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## Exposure and Vulnerability Toward Summer Energy Poverty in the City of Madrid: A Gender Perspective

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# 1 Exposure and Vulnerability towards Summer Energy Poverty in the

# 2 City of Madrid: A Gender Perspective

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#### 6 Abstract

7 Recent research has addressed the special relationship between energy poverty and women. Despite that not 8 many studies are yet available, results show that there might be strong gender inequalities connected with 9 household's energy deprivation. Furthermore, differentiated health impacts have been detected between men and 10 women, putting women into a more vulnerable position. In this sense, the so-called feminization of energy poverty 11 is urging a revision of the existing studies from a gender perspective to foster its inclusion within energy poverty 12 alleviation policies. The present study explores the links between summer energy poverty and gender in the city of 13 Madrid. Summer energy poverty is considered another variety of energy deprivation particularly relevant within 14 mid- and low-latitude countries, in which energy consumption for cooling is heavily increasing. It also seems to be 15 particularly relevant in cities in which the urban heat island introduces relevant variations in the microclimatic 16 conditions that might increase the housing-cooling demand. Following the methodology developed in previous 17 studies, the risk of suffering from summer energy poverty is, in this paper, explored considering the household's 18 gender composition. The geospatial distribution of their vulnerability is compared with other indicators related to 19 their exposure to high temperatures: the housing energy efficiency and the cooling degree hours. The evaluation 20 at the sub-municipal scale is carried out among the different subgroups in which a woman is the main breadwinner: 21 single women with children and single women over 65 years old. Their situation is also compared to those 22 households in which a man is the main breadwinner. The analysis of the selected variables is conducted using a 23 hotspot analysis, which evaluates the autocorrelation of each variable according to its spatial distribution. Results 24 show that women living alone and above 65 years old seem to be under the highest risk. They concentrate in areas 25 with low energy-efficient housing stock and strong urban heat island intensities. On a general basis, the income 26 gap between women and men makes it advisable to address energy poverty with a gender perspective.

27 Keywords: summer energy poverty, gender perspective, intra-urban variations, feminization, urban heat island

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### 28 1 Introduction

29 Climate change projections for Europe suggest that the current temperature rise will continue throughout this century (IPCC 2013), which will coincide with an increase in the frequency and intensity 30 31 of heat waves (Tebaldi et al. 2006). These temperatures will be higher in urban areas, where the urban 32 heat island (UHI) phenomenon produces temperature increases that can exceed 12 °C in comparison 33 to their immediate rural areas (Gago et al. 2013; Oke et al. 2017). In that sense, and despite having 34 focused its development on the inability to keep households at an adequate temperature during winter, 35 the analysis of energy poverty is beginning to extend beyond under-heated months (Moore 2012). This 36 new dimension of fuel poverty is known as summer energy poverty.

### 37 1.1 Summer Energy Poverty

38 Despite that there is not a specific definition, summer energy poverty can be understood as the inability 39 to keep the house at an adequate temperature during the hottest months. According to the Energy Poverty Observatory (European Commission 2020), households might experience this situation due to 40 41 a combination of factors: low income, inefficient building and appliances, high energy expenditures and 42 specific energy needs. Although the definition of energy poverty includes heating and cooling needs in 43 both the European and Spanish context (European Commission 2020; Ministerio para la Transición 44 Ecológica 2019), the statistical databases do not reflect these situations equally. An example of this is 45 that the last (and only) time European citizens were asked about their inability to keep their homes at a 46 comfortable temperature during summer was back in 2012 (European Commission 2012). In a similar 47 way, the last time Spanish households were asked about the availability of cooling systems was in the 48 2001 Census (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2004). 49 However, the lack of statistical information has not prevented researchers from incorporating the 50 summer energy perspective into the study of energy poverty. Several studies from around the world, such as in Australia (Moore et al. 2017), the UK (Mavrogianni et al. 2015; Wolf et al. 2010), Chile (Rubio-51 52 Bellido et al. 2017) and Italy (Pisello et al. 2017), have evaluated the resilience of vulnerable homes to 53 high temperatures. Others have worked on the identification of summer energy poverty in the European

- 54 context (Sánchez-Guevara et al. 2019; Santamouris and Kolokotsa 2015; Thomson et al. 2019). 55 Researchers have even begun to explore various strategies to provide fresh and safe spaces for the
- 56 population (Pearsall 2017; Sanchez and Reames 2019) or to improve the local and intergenerational
- 57 connections and provide community assistance to the most vulnerable people (Sampson et al. 2013).
- 58 A wide range of studies is, thus, beginning to be carried out to analyze the causes, consequences and
- 59 possible solutions to alleviate summer energy poverty.

## 60 **1.2 The Feminization of Energy Poverty**

61 In recent years, several studies have mainstreamed a gender perspective into energy poverty (e.g., 62 Clancy et al. 2017; Clancy and Feenstra 2019; Gonzalez Pijuan 2017; Robinson 2019). Continuing with 63 this work, the FEMENMAD Project (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid 2019) has evaluated the 64 feminization of energy poverty in the city of Madrid (Sánchez-Guevara et al. 2020; Sanz Fernández et al. 2016). The results show that, while 23% of total households of Madrid suffer from energy poverty, it 65 66 rises to 29% in the case of those households where a woman is the main breadwinner. These values 67 increase even more for the situation of a single woman over 65 (39%) or a single mother with children 68 (41%) is assessed. In other words, single mothers with children are almost twice as likely to suffer from 69 energy poverty as the average of the household of Madrid.

70 Risks associated with a different physiological response to high temperatures are also relevant between 71 the sexes (Díaz et al. 2018; López-Bueno et al. 2019). Within the framework of the FEMENMAD project, 72 the differences in terms of mortality and emergency hospital admissions were also analyzed. Although 73 the differences found in mortality are explained by the difference in life expectancy between men and 74 women, it was found that, with each degree exceeding 36 °C, older women corresponding to the group 75 from 65- to 74-years old experienced an attributable risk increase of 4.6% in admissions for natural 76 causes. In the case of mortality due to circulatory causes, this percentage increased by 11.8% with 77 each degree, while no significant statistical association was found for men during heat waves. 78 Given the higher incidence of energy poverty among households in which a woman is the main 79 breadwinner and the higher vulnerability that some of these households might experience towards high 80 temperatures, the present study explores their risk of suffering from summer energy poverty using the

81 following approach.

88 89

90

### 82 2 Methodological Approach

The risk of suffering from energy poverty can be assessed through the spatial analysis of proxy indicators, as several studies have shown in recent years (Gouveia et al. 2019; März 2018; Tomlinson et al. 2011). These indicators are mapped and analyzed in order to find those areas where energy poor are more likely to be found. In this study, the risk of summer energy poverty is defined by the following expression:

 $Risk = Exposure \cap Vulnerability$ 

91 Here, the risk depends on the intersection of households' exposure with households' vulnerability to 92 high temperatures. Both exposure and vulnerability to high temperatures were measured through several indicators that were represented and treated spatially. Their degree of autocorrelation helped 93 94 determine the areas where the highest values of each one of these indicators were concentrated (ESRI 95 2016a). These areas of concentration, called *hotspots*, were determined with a 90% confidence interval. Then, from the overlap of these hotspots, the areas with a higher risk were obtained together with the 96 97 elements that characterize each one of them. To facilitate the comparison between the different cases, 98 all indicators were presented by deciles. The spatial unit of the results is the census section of 2018.

## 99 2.1 Households Exposure to High Temperatures

The indicators used in Sánchez-Guevara et al. (2019) were taken as representative of those areas where a greater expenditure of energy could be given to keep home at an adequate temperature. These are, on the one hand, the energy performance of the building during the summer and, on the other hand, the cooling degree hours (CDH), which were estimated for both day and night. Since all domestic active cooling systems rely on electricity, the price of energy was not considered.

### 105 2.1.1 Energy Performance of the Housing Stock

The energy performance of buildings during summer was indirectly derived from the year of construction, in a similar way as was done in the *Technical Study on Energy Poverty in the City of Madrid* (Sanz Fernández et al. 2016). The year of construction reflects on a general basis both the construction characteristics of buildings and the regulations in force in that time (Instituto para la Diversificación y Ahorro de la Energía 2011). It was obtained from the Spanish Land Registry (Ministerio de Hacienda

- 111 2019) for each residential building in the city of Madrid. Table 1 shows the relationship between the
- 112 year of construction and the estimated energy performance of the buildings, while **Figure 1** shows the
- delimitation of the *hotspot* for the energy performance indicator. The housing with the worst energy
- 114 performances during summer seems to concentrate around the central area of the city. These buildings,
- 115 mostly constructed during the 1960s and 1970s, are characterized by the low quality of the construction,
- 116 with low thermal inertia and the absence of thermal insulation.
- 117 **Table 1** Energy performance of buildings during summer

	Year of construction	Percentage of total buildings	Construction characteristics	
High	Before 1940	11%	Built of masonry, characterized by high thermal inertia and the use of shading devices to protect the openings from solar radiation.	
	After 2006	25%	Built after the adoption of the Spanish Building Code (Código Técnico de la Edificación, 2019). Energy-saving and energy-efficiency criteria were introduced.	
Average	1981 to 2006	7%	Built after the approval of the basic building regulation on thermal conditions (Gobierno de España, 1979), which introduced minimum insulation requirements.	
Low	1941 to 1960	17%	Built of the post-Civil War period, no regulations applied. It is characterized by cheap materials with no quality standards.	
	1961 to 1980	40%	Constructed during an expansive economic cycle, no regulations applied. Low- guality construction. Low thermal inertia. Absence of thermal insulation.	



118

119 Fig. 1 Spatial distribution of the indicator associated with the energy performance of buildings during summer

### 120 2.1.2 CDH on the Microclimatic Scale

Cooling degree hours were estimated as the number of degrees that, for each hour of the day, the 121 122 outdoor air temperature is above a certain reference temperature. Given the significant temperature 123 differences that can be recorded in Madrid due to the UHI (Núñez Peiró et al. 2017), the data collected by a network of 20 sensors deployed during the MODIFICA Project (Universidad Politécnica de Madrid 124 2014) was used to determine the outdoor air temperature of each urban area. These sensors were 125 126 distributed throughout the municipality following contextualization criteria that would guarantee their 127 representativeness of the urban environment (Núñez Peiró et al. 2019) and were complemented with 128 the records of three observatories from the Spanish Meteorological Agency (AEMET). The reference

temperature, on the other hand, was defined as the comfort temperature established by the ASHRAE 129 130 adaptive comfort standard (ASHRAE 2013; de Dear and Brager 1998). Since this standard does not contemplate sleeping hours (11 pm to 7 pm), two different reference temperatures, daytime and 131 nighttime, were used. The daytime reference temperature was, thus, fixed at 28.3 °C for June and at 132 28.4 °C for July and August. On the other hand, a temperature of 27 °C was established for the nights, 133 in accordance with the criterion of the Spanish Building Code (Código Técnico de la Edificación, 2019). 134 Finally, the day and nighttime CDHs were spatially interpolated for the entire city using a kriging, a tool 135 available in the geostatistical analysis module of ArcGIS (ESRI 2016b; Oliver and Webster 1990). 136

Figure 2 shows the corresponding *hotspots* for high temperatures on the microclimatic scale. The concentration of a higher amount of CDH in the city center during the night corresponds to the typical concentric distribution of the UHI, while during the day the highest temperatures take place in the southcentral area of the city. Despite the obvious differences between the day and nighttime CDH, there are some southern areas of the city in which high temperatures might be concentrated 24 hours a day.



142

143 Fig. 2 Spatial distribution of CDH during the night (left) and during the day (right)

### 144 2.2 Gender-related Vulnerability of Households

145 To incorporate the gender perspective in this study, the indicators of vulnerability to high temperatures were defined in relation to the concentration of households in which women are the main breadwinners. 146 Households with a single woman over 65 and with a single woman with children were, therefore, used as 147 148 indicators of vulnerability. The data used in this study was extracted from the municipal statistical database (Ayuntamiento de Madrid 2018), which provides the total number of households according to their 149 composition and by census section. The situation of each one of these vulnerable households was 150 compared with their male counterparts, aiming at detecting differences in their spatial distribution, degree of 151 exposure to high temperatures and any relationship with other relevant indicators. All these indicators were 152 treated using the same statistical analysis tools as done with the exposure indicators, thus generating 153 hotspots for the identification of areas with the greatest concentration of vulnerable households. 154

### 155 2.2.1 Households with a Single Women over 65

The concentration of households with a single person over 65, both men and women, is shown in **Figure 3**. While single men over 65 tend to inhabit the north-central part of the city, women are

- distributed in a ring around the city center, living in the northern, eastern and southern areas of the city.
- 159 Although *hotspots* of both men and women seem to have a similar dimension, the total number of
- 160 households concentrated in these areas are different. Single women over 65 represent 10% of the total
- households of Madrid, while this percentage reduces to 3% in the case of men.



162

163 Fig. 3 On the left, the spatial distribution of the vulnerability indicator associated with single women over 65 years

164 old. On the right, the situation of their male counterparts

165 2.2.2 Households of a Single Woman with Children

**Figure 4** shows the concentration of single-parent households led by women and men. Both *hotspots* concentrate on the outskirts of the city. Male single-parent households are mostly found in the northern part of the city, while female single-parent households are distributed as well in the eastern and southern parts. In comparison with the total amount of households of the city, single-parent households account for 2.5% and, again, women comprise most of them (83% of single-parent households).

171

## 172 3 Results

**Table 2** summarizes the result of overlapping the indicators associated with a greater exposure to high temperatures with the indicators of greater vulnerability in the city of Madrid. Among single women over 65, 41.1% live in areas where there is at least one overlap with an exposure indicator. In the case of their male counterparts, this percentage drops to 33.9%. This situation is repeated when analyzing the overlaps with two (12.6% vs 7.2%) and three (2.5% vs 0.7%) indicators. Similarly, and even though this is not an indicator of exposure but related with the expenditure capacity, women are more concentrated in the areas of Madrid where the lowest incomes concentrate (7.7% vs 1.0%).

180



181

182 Fig. 4 On the left, the spatial distribution of the vulnerability indicator associated with single-parent households led

183 by women. On the right, the situation of their male counterparts

184

185 **Table 2** Percentage of households living in areas with a higher risk of suffering from summer energy poverty

	Single women		Single men	
Exposure indicators		with children	over 65	with children
One overlap		4.7%	33.9%	3.7%
Daytime CDH	9.8%	3.3%	5.6%	1.1%
Nighttime CDH	21.3%	1.1%	23.4%	0.7%
Buildings performance	25.0%	1.8%	12.8%	2.8%
Two overlaps	12.6%	1.3%	7.2%	0.7%
Daytime and nighttime CDH	7.3%	1.1%	5.5%	0.7%
Daytime CDH and buildings performance	4.8%	0.4%	0.7%	0.3%
Nighttime CDH and building performance	5.4%	0.2%	2.4%	0.3%
Three overlaps		0.2%	0.7%	0.3%
Daytime CDH, nighttime CDH and building performance	2.5%	0.2%	0.7%	0.3%
Low income indicator		1.0%	3.6%	0.0%

186

187 Regarding their exposition to high temperatures, the situation of single women over 65 also differs from 188 men: While both groups tend to suffer from high nighttime temperatures (21.3% vs 23.4%), women are 189 more prone to concentrate in areas with less efficient buildings (25.0% vs 12.8%). Figure 5 also shows 190 that women tend to occupy more areas to the south, where several exposure indicators overlap and, 191 thus, where the highest risk areas are located. These, which seem to concentrate in the districts of 192 Carabanchel, Usera and, to a lesser extent, Puente de Vallecas, Retiro and Tetuán, are coincident with 193 other vulnerable population areas revealed in previous studies (Sánchez-Guevara Sánchez et al. 2017).



Fig. 5 On the left, the risk of suffering from summer energy poverty for single women over 65. On the right, resultsobtained for their male counterparts

As for single-parent households, **Figure 6** shows the distribution for both headed by a woman and those headed by a man. Despite the fact that these households tend to be concentrated in the outskirts of the city, where they are less likely to suffer the highest temperatures during summer or to inhabit buildings with the poorest energy performance, the situation of women is still relatively worse than the situation of men. Single women with children concentrate on 4.7% of occasions in areas with a certain degree of exposure and opposed to 3.7% in the case of single men with children. This situation is reproduced when analyzing higher risks, i.e., the overlap of two indicators (1.3% versus 0.7%).



204

205 Fig. 6 On the left, the risk of suffering from summer energy poverty for single women with children. On the right,

### 207 4 Discussion

208 Despite that single women with children seem to face relatively low risks from summer energy poverty. almost half of them are under general energy poverty since most of them are below the monetary 209 poverty line (Sánchez-Guevara et al. 2020; Sanz Fernández et al. 2016). While, in terms of exposure 210 211 to high temperatures, these households might be relatively better than the rest of the municipality, their 212 vulnerability puts them at a higher risk of suffering energy poverty during heat waves episodes, which 213 are expected to become more frequent in the next decades due to climate change. In this scenario and 214 given the increasing penetration of cooling systems in Spain (Idealista 2019), the use of social tariffs 215 might help to reduce the risk within this group. Cooling centers, which provide air-conditioned spaces 216 during heat waves, have proven to be effective as well (Sanchez and Reames 2019).

Although fostering the use of air conditioning among certain groups might be protective during 217 218 heatwaves, it might be a maladaptive strategy in the long run. The challenge might be not to increase 219 the cooling energy consumption but to lower indoor temperatures in the most efficient way. In that sense, 220 since the risk of suffering summer energy poverty among single women over 65 seems to be associated 221 with an inefficient housing stock, energy retrofitting of buildings seems to be a reasonable approach to 222 alleviate their situation. When possible, retrofitting should be accompanied by interventions in the public 223 space to help mitigate the UHI. Reducing the outdoor temperature would increase the effectiveness of 224 passive strategies, such as natural ventilation or evaporative cooling, and enhance the attractiveness 225 of ventilators, which are low-energy consumption cooling systems. Additionally, avoiding the use of air 226 conditioners would help to not contributing to the increase in the outdoor temperature (Sampson et al. 2013). 227

228 Regarding the limitations of this study, these are mainly related with data availability and disaggregation 229 barriers found both spatially and by gender. In that sense, socioeconomic indicators could not be 230 included to further explore the characteristics of each vulnerable group at the various locations. Despite 231 that these groups were derived from previous studies for the municipality of Madrid in which 232 socioeconomic indicators were used, relevant socioeconomic variations could be expected and should 233 be analyzed in future studies as soon as disaggregated data becomes available. Another source of 234 uncertainty relates to the building's energy performance indicators, which is only based on the year of 235 construction. Further research should incorporate other variables such as the orientation, the relative 236 position within the same building or the glazing area of the thermal envelope of the building, which does 237 certainly have an impact into the cooling loads.

238 Finally, and beyond the limitations of not including in the present study neither the intra-household 239 differences (Haddad and Kanbur 1992; Ponthieux and Meurs 2015) nor the greater risks associated 240 with a different physiological response to high temperatures (see Sect. 1.2), it should be noted that the combination of all single women over 65 and single-mother households in the city of Madrid accounts 241 242 for only one third of the total households in which a woman is a breadwinner. Derived from a lack of 243 disaggregation by gender, this situation could hide the vulnerabilities associated with other household compositions. Gender-disaggregated statistical data, together with a greater methodological 244 interconnection between the different databases and greater consistency and frequency of the provided 245 data would, consequently, not only facilitate mainstreaming the gender perspective into energy poverty 246 247 studies but increase the robustness of the results and ensure that they are monitored over the years.

### 248 5 Conclusions

- This study is a first exploration of the risks that households led by women might face regarding summer energy poverty. Two household typologies, single women over 65 and single women with children, were analyzed spatially at the sub-municipal scale. A methodology based on the intersection of vulnerability and exposure to high-temperature indicators was used, showing that households led by women, together with a greater vulnerability in comparison to those led by men, also tend to concentrate in areas in which a higher exposure to high temperatures can be expected.
- 255 Regarding the different household typologies, single women over 65 seem to accumulate the highest 256 risk of suffering from summer energy poverty. This risk is mostly associated with the energy 257 performance of their buildings during the summer months, but it is also related to high outdoor 258 temperatures due to the UHI effect. Since reducing the outdoor temperature would promote the use of 259 passive strategies, housing interventions should be coordinated with urban adaptation and mitigation 260 strategies to improve microclimatic conditions. On the other hand, single women with children tend to 261 concentrate on the outskirts of the city and live in relatively new housing stock. They seem to face a 262 relatively low risk towards summer energy poverty, although they might encounter relevant risks during 263 heatwaves given their limited economic capacity to cope with unforeseen energy expenditures. In this 264 context, providing financial assistance might be protective for those households with air conditioning 265 systems. For those without any cooling device, setting up cooling centers might be effective as well.
- Despite the limitations of not including other related variables, such as socioeconomic indicators, intrahousehold differences or the different physiological response towards high temperatures, the geospatial analysis based on proxy indicators has proved to be a useful tool to evaluate the relative risk of suffering from summer energy poverty at the sub-municipal scale and integrate a gender perspective. In that sense, policies aiming at mitigating summer energy poverty should consider the intra-urban variability of the phenomenon, prioritizing the most vulnerable areas and mainstreaming a gender perspective. To
- do so, further gender-disaggregated data should be collected in order to explore the situation of all
- 273 household typologies.

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