

GEOGRAPHY  
INDIVIDUAL COURSEWORK

HOW AND WHY DOES THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
DIFFER BETWEEN THE LA MINA AND  
DIAGONAL MAR DISTRICTS OF BARCELONA?

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## **SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION**

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# 1. OUTLINE KEY AIMS AND QUESTIONS OF MY STUDY

## 1.1

### Aim of Investigation:

To Study *how* and *why* does the Quality of Life differ between the Diagonal Mar and La Mina districts of Barcelona.

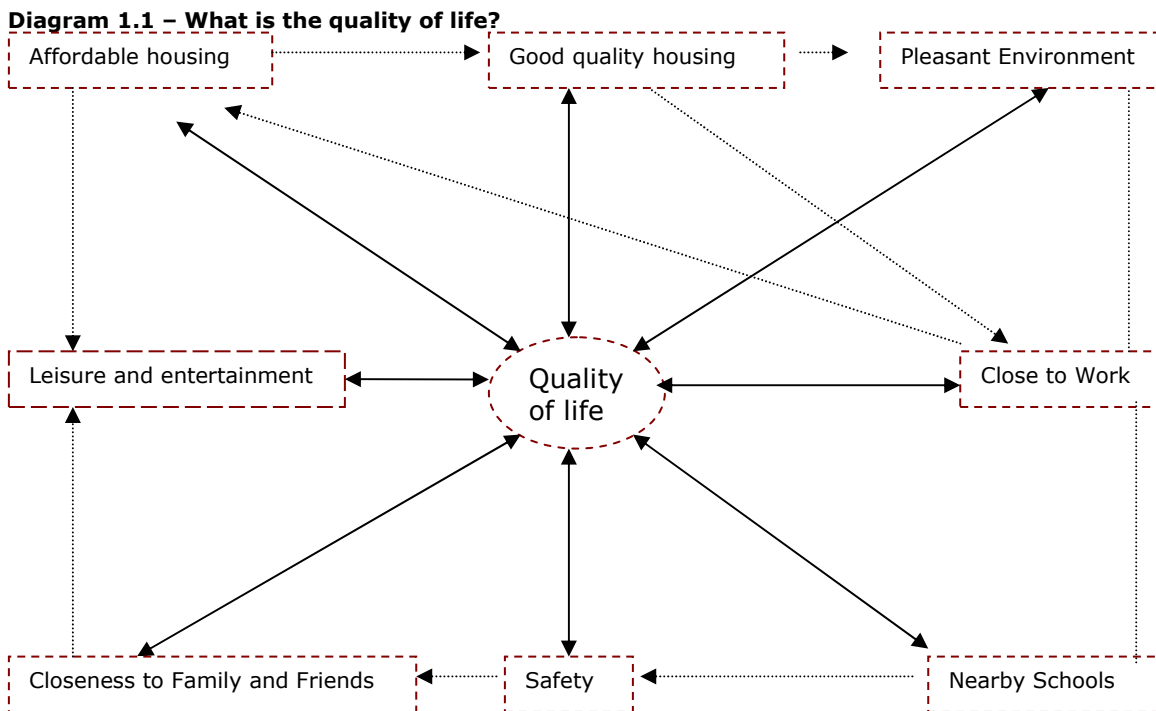
### Key Questions

- ◇ How do the areas differ socially, environmentally and economically?
- ◇ Why do the differences exist?
  - Have the area influenced the quality of life of each other?
  - How, if at all, can Geographical Models explain the differences?
  - How, if at all, has urban regeneration schemes/development plans affected the quality of life in the two districts?

## 2. INTRODUCTIONS

### 2.1 Defining quality of life

For a residential district, the quality of life is dependent on several factors illustrated in **Diagram 1.1**. A community that offers as much of these factors as possible can often provide the optimal quality of life, and is therefore pleasant and attractive to live in.



### 2.2 Background of Diagonal Mar

As a post-industrial city, Barcelona may be subject to urban fragmentation in a way similar to that of Los Angeles, where the population is polarized into rich and poor. Diagonal Mar Park may represent the city's rich – an American style gated residential community located on the city's southeast coast (location shown in **map 1.1**) that is currently the city's largest redevelopment site. Diagonal Mar is designed to attract Barcelona's young professionals stereotyped as the

“Yuppies”, and as a gated community, it is expected to have specific impacts on the neighborhood, as listed in **Table 1.1** below.

**Table 1.1 – Impacts of a gated community (Source: [www.geographyfieldwork.com](http://www.geographyfieldwork.com))**

Positive	Negative
No ‘through traffic’	Community rules may be restrictive
Safe	Segregate people to a certain extent
Private leisure facilities	Inconveniences for home services
Residents share similar social status	Depends on Private contribution for maintenance or renovations
a strong pride of ownership	Complex ownership laws and rights

### 2.3 Background of La Mina



**Photo 1.1**

La Mina is one of Barcelona’s “poor” districts, known as a sink-estate of social deprivation, introversion and a mini-state of the Gitanos (who occupy 35% of local population).

Until late 1960s, La Mina was little more than an area of cultivated field close to the old industrial core on the coast (location see **map 1.1**). The area was eventually built up to provide low rent housing for itinerant workers from less developed parts of Spain (e.g. Andalucía). Since then, the area has divided into the Old Mina and the New Mina, the reasons explained in **Table 1.2**.

**Table 1.2 – Features of Old Mina and New Mina (source: [www.barrimina.org](http://www.barrimina.org))**

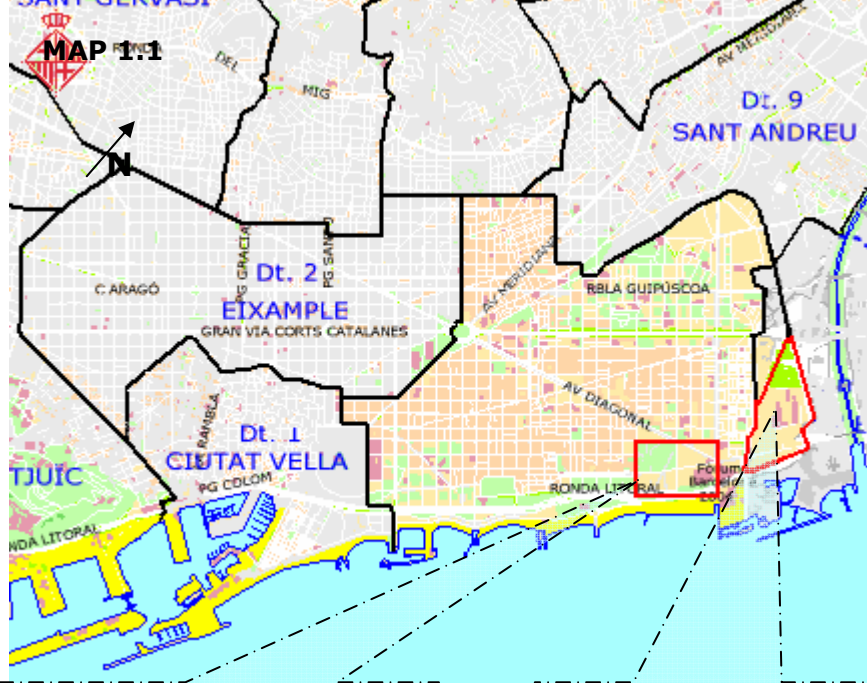
Old Mina	New Mina
Was the first wave of construction	result of a remodeling plan after the Old Mina
Includes 500 apartments	consists of 6 “matchbox” blocks with 2100 new apartments
Proved in sufficient to relocate industrial slum dwellers	designed to support high population: as many as 10 people / flat

Today, after 45 years, one would expect La Mina to have developed well-balanced residential community. However, this is not the case. The area is infamous with newspaper headlines (like that attached in the Appendix), featuring: “La Mina, district without law.”

The construction of Diagonal Mar adjacent (500m) to La Mina is part of Barcelona’s tradition of using investments to bring about social regeneration. It would be interesting to see, therefore, if the construction Diagonal Mar influenced the quality of life in both areas, and if not, why not.

### 3. LOCATION

Map 1.1 – Location of La Mina and Diagonal Mar (Source: [www.bcn.es](http://www.bcn.es))



#### Diagonal Mar:

- the area is located along the coast line
- the zone is next to the main artery of the city, Av. Diagonal

#### La Mina:

- Once an industrial core of the city, making use of the adjacent river Besos
- the area is located just on the outskirts of the city
- the area is only 500m away from Diagonal Mar

## SECTION TWO DATA COLLECTION

### KEY CONTENT:

- 1 . **SAMPLING**
- 2 . **DATA TYPE**
- 3 . **DETAILED METHODOLOGY**
  - 3-1. Environmental Survey
  - 3-2. Residential Decay
  - 3-3. Survey of Perception
  - 3-4. Index of Service and Amenities

The purpose of Data Collection is to provide supportive evidence to demonstrate how the quality of life differs between the two districts. Factors affecting quality of life (**Diagram 1.1**, page 4) can be divided into three main groups: social, environmental and perceptual, I will base my data collection on these three groups.