019) (Map 4). Seville and Burgos have similar extensions, with 106 and 371 municipali-

¹¹ In response to the demand for statistics at a local level below the provincial level (NUTS3), the European Union produced two smaller levels of population entities until 2016, LAU1 and LAU2, which corresponded to the NUTS4 and NUTS5 indicators, respectively. Not all Member States had territorial representation at the LAU1 administrative level, whereas the LAU2 level (corresponding to municipalities in Spain) did appear in all EU countries, and was therefore more suitable for statistical comparisons. As of 2017, only one level remains below NUTS3, called LAU.

Map 4. Delimitation of municipalities in Seville and Burgos (2019)

Seville (106 municipalities)

Source: (de las Heras, 2019:131)



Burgos (371 municipalities)

Table 8. Average size of administrative units in EU countries

Territory	NUTS2 (2019)	NUTS3 (2019)	LAU (2019)	Km ²	Higher than average of NUTS2 (km ²)	Higher than average of NUTS3 (km ²)	Higher than average of LAU (km ²)
EU 27	240	1,169	99,387	4,225,127	17,604.70	3,614.31	42.5
Spain	19	59	8,131	505,983	26,630.68	8,575.98	62.2
Andalusia	1	8	785	87,597	87,597	10,949.63	111.6

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat data.

ties respectively. In Andalusia, it is difficult to find municipalities with fewer than 100 inhabitants. The phenomenon of depopulation has been somewhat slower and delayed than in the rest of Spain, but above all the greater surface area of Andalusian municipalities makes it very difficult to reach such low inhabitant figures in these municipalities.

As shown in Table 8, Andalusia has a territorial size of administrative units (NUTS2, NUTS3 and LAU) well above the European and Spanish averages. This is due to the small number of municipalities in the community that are sparsely populated. On the other hand, the greater extension of administrative units affects the resulting population density calculations (inhabitant/km²), although the nuclearization of the population in the provincial capitals hides the reality of the less populated municipalities.

The largest municipalities are in the southern half of the Iberian Peninsula, as well as in the Canary Islands. Andalusia

is made up of a total of 9,003 population entities, distributed among Municipalities, Population Centers¹² and Scattered Settlements¹³. For administrative purposes, the Municipality is the unit of action.

¹² The INE considers a «population center» to be a set of at least ten buildings, which form streets, squares and other urban roads. As an exception, the number of buildings may be less than 10, provided that the population inhabiting them exceeds 50 inhabitants. Included in the center are those buildings which, being isolated, are less than 200 meters from the outer limits of the above-mentioned group, although in determining this distance, land occupied by industrial or commercial installations, parks, gardens, sports areas, cemeteries, car parks and others, as well as canals or rivers which may be crossed by bridges, must be excluded (INE, 2020).

¹³ According to the INE, the buildings or dwellings of a singular population entity that cannot be included in the concept of a center are considered to be a scattered settlement (INE, 2020).

Table 9. Classification criteria for rural and urban areas

Classification criteria rural/urban	Nº municipalities (Total in Andalusia)	Percentage of rural population with respect to the total Andalusian Community (% rural population in Spain)	Percentage of rural Andalusian territory (% rural territory in Spain)
OECD 1994 Rural if density is less than 150 inhabitants/km ²	642 (of 785)	30.3%(Andalusia) 22.1% (Spain)	87.8% (Andalusia) 90.2% (Spain)
INE Rural municipalities with a population of less than 10,000 inhabitants.	632 (of 785)	19.2% (Andalusia) 20.3% (Spain)	65.6% (Andalusia) 80.8% (Spain)
INE Small rural municipalities with a population of less than 2,000 inhabitants	330 (of 785)	3.3 % (Andalusia) 5.7% (Spain)	23.7% (Andalusia) 54.7% (Spain)
Law 45/2007, Law for the Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment. Rural environment, less than 30,000 inhabitants and density less than 100 inhabitants/km ²	739 (of 785)	22.9 % (Andalusia) 16.1% (Spain)	78.7 % (Andalusia) 84.1% (Spain)
Law 45/2007, Law for the Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment. Rural municipality, less than 5,000 inhabitants	528 (of 785)	10.5 % (Andalusia) 12.2% (Spain)	51.1 % (Andalusia) 70.7% (Spain)

Source: own elaboration based on data from the INE and IGN (2020).

5.2. Rural-Urban distinction in the Autonomous Community of Andalucía

From an institutional framework, and with greater transcendence in the application of rural development policies and programs, and as far as Andalusia is concerned, the OECD, the National Statistics Institute (INE), and the Spanish Government and the European Union have defined parameters to differentiate rural and urban territories in an operational manner (Table 9).

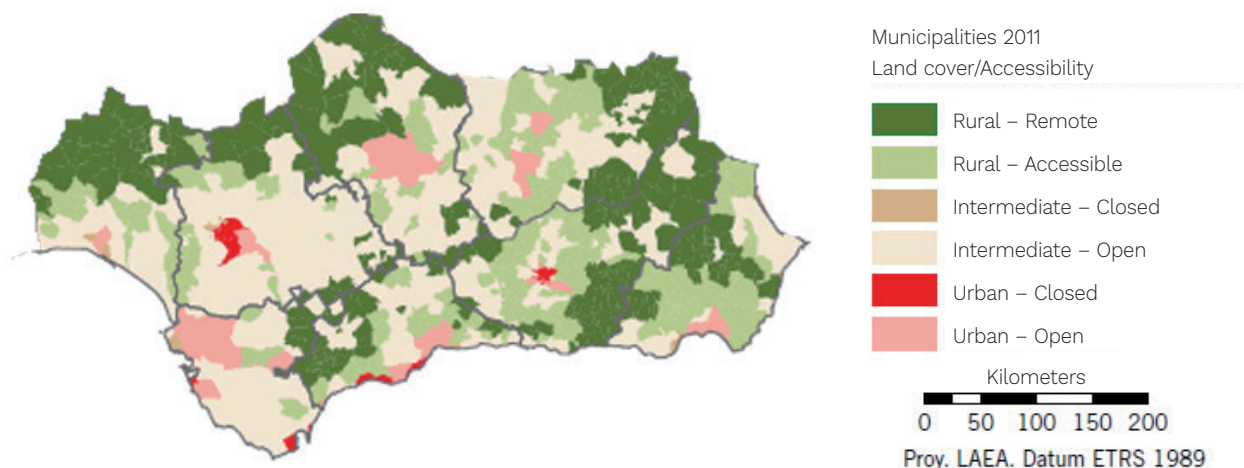
The analysis of the criteria described in Table 9 shows that measuring rurality with these parameters yields a variety of results that is inconclusive. According to the territory, between 70.7% and 90.2% of Spain's surface area is considered rural, while in Andalusia this figure is between 51.1% and 87.8%.

The European Union is promoting a criterion more in line with the characteristics of the territory and not dependent on administrative boundaries, using cells of 1 km² as a territorial unit and adding other pa-

rameters such as the resident population in each cell, land use, accessibility and altimetry. Reig, Goerlich and Cantarino, using this methodology with 2011 census data, describe three municipal typologies: urban (closed and open), intermediate (closed and open) and rural (accessible and remote), indicating that 13.7% of the Spanish population lives in rural municipalities. Eighty-three percent of Spanish municipalities are considered rural and occupy 73% of the national territory. In Andalucía (Map 5), 15.3% of the population lives in rural municipalities, which represent 70.4% of the municipalities and occupy 56.6% of the surface area (Goerlich *et al.*, 2016).

5.3. The challenge of the new information society for the rural areas of Andalusia

The economic structure of the Andalusian community has undergone a remarkable change since the middle of the 20th century. Although in the 1960s, around 65% of the active population of Andalusia was involved in agriculture (Gálvez, 2008), data from the fourth quarter of 2019 in-

Map 5. Municipalities by typology: demography, land cover and accessibility

Source: own elaboration from Reig, Goerlich and Cantarino, 2016: 103.

dicate that only 9.7% of Andalusians are employed in agriculture-related activities. Nonetheless, Andalusia, together with Extremadura (11.8%) and the Region of Murcia (10.8%), leads employment in this sector at the national level. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the service sector employs the greatest number of workers in Andalusia (66.8%) (INE, 2020).

The evolution of the agricultural sector, so closely linked to the rural world, indicates that since the fifties a process began of dismantling traditional agriculture. Irrigation increased and the definitive modernization of the sector was undertaken (Zambrana, 2006). This situation led to a notable exodus from the Andalusian countryside towards other territories outside and within the community (Map 6).

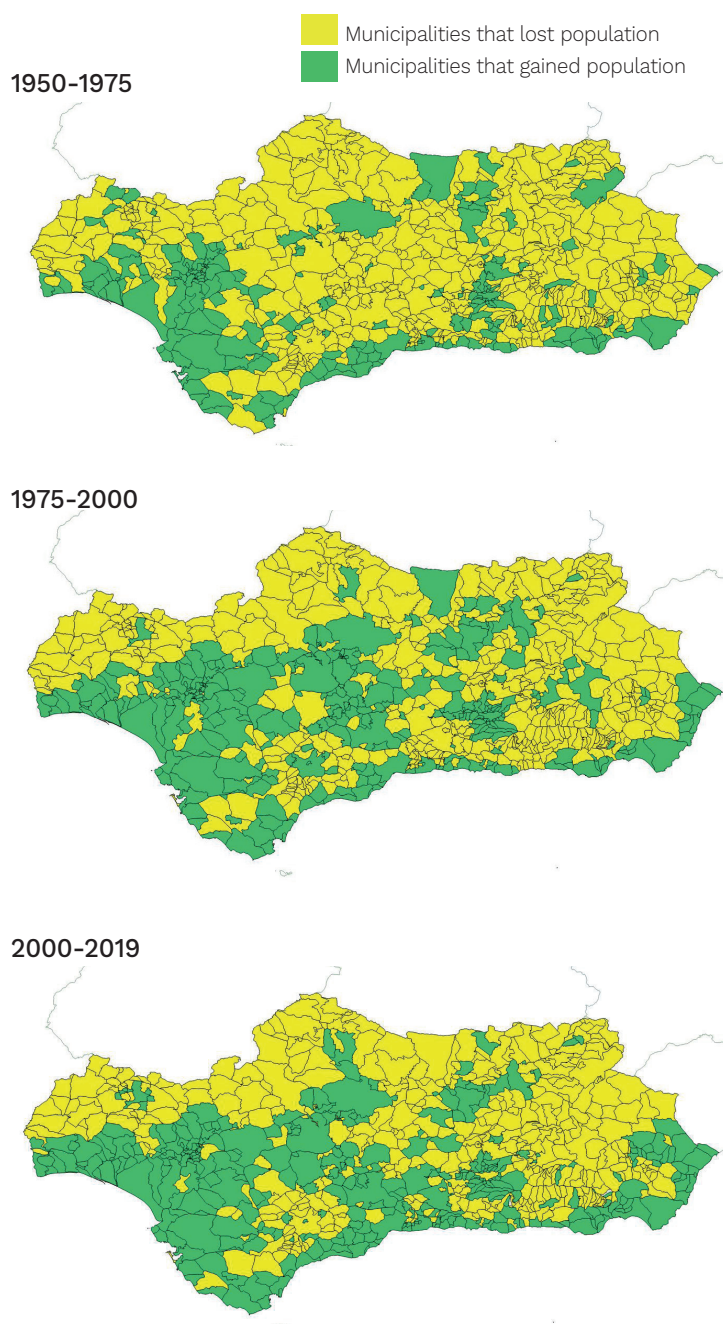
Most of the areas considered rural have undergone a process of diversification. This evolution has not been a homogeneous process. In Andalusia, certain rural areas have not been able to adapt, for various reasons, and are currently less developed, with low accessibility and lack of opportunities. Without losing their essence, other rural areas have followed a process of transformation and, while maintaining the characteristics of the territory, are developing a remarkable socio-economic activity (Entrena-Duran, 1998). Complementing traditional agriculture with industrial activity, the appearance of new sectors, as well as the improvement of infrastructures and the appearance of cultural currents for sustainability are necessary changes that would help to slow the decline of the rural world (Lacambra, 2001).

The digitalization of the territory and its inhabitants represents a real opportunity for the maintenance and empowerment of small municipalities. At present, we are witnessing a «perfect storm» if we take into account that: the territorial coverage of broadband internet is of lesser capacity the smaller the size of the municipality¹⁴, the rural population registers less use of ICT technologies. In addition, in these small municipalities, the average age of inhabitants is higher. It has been noted that the older the person the less the Internet is used¹⁵. The social digital divide must be reduced (Norris, 2001), which in-

14 The Secretary of State for the Digital Advance of the Ministry of Economy and Business publishes the detailed data of broadband coverage by autonomous community. As of June 30, 2018, ADSL coverage in Andalusia ≥ 10 Mbps varied from 87% for municipalities between 5,000 and 10,000 inhabitants to 29.7% in municipalities up to 500 inhabitants. Fixed network coverage at speeds ≥ 30 Mbps varied from 99.4% for towns with more than 500,000 inhabitants to 36.4% for towns with less than 500 inhabitants.

15 The survey on Equipment and Use of Information and Communication Technologies in the households of Andalusia, published by the Department of Innovation, Science and Enterprise of the Andalusian Government, in its 2019 wave, shows that only 60% of people over the age of 64 have used the Internet in the last year, when the average for the Andalusian population is around 90%. In municipalities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants, 83.8% of the population used the Internet last year, while in municipalities with more than 100,000 inhabitants and provincial capitals, the figure reached 94.3%.

Map 6. Andalusian municipalities that gained and lost population (1950-2019)



Source: own elaboration based on data from the INE and IGN (2020).

cludes differences in access between different regions, social groups and individuals, according to their economic capacity, sex, educational level, race or place of residence (Robles, 2005).

Andalusia has improved its digital connectivity. In 2006, 24.2% of Andalusian homes had a broadband connection (ADSL, cable network, etc.), which was 5% below the national average (29.3%). In 2019, 89.2% of Andalusian households had access to this

type of connection, while in Spain this figure was 91.2% (INE). Although very close to the national values, Andalucía only surpassed the communities of Castile-La Mancha, Galicia and Castile and Leon in the percentage of dwellings connected to broadband. It is not sufficient to have a digital network that reaches all inhabitants; accessibility, acceptability and social adaptability are essential (Morales, 2017).

Intelligent territories are an effective and feasible tool to combat depopulation and provide these locations with connectivity that facilitates the provision of basic services and the diversification of economic activity¹⁶. The Andalusian Government, through the Ministry of Economy, Knowledge, Business and University promotes various projects aimed at promoting and developing intelligent cities and territories¹⁷.

The development of Smart Cities, the use of Big Data and other digital tools have emerged as a new form of communication, information and data traffic. Their main focus is to improve environmental and economic sustainability, as well as the quality of life of citizens. Can the concept of Smart City be applied in rural areas?

One of the biggest problems facing small rural municipalities in Andalusia is their economic and demographic sustainability. The main disadvantages these communities face in order to retain or attract population stem from the lack of public services, job opportunities and other daily activities. Municipalities with less than 1,000 inhabitants in Andalusia risk losing services due to the difficulty of sustaining

¹⁶ Professor Carlos de las Heras is currently a member of the Working Group CTN 178/SC 6/GT 1, which drafted the UNE PNE 178601 standard «Territorios rurales inteligentes: definición, atributos y requisitos».

¹⁷ The most recent measure is the Resolution of 31 January 2020 of the Directorate General for the Digital Economy and Innovation. Aid consisting of the development, execution and implementation of intelligent development initiatives in the scope of the cities and territories of Andalusia, through the use of ICTs, with the aim of promoting the intelligent transformation of cities and territories for the benefit of citizens.

them; however, the creative application of ICTs in these territories can contribute not only to their maintenance but also by activating new opportunities. Innovation is not only an instrument that can improve the functioning and competitiveness of companies and institutions; it is also a tool for improving the management of territories (Maier, *et al.*, 1987).

Rural territories have unique characteristics that make it necessary to take targeted action, first to alleviate the shortcomings of the most basic services and structures needed for technological development, and second to develop social change and values towards new technologies. It is therefore a matter of implementing a scientific and technological culture at the service of inhabitants and visitors through citizen participation (del Rio, *et al.*, 2019).

Intelligent rural territories are the next step. The rural world is presented as a real opportunity for the development of new technologies focused on the settlement of the population and increasing the attractiveness for new inhabitants. Remote health care, interconnected training centers, digital administration, monitoring of farms, *online* commerce from the farms themselves, as well as the promotion of job opportunities in the ICT sector are just some examples of the new digital era adapted to rural territories.

6. Andalusia and migration: regions of origin and destination

Migratory movements have a decisive impact on the configuration of the new *information society*, influencing both the main demographic indicators and the configuration of the labor market and family structure of the population. In the first few years of the 21st century, Spain experienced an increase in all forms of internal migration without precedent since the 1960s (Recaño, 2015). The period of strong economic expansion at the beginning of this century meant the entry of more than six million immigrants from abroad, which had a great impact on all territorial and population levels. Between 2000 and 2009 the population of Andalusia increased by one million inhabitants; three out of every four new residents in Andalusia were due to immigration.

Migration patterns in Spain have been constantly evolving to the present day. From the middle of the 20th century until 1975, internal migration was the protagonist of regional population growth, notably influencing the rise and fall of the population in the different provinces according to the migration balances (Cabr , *et al.*, 1985). This stage was marked by the rural exodus of young people in search of better living conditions, which caused population effects that still persist in small municipalities, such as a marked age imbalance, and a high degree of masculinization. The decline in marriage rates in these areas of emigration is evident in the drop in the birth rate of the generations born in rural areas from 1960 onwards (Reca o 2017).

Between the 1970s and 1980s a new migration pattern emerged. The leading role of Catalonia, the Basque Country and Madrid and other urban industrial areas as receivers of population from areas with less economic development decreased. Return migrations began to take place from the areas of destination areas towards the regions of origin, such as Andalusia, Castile-La Mancha, Extremadura and Galicia. Finally, new spaces of migra-

tory attraction appeared, located on the Mediterranean coast, in the Ebro Valley and the Islands (Cabr , *et al.*, 1985).

Since the nineties, the exhausted rural-urban model has been displaced by a growing interurban mobility, where the service sector acquires greater relevance, supported by the local labor market. Although construction and hotels and restaurants continue to receive some inter-regional immigration, mobility between regions is considerably reduced, and the marked regional imbalances have diminished markedly as a result of development and aid programs from the European Union (Reca o, 2003). With the beginning of the new century, in the analysis of migratory movements, foreign immigration dominates, and even though it has been affected by the economic crisis, remains the predominant model to this day.

6.1. Internal and external migratory flows

The migration pattern in Andalusia continues to evolve, affected mainly by economic factors, the characteristics of its labor market and foreign immigration. As in the rest of Spain, the economic boom at the beginning of the 21st century and the subsequent crisis have marked the migratory trend. Andalusia has maintained immigration records above the Spanish average (Figure 8), with a less pronounced decline since 2008.

The balance between population entering and exiting the Andalusian community has been positive until 2012, which has

affected the size of the population. It is not until 2017 when a return to the positive balance between immigrants and emigrants occurs. In Spain, a positive migration balance has been recorded since 2015. In 2018, both Spain and Andalusia received approximately 14 new inhabitants for every 1,000 residents. In contrast, the Andalusian emigration rate in 2018 was 11.7 cases per 1,000 inhabitants, whereas in Spain this rate dropped to 6.6 per 1,000 inhabitants.

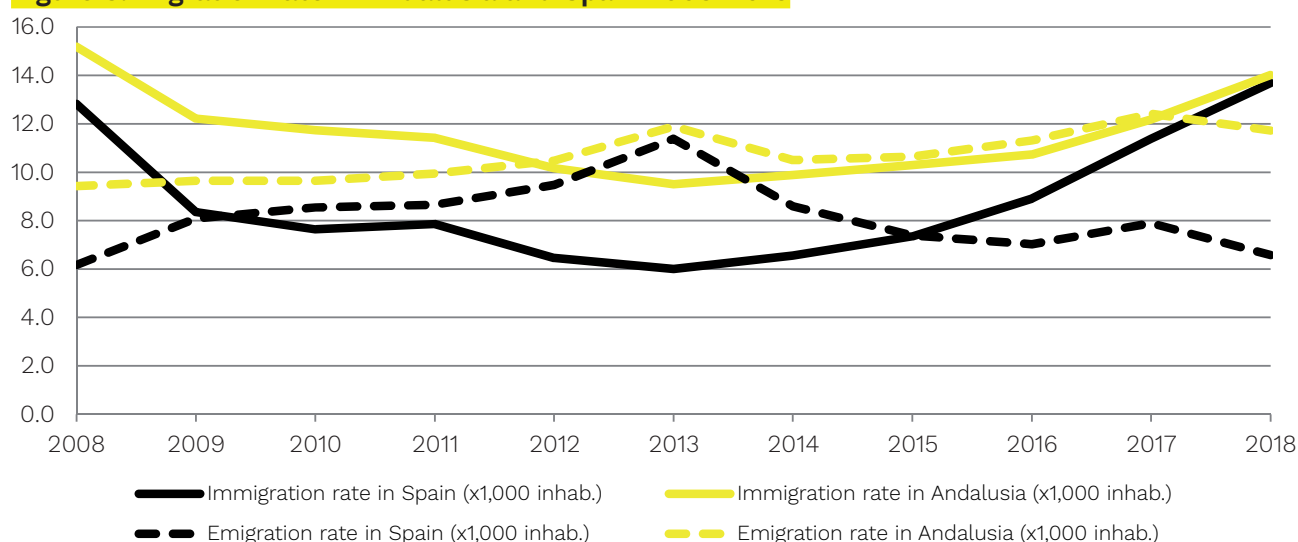
The influence of migratory balances on the size of the Andalusian population is of great importance. Between 2008 and 2019, Andalusia grew by 212,020 inhabitants (INE, 2020), 40% of which was due to the positive migratory balance. Andalusia received more than one million migrants in the decade 2008-2018 both from abroad and from other autonomous communities, but it also provided almost one million of them to other destinations (Table 10).

The increase in population in Andalusia caused by migratory flows is not uniformly distributed throughout the territory. In the decade between 2008 and 2018, the population of provinces such as Malaga increased by more than 90,000 people due to migration, Seville by more than 12,000 and Almeria by almost 10,000. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Jaen lost more than 30,000 inhabitants during this period, and Cordoba lost almost 13,000. Map 7 shows the provinces that have been recipients and senders of migrants in the last 10 years.

Migration processes have established a large diversity of nationalities. In Spain, 10.7% of its inhabitants were foreign nationals in 2019, while in Andalus , they accounted for 7.8%, although notable differences appeared between some provinces (Table 11). Almeria and Malaga had the highest numbers of foreign residents in the autonomous community, data associated with their main economic activity sectors and with increasing residential migration (Checa, *et al.*, 2018).

The foreign-born population maintains different migration standards from the native population, either because of a higher intensity of internal migration, or because of the migratory distance of their movements. These characteristics are ac-

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Figure 8. Migration rate in Andalusia and Spain 2008-2018


Source: own elaboration based on INE 2020 migration statistics.

The values shown in the figure correspond to: for Spain, the total number of immigrants and emigrants registered from 2008 to 2018; for Andalusia, in addition to migratory movements abroad, the values corresponding to immigration and emigration to and from other autonomous communities have been included.

centuated in the countries of southern Europe and therefore in the Andalusian community (Recaño and De Miguel, 2012). The settlement of people from abroad or from other communities in Andalusia has a significant territorial impact.

Table 10. Migrations in Andalusia and Spain (2008-2018)

	Andalusia	Spain
Population as of 1 January 2008	8,202,220	46,157,822
Population as of 1 January 2019	8,414,240	47,026,208
Population increase 2008-2018	212,020	868,386
% Population increase 2008-2018	2.58%	1.88%
Immigration from abroad 2008-2018	578,806	4,547,033
Immigration from other autonomous communities 2008-2018	493,863	
Emigration abroad 2008-2018	442,076	4,209,888
Emigration to another autonomous community 2008-2018	545,581	
Total cumulative immigration 2008-2018	1,072,669	4,547,033
Total cumulative emigration 2008-2018	987,657	4,209,888
Cumulative migration balance 2008-2018	+85,012	+337,145
Population increase between 2008-2018 due to migration	40.1%	38.8%

Source: own elaboration based on INE 2020 migration statistics.

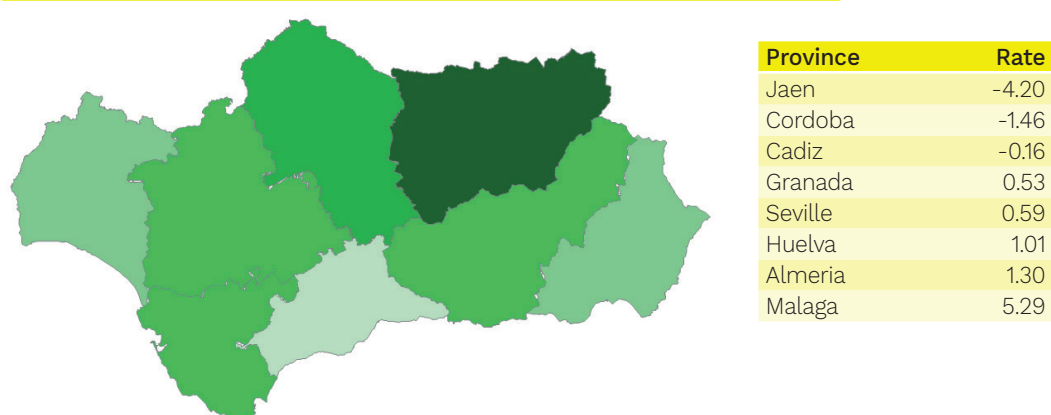
To detect which geographic areas are attractive for immigration, the percentage of the resident population by municipality born outside Andalusia was analyzed. It was discovered that the influence of those born in another autonomous community on the total population of the municipality is not very significant, in most cases reaching just 15% (Guadalcanal in Seville, Los Blázquez in Cordoba, or Siles in Jaen). By contrast, the percentage of the resident population born abroad in each municipality reaches, in many cases, is above 30%, mainly in Malaga and Almeria (Map 8).

Geographic mobility has declined as of the second decade of the 21st century, following the disappearance of the exceptional conditions at the beginning of the century. The appeal of the territories to attract immigrants continues to be heterogeneous in our community and is concentrated along the Mediterranean coast and areas of high agricultural production.

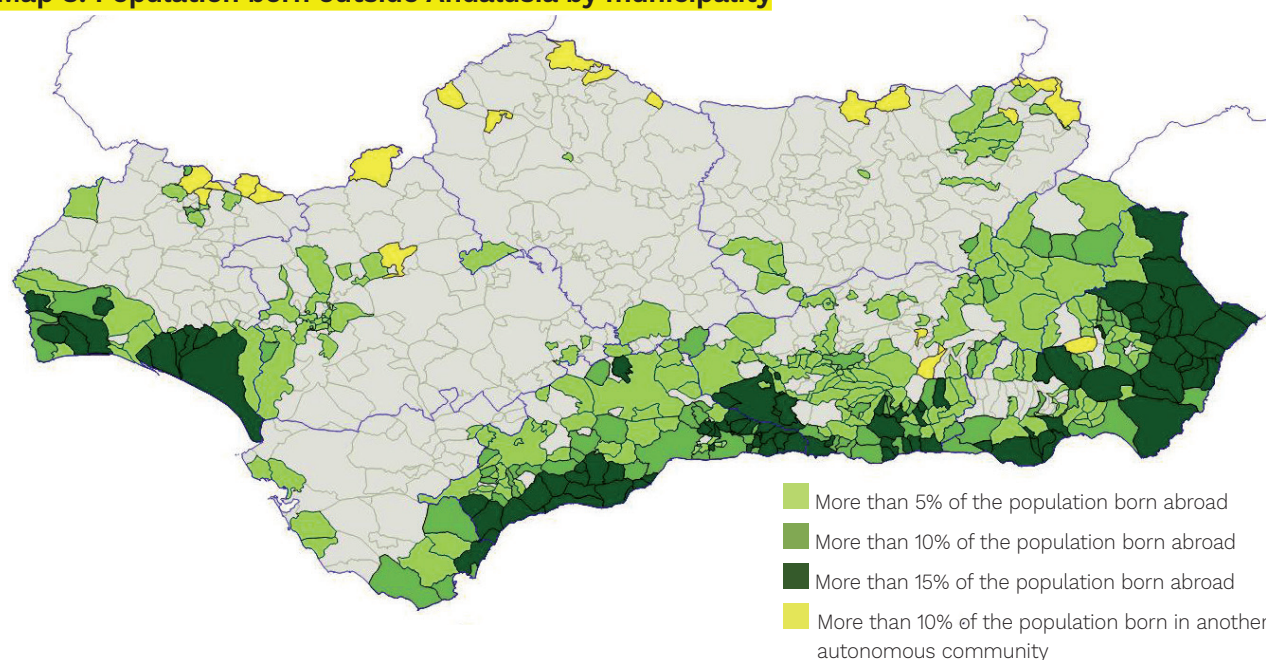
Table 11. Percentage of foreigners (2019)

	TOTAL	Spaniards	Foreigners	% Foreigners
SPAIN	47,026,208	41,989,330	5,036,878	10.71%
ANDALUSIA	8,414,240	7,758,685	655,555	7.79%
Almeria	716,820	570,912	145,908	20.35%
Cadiz	1,240,155	1,194,830	45,325	3.65%
Cordoba	782,979	761,876	21,103	2.70%
Granada	914,678	853,709	60,969	6.67%
Huelva	521,870	477,032	44,838	8.59%
Jaen	633,564	618,192	15,372	2.43%
Malaga	1,661,785	1,408,632	253,153	15.23%
Seville	1,942,389	1,873,502	68,887	3.55%

Source: own elaboration based on the Population Series of the INE 2020.

Map 7. Average migration rate (2008-2018) (x1000 inhabitants)

Source: own elaboration based on INE 2020 migration statistics.

Map 8. Population born outside Andalusia by municipality

Source: own elaboration based on the Population Series of the INE (2019).

7. Conclusions

Andalusia is currently moving towards a *new information society*, in which knowledge, new technologies and globalization will play an increasingly important role (Torres, 2015). This transition will affect social values and structures as well as our territorial distribution and demographic behavior. This booklet in the *Actualidad* collection provides an in-depth look at the situation facing our autonomous community in this new cycle, paying special attention to new population trends and their impact on the territory. This picture should be taken in light of our historical background and its specific expression in areas such as: homes and families, the rural world or migratory phenomena. The transformation of the private spheres, the revolution in the rural world as a result of ICTs and the greater geographic mobility of the population are phenomena that will have a crucial effect on the Andalusia of the future and will involve new demands but also a «new train» in our socio-economic development.

The demographic situation in Andalusia follows the same patterns as other communities in Spain. With just over 8.4 million people, it is Spain's most populated region, with an increase of almost 1.1 million people since the beginning of the century, mainly due to the increase in life expectancy and the arrival of the immigrant population. However, despite starting from a position better than the national average, our socio-demographic indicators are rapidly adapting to the same trends as the rest of Spain. In 2018, and for the first time in the modern history of Andalusia, a negative natural balance was reached, that is, more people died than were born in this region (IECA, 2020).

This demographic transformation has not affected all of our geography equally. More than half of the Andalusian municipalities have less population at present than in the year 2000; there has been an important loss of population in those with less than 10,000 inhabitants, with an accelerated aging process in these centers. The mountainous areas of all of northern Andalusia, along with various areas of the interior, are experiencing an accelerated population decline. Provinces including Jaen, particularly, but also Cordoba, the Alpujarras of Granada and Almeria, the interior of the province

of Malaga and the mountains of Huelva are facing a significant population decrease in their small and medium municipalities. This situation will become more critical in the coming years, when several decades of demographic decline will accumulate, and there will be more elderly than young. Projections indicate that the year 2040 will be an important turning point, as our country will reach the highest life expectancy in the world (half of the children born will live to be 100), but the total population will start to increasingly decline.

Following the postulates of the information society (Castells, 1996), the population is more concentrated in the provincial capitals, and there is a decrease in medium and small municipalities. This transformation is directly reflected in the composition of households and families. We are witnessing an accelerated loss of persons per household and an increase in single-person households due mainly to structural factors such as the decline in fertility and the increase in the number of older persons but also to cultural factors reflecting the trends of the newly emerging society. The new gradual scenario of aging to which we are heading will bring with it significant demands for care, an increase in very significant territorial differences, and the need to anticipate structural reforms for the maintenance of our welfare state.

Individualistic values, together with the new opportunities provided by ICTs in the private sphere (Ayuso, 2015) and changing lifestyles, are leading to significant changes in life cycles. There is a growing number of life stages leading up to the formation of a family, and these stages have become longer and more delayed. As a result, it takes longer to finish studying, longer to find a stable economic position, longer to marry, and therefore the arrival of children is delayed in those cases where it is planned, in many cases prevent-

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ing couples from conceiving the number of children they want. Two aspects are fundamental in the development of Andalusian families and directly affect fertility: on the one hand, the processes of emancipation that do not allow young people to develop their own life project at an early age; and on the other hand, the measures related to work-life balance and joint responsibility within the family. Both phenomena should cause us to reflect on the role of children in society and the need to listen to and understand the families themselves.

One of the most important questions surrounding the future structure of Andalusia concerns how the trends of the new information society will take shape in rural areas. There is a general consensus on the need to balance services, people and territories throughout our community, bearing in mind that people have universal rights, regardless of the territories in which they live. The rural world has always been very important in Andalusia to understand our social and economic structure, and of course our culture (Jiménez de Madariaga and Hurtado, 2012). The evolution experienced by Andalusia has been very significant due to the processes of disaggregation and tertiarization that have blurred the very definition of what is rural. This phenomenon, however, has not been homogeneous throughout the territory. Some rural areas due to various factors have not been able to adapt and are still less developed, with low accessibility and lack of opportunities, while others represent centers of dynamism and attraction within the same rural world.

The digitalization of the territory, the importance of environmental issues and the new economic and quality of life opportunities offered in these areas are very important potential factors. The information society is characterized by a decreasing importance of physical space and high geographic mobility supported by a highly computerized territory. This can be a very important advantage for rural areas provided this infrastructure is in place and this change is well understood, as these areas are ultimately dependent on the cultural and innovative capacity of their own inhabitants to implement this change. As Pérez Yruela points out, the development of rural areas ultimately depends on «the attitude adopted by their population and the degree of involvement of their people, insisting that it is the cooperative will of the population that makes it possible to

take advantage of the many opportunities offered today by the vertiginous process of change in which contemporary societies are engaged» (Yruela, 2002; Moscoso, 2005).

Another of the unknowns of this new society concerns migratory processes and geographic mobility, which can give Andalusia the potential to attract population, which seems fundamental for the future; Andalusia continues to receive around one hundred thousand immigrants each year, which is offset by somewhat lower departures. We must maintain the economic momentum and expand the number of receiving locations that offer opportunities and attractiveness for the settlement of the population.

The information society is characterized by a decreasing importance of physical space and high geographic mobility supported by a highly computerized territory. This can be a very important advantage for rural areas provided this infrastructure is in place and this change is well understood

The analysis of the new structural trends in Andalusia, both from a territorial and social perspective, indicates that we are facing one of the most important challenges of our recent history: having to face, just as most of advanced societies, a scenario of greater population aging, a growing urban concentration, and significant depopulation in the territories furthest away from large cities. This entails having to respond to challenges related to all sectors and institutions that constitute our autonomous community, from the very desires and needs of the Andalusian population, to maintaining our economic dynamism and social and territorial cohesion throughout our territory. We must work to transform this challenge into an opportunity that will enable Andalusia to become more dynamic, provide greater opportunities for young and old, achieve sustainability, improve the structuring and development of different rural areas, environmental protection and balance, and, finally, to ensure and strengthen our welfare system.

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