PARTECIPAZIONE e CONFLITTO
The Open Journal of Sociopolitical Studies
ISSN: 1972-7623 (print)
ISSN: 2035-6609 (online)
Coordinamento SIBA - University of Salento

PArtecipazione e COnflitto
http://siba-ese.unisalento.it/index.php/paco
ISSN: 1972-7623 (print version)
ISSN: 2035-6609 (electronic version)
PACO, Issue 16(1) 2023: 24-42
DOI: 10.1285/i20356609v16i1p24

Published 15 March 2023

RESEARCH ARTICLE

MOBILIZING CARE AND HOUSING ACCESS. DEMANDING RESPONSES TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN BUENOS AIRES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Mónica Farías
University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Carolina Sternberg
DePaul University, USA

ABSTRACT: The Covid-19 pandemic made starkly visible the housing crisis in the City of Buenos Aires characterized by the increasing presence of precarious housing situations. The mandatory social isolation imposed nation-wide at the onset of the pandemic significantly delayed the spread of the virus. Yet, this policy revealed the exclusion of the most vulnerable populations- the unhoused and slum dwellers.
The city government of Buenos Aires offered the unhoused and slum dwellers patch-aid policies that immediately triggered the reaction of a collective of unhoused advocacy groups and grassroots organizations (GOs). Long-term and new GOs, demanded from the local government, adequate housing and immediate sanitary assistance for those who were already living in precarious conditions. We selected two case studies that were at the forefront of the array of claims and critiques to the local government during the pandemic. Most of these claims were situated under the constitutional "right-to-housing" established in the Argentinean constitution.
We argue that the GOs mobilized an "ethic of care" whereby they built networks of care and assistance rooted in the idea of a relational social ontology. At the same time, they did not intend to replace the State's withdrawal from being a welfare provider and guarantor of rights, but to call attention to the State's moral obligation to care.

KEYWORDS: Buenos Aires, Care, COVID-19 Pandemic, Grassroots Organizations, Housing

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR(S): monicafarias@filo.uba.ar; csternb1@depaul.edu

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic made starkly visible the housing crisis in the City of Buenos Aires (CBA) characterized not only by the lack of access to credit loans and affordable housing but also, by the presence of diverse and precarious housing situations, ranging from rough sleeping to living in tin shacks in overcrowded slums lacking basic services, including running water and/or sewages. The mandatory social isolation imposed nation-wide at the onset of the pandemic significantly delayed the spread of the virus. Yet, as soon as the community transmission phase started in mid-April 2020, this policy revealed the exclusion of the most vulnerable populations—the unhoused[1] and slum dwellers—even within a national state of sanitary emergency (Farías forthcoming).

Despite these populations' inability to socially isolate themselves, the Government of the City of Buenos Aires (GCBA) offered the unhoused and slum dwellers of *Barrio 31*,[2] a slow, insufficient, and disarticulated policy to their immediate housing and sanitary needs. This patch-aid policy triggered the immediate reaction of a collective of unhoused advocacy groups and grassroots organizations (GOs). At the beginning of the pandemic, long-term GOs and new ones created ad hoc, demanded the local government, adequate housing, and immediate sanitary assistance to those who were already living in precarious conditions. At least for the last two decades, these organizations have had the important role of calling attention to the stark inequalities that characterize the CBA and the long-established absence of appropriate responses to it.

The cases we selected in this study stood at the forefront of the array of claims and critiques to the local government, at the onset of the pandemic. To note, most of these claims were positioned under the constitutional "right-to-housing", established in the Argentinean constitutional reform of 1994; which denotes a human right that should not be mediated by the market. In this study, we argue that the GOs mobilized an ethic of care whereby they strived to build networks of care and assistance rooted in the idea of a relational social ontology. This ontology proposes that places and the people in them are made relationally, while it calls attention to the responsibilities that come with privileged positions in those relationships (Lawson 2007, Phillips 2007, Tronto 2013). At the same time, the GOs selected for this study, we contend, have called attention to the city government's[3] moral obligation to care. As we illustrate, neither do the GOs actions are meant to replace the local government's withdrawal from being a fundamental provider of public services and guarantor of rights, nor the local government is expected to be excused from the moral commitment to care.

Through the selected cases, this paper not only contributes to drawing attention on the relationship between care and the local government—in particular, its moral obligation to care—, but also to the ongoing efforts to

[1] We use the term "unhoused population" to acknowledge the limitations of using the term "homeless". In short, the term unhoused refers to a specific group of people that do not have the means to access a shelter or a house, however, they can build relationships of belonging and sense of place, similar to feeling "at home". As an example, the expression "my dog is my home" refers precisely to a sense of belonging to something or someone that is intimately connected to the imaginary of "home", in this case, a dog.

[2] For decades, this slum was popularly known as *Villa 31*. The term *villas* or *villas miseria* is widely used in Argentina to refer to any informal settlements (*barrios populares*), according to the National Registrar of Popular Neighborhoods-RENABAP. *Barrios populares* are considered vulnerable neighborhoods in which, "at least, 8 families live together or next to each other, where more than half of the population do not have a property title, neither access to two or more regular basic services (running drinking water, electricity and/or sewage)" https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/barrios-populares.

[3] Here, as well as in other sections of the text, we would prefer using the word State, rather than government. We understand that providing housing, understood as a constitutional right in Argentina, is a matter of State policy, not simply a governmental action. However, we chose to use local government or city government to remain consistent throughout the text and to avoid any confusion that may cause the term "State".

inform urban theory with a feminist care ethics approach. A feminist ethic of care is fundamentally interested in examining the interdependence and mutually responsible relationships (Massey 2004) that are built to cause social inequalities and oppressions such as race, class, sexuality, and age among others (Lawson 2007). In other words, by questioning the idea of an autonomous and self-sufficient individual, a feminist care ethics underscores the political charged questions of who cares for whom, and, who deserves to be cared for.

This study closely follows Fisher and Tronto's (1990, 40) definition of care as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our "world" so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life sustaining web." In addition, we understand that in capitalist societies, care relations involve the work of social reproduction at different spheres (the household, the State, the community), that is, the everyday practices that "glue" society together and secure the conditions of production (Fraser 2016). Yet, care includes an array of social relationships besides social reproductive work; those that compel people to care as well as the relationships built through caring work (Ruddick 1998). Acknowledging these aspects means that care is a moral commitment to an ethical practice that positively impacts on other people and things because it ultimately secures the conditions for all of us to live and possibly, as well, thrive. Finally, we argue that care is situated and contextually-specific (Gabauer et al. 2022) in all its dimensions: care labor, relationships of care and care ethics. In this study we are predominantly concerned with the local government's lack of relationship with care and care practices.

Drawing from 18 open-ended qualitative interviews conducted both in person in the CBA and through zoom, from April 2020 to December 2021,[4] in addition to content analysis of an array of newspaper outlets, governmental reports, GOs' websites, and bi-weekly meetings and activities organized by one of the GOs selected for this study, this work sheds light on the struggles of two of the most vulnerable populations in the CBA, for access to housing and basic sanitary provisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. We focus on the ways in which the unhoused and slum dwellers (hereafter, *Barrio 31* residents or *villeros*), living in one of the richest cities in Argentina, demand the local government—through a collective of organizations—to address their critical housing and health needs, aggravated by the pandemic.

We are interested in documenting and analyzing some of the most relevant and visible actions displayed by the national and local government. More importantly, we document and reflect on the responses of a collective of organizations, which attended some of the urgent needs of the unhoused population and the *villeros*, that either were aggravated by the COVID19 pandemic or were a result of it.

Lastly, here we are interested in discussing and reflecting upon the role of care in creating inclusive spaces in the city through the experiences and practices of a collective of different organizations assisting the

[4] We conducted a total of 10 open-ended interviews (in person) principally with staff members of the GO "Popular Assembly of Plaza Dorrego" and "Popular Assembly for the Rights of Unhoused People," before or after their regular meetings and/or activities, usually during the weekends, from April 2020 to December 2021. We were interested in understanding the frequency, assistance and care levels provided by the GOs to the unhoused, and how these activities changed over the course of the pandemic in relation to the limits imposed by changing protocols as well as by the emerging needs of the unhoused. In addition, we conducted 8 open-ended interviews (in person and via zoom) with members of GOs living in Barrio 31; for example, with representatives of El Hormiguero, and with NGO's, for example Asociación Civil para la Igualdad y la Justicia, to examine the frequency, assistance and care level provided by the national and/or local level over the course of the pandemic. Given the overall difficult circumstances residents of Buenos Aires experienced through the pandemic, it was very difficult to recruit GO staff and Barrio 31 residents and/or ask them to set time aside to respond our questions; more so considering they were working around the clock caring for the unhoused population and the *villeros* in Barrio 31.

unhoused and *villeros* during COVID-19 pandemic, that starkly contrasts with the absence of "care" from the local government.

2. Cities for Care

As an unprecedented global event, the pandemic profoundly revealed two important socio-economic aspects that are relevant to this work. First, the severe inequalities that cut across urban spaces, particularly in cities of the Global South where extreme wealth and abject poverty coexist in close distance. There is a strong consensus among social scientists that the pandemic aggravated already existing inequalities (Stantcheva 2022) caused by, for example, the loss of informal jobs, differential access to remote working and education opportunities, unequal access to health care and isolation possibilities (see Maneiro et al 2020, Dammert N/D, Quiroz Reyes 2020 among others).

A second notable aspect resulting from the pandemic, was the consolidation of urban spaces as fundamentally uneven spatio-temporal terrain of care, or "caringscapes" (Bowlby 2012). Indeed, over the last three decades the need for care has forcefully emerged in large cities across the world, a phenomenon aggravated by spiraling inequalities, austerity policies and disinvestment (Morse and Munro 2018; Power and Hall 2018). Feminist and urban geographers have been at the forefront of this research, building on longstanding recognition of the intersectional inequities shaping urban care responsibility, which understand women, under-resourced populations and racially and ethnically marginalized groups as fundamental subjects of care (Tronto, 2013). Indeed, cities—all aggravated by the pandemic—have become the sites where some groups stand out as having a specific need for care and to care. These include unhoused population (Conradson, 2003b; Johnsen et al., 2005a; Williams, 2017), asylum seekers and undocumented migrants (Darling, 2011), social housing tenants (Mee, 2009; Power and Bergan, 2018), children (Bartos, 2012; Kullman, 2014), and so forth.

Now, aside from the socio-economic effects of the pandemic, and more due dominant neoliberal ideologies shaping our collective understanding of responsibility for and to care, there is a strong consensus among feminist and urban geographers about the need bring care into building just cities (Williams 2017). For instance, Williams (2017), reflects on the importance of care practices (caregiving, taking care of, care receiving and caring about) that complement practices of justice and the way we theorize and envision cities. One central aspect of her work is the concept of "care-full justice", which allows for the visualization of grounded responses to injustice through care actions in a way that politicizes the everyday practices of GOs. As such, we can learn and think about ways of "doing/being/thinking urban life" (Williams 2017, 17) an aspect that we highlight in our work.

Our study seeks to contribute to the emergent literature about cities for care drawing from a case study from Buenos Aires, a neoliberal urban formation of the Global South that is amalgamated with State-centered policies and practices. As we illustrate, the actions and work of GOs we investigate, mobilize a language of "rights" and posit claims on the local government while enacting care practices to supply its limitations. As such, we propose that care or care practices represent an oppositional politics (Staeheli 2013) that calls for three important aspects: Firstly, care denounces the inaction and negligence of the local government on urgent matters of housing and sanitary assistance during the pandemic, that should have been immediately provided as part of the fundamental rights granted in the Argentine Constitution. Secondly, building care in Buenos Aires is possible—arguably beyond the action of the local government—based on the development of thick networks of interdependence, mutual responsibility, and solidarity. Equally important to note here, is that the

caring practices exercised by the collective of GOs that we investigate, not only provide immediate assistance to the most needed ones, but also, call attention to the local government's moral obligation to care based on existing local legislation in place (for example Law 3706 that we will discuss later). This legislation was enacted in 2011 and since then, has provided specific language to address the specific needs of vulnerable sectors, including the ones we focused on in this study. As we later illustrate, the care practices of the GOs are not meant to supply the local government's withdrawal from being a fundamental provider of public services and guarantor of rights, neither the local government is expected to be excused from its moral commitment to care.

3. (Un)caring Buenos Aires: ascendant neoliberalism and the housing crisis

Propuesta Republicana's (PRO) revanchist city

The onset of Mauricio Macri's first term as CBA mayor marks the profound advancement of neoliberal principles and practices in the city. Since he assumed power in 2007, profound cuts in public spending were coupled with urban policies oriented to reduce affordable housing and neglect disinvested neighborhoods, considered priorities for urban renewal in previous administrations. For example, the GCBA has consistently defunded the CBA Institute for Housing, the public office in charge of securing housing to all their citizens and limiting the access to affordable housing to many working-class and low-income communities. It was no surprise that in 2007 the public media, critical urban scholars, and NGOs, altogether declared a crisis of affordable housing in the CBA. Quintessential neoliberal financial strategies also characterized this period: the sale off city properties and public vacant land for short-term gain with revenue used to attract corporate and real-estate investment, changes in zoning ordinances, land donations and a series of tax abatements to favor real-estate speculation (Sternberg 2018). Accompanying this, the renewal of public space, focused primarily on fencing parks and squares, and expanding sidewalks to reduce traffic, became one of the main public interventions during the eight years of the duration of Macri's administrations.

In 2011, neoliberal governance continued undaunted in implementing unpopular policies with Macri's second term in office (2011-2015), along with a profound revanchist orientation in its policies and rhetoric. Macri's successor and PRO advocate, Rodriguez Larreta, elected in 2015 and re-elected in 2019, seemingly followed Macri's neoliberal ethos and revanchist policies toward low-income populations and non-white populations, in particular, non-white immigrants from neighboring countries. Of a particular note during this period of analysis has been the ostensible privatization and commodification of vacant public land located in the CBA, either owned by the GCBA or the federal government through the Agency of State Property Management. Interestingly, over Macri's eight years in office (2007-2015), the acres of public land located in the CBA that became privatized (or commodified through local government concessions to private builders and developers) increased every year to the point that many local journalists started calling Macri's administration a "real-estate kingdom" (Sanchez and Baldiviezo 2020). The privatization and commodification of public land continued under Macri's successor, Horacio Rodriguez Larreta[5] (see Sanchez and Baldiviezo 2020 for more details about the process of land privatization).

[5] Despite the common political and ideological project between Macri and Rodriguez Larreta, some scholars have argued that Rodriguez Larreta attended the needs of the residents of Barrio 31 or *villeros* to a certain extent, by advancing the urbanization of Barrio 31 before the pandemic. This project, yet unfinished, was successful to a certain

On a different note, according to the Metropolitan Studies Center-CEM 2021 report, the poverty level in the city of Buenos Aires reached 27 percent of the population in 2021 and encompassed 20 percent of the households (CEM 2021). Interviewed by the daily Pagina12, the director of CEM pronounced the following: "Added to the territorial, gender, educational, sanitary, and labor inequalities, among others, instead of building equal opportunities for everyone, the local government [of Buenos Aires] amplifies them [the social inequalities]" (apud Pagina12 2021, our translation).

All in all, neoliberal governance, through Macri and Rodriguez Larreta's 14 years in power, has systematically overlooked the increasing socio-economic inequality that profoundly affects the impoverished population. In addition, this governance has profoundly advanced in transforming use-value into exchange-value land in an unprecedented way, and in increasing the gap between the haves and the have-nots. In parallel, middle and working-classes have also been profoundly affected by the local governments' neoliberal orientation, in particular, since they have been struggling to access credit loans. Notably, all the policies mentioned above have translated into a profound process of accumulation by dispossession whereby the have-nots, including unhoused and slum dwellers, have been dramatically impacted.

Socio-inequalities and housing emergency

The CBA has been popularly represented, albeit incorrectly, as a white middle-class European city. Yet, this portrayal has historically masked stark socio-spatial inequalities and racial stigmatizations that have been cemented over the years. In terms of socio-spatial inequalities, the CEM report mentioned above, compares data from 2020 to 2021, and notes an increase of 3.6 percent of the population living in poverty and of 2.5 percent of households living in the same manner. In addition, the study notes, the socio-economic gap has also increased during Macri's time in the CBA due to austerity measures, including budget cuts and/or underspending of some of the most critical budgets in terms of social needs, including education, health, and housing. The report also notes that the coronavirus pandemic has aggravated the negative trends registered since 2017, including increasing poverty and below poverty levels, rampant inflation, and notorious decline in the real salary. Additionally, from a geographical perspective, the socio-economic gap between the north and south side of the city continues to expand, in particular from 2018 onwards. In the same interview with Pagina12 (2021), the director of CEM concluded the interview by expressing that currently, the local government does not equally distribute the immense wealth that the city of Buenos Aires produces.

Specifically in terms of housing, 52% of Buenos Aires citizens own their house, while 35% are tenants, and the remaining 13% are engaged in a mix of house tenure categories. Yet, in Buenos Aires, owning a house does not guarantee housing security and good service provisions, for there exists a high variability within each house tenure category. For instance, while the percentage of rented homes is higher in the north of the city than in the south, it is the rented houses in the south which present higher levels of overcrowding (City of

extent: 1,200 new houses were built and new infrastructure was installed, including electricity, running water and gas pipes, across 44 acres. Yet, the decision-making process of the urbanization was highly centralized by the city government officials with almost no insights from the *villeros*. In addition, in the short term, a large number of *villeros* complained about the low quality of the new housing and infrastructure installed, and a lack of understanding of Barrio 31's existing infrastructure and extension limitations. Finally, as we explain later, at the apex of the pandemic, Barrio 31 didn't even have running water.

Buenos Aires' Housing Watch 2018). Similarly, even though the *Comuna* 2[6] and *Comuna* 8 present similar rates of ownership (46.5% and 45.3 respectively), 32.9% of the population in *Comuna* 8 lives in *barrios populares* (City of Buenos Aires' Housing Watch 2018). In addition, those who rent in the formal real-estate market must afford the cost of paying higher rent prices every 6 months (due to frequent fluctuations in the market along with the unstable local currency) added to the increasing costs of house assessments. As for the informal housing market, those who already live in very precarious conditions and pay unreasonable rent prices, have no legal protection from evictions.

According to the General Department of Statistics and Censuses of the city, by 2020, 7.4% of the population lived in *barrios populares* or *villas*, approximately 215 thousand people. This demographic data is significantly lower than the one reported in 2016 by GOs and NGOs, which estimated that number in 270 thousand (see ACIJ 2016). Given the historical pattern that people living in Buenos Aires' *barrios populares* increase on a yearly basis, it is difficult to sustain that its number would decrease in a span of four years. Proof that data reported by the Asociación para la Igualdad y la Justicia (ACIJ) is more accurate, is the expansion of the *barrios populares'* skyline with precarious constructions up to 4 floors (see Figure 1). As per the unhoused population, the 2nd Census of Unhoused People (PC) conducted in April 2019, counted 7,251 people (5,412 people sleeping rough added to 1,839 using shelters). Notably, the same GOs that organized the PC estimated that the number had continued to grow (personal communication), particularly during the pandemic as we shall explain in the following section.

4. Public policy approaches to the pandemic

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic in precarious dwellings

As early as March 12th, 2020, the national government declared the "state of sanitary emergency", and on March 19th, it passed an executive order to mandate a strict lock-down, which was called "Aislamiento Social Preventivo Obligatorio" (Preventive Mandatory Social Isolation) or ASPO. The national government, in coordination with local authorities, and private and semi-private health providers, quickly executed measures to strengthen the infrastructure and logistics of the public health system and expand the availability and accessibility of resources for as long as the emergency was declared. While the strict lock-down gave the national government enough time to buy equipment, train professionals, and pass legislation that would assist in the pandemic, the ASPO did not suffice to control the spread of the virus, reaching a peak of more than 15,000 cases a day in October 2020 (this number was reached again in May 2021).

In the case of *barrios populares* of the CBA, more specifically *Barrio 31* located in the wealthy neighborhood of Retiro, the living conditions of its residents presented important challenges as soon as the pandemic hit them, due to the historical and structural deficiencies of these urban forms. The poor quality and/or lack of basic services such as running water and gas—even after the upgrading of the *Barrio 31* started in 2017—added to the high levels (19%) of overcrowding (Dirección General de Estadísticas y Censos 2019), made the option to remain in isolation untenable (national ASPO policy). Let alone was it possible for the

[6] The CBA is formally divided in 48 *barrios* (neighborhoods), grouped into 15 *comunas* (communes), which are defined as "units of decentralized political and administrative management governed by designated residents" (Constitution of the City of Buenos Aires).

Barrio 31 residents to follow basic hygiene measures, such as handwashing, as we illustrate in later sections. In particular, a report from the collective Right to the City Watch has denounced that one citizen out of seven in the city did not have access to potable and running water at the apex of the pandemic (Sanchez, Robertazzi and Guebel 2020). All the above indicated their complete abandonment from the GCBA assistance, as we detail later. Poverty rates and income instability among *villeros* are still prevalent, which further complicated the possibility of abiding by the ASPO.

The unhoused population in the city presented different, albeit related challenges. The most obvious and foremost obstacle is the absence of a house where to shelter from the virus. During the pandemic, only a handful extra shelters opened. However, not only was the number of available shelters smaller than the actual unhoused population, but also, many refused using the city-run shelters to quarantine due to the mistreatment and abuse the unhoused have been regularly subjected to. Contrary to common local stereotypes about unhoused people being "rooted" in the streets and, thus, being incapable of making any short-term decision to protect them, in this case from the virus, unhoused people actively chose not to use public shelters where they felt patronized, bullied and sanitarily unsafe. As a matter of fact, many people who first sought refuge from the virus in shelters, very soon left as safety measures and hygiene protocols were not regularly followed. For example, one of the authors in this study learned firsthand that an unhoused individual who had attempted to isolate from the virus in a shelter provided by the local government- that supposedly was strictly following health protocols- found out on site that masks and physical distance were not enforced. More surprisingly was to learn that, when one of the social workers of the shelter brought the virus in, not only many unhoused people became infected, but also there was no place where they could properly isolate themselves until they could be taken somewhere else (informal conversation with G., an unhoused person staying in the shelter). Another critical limitation faced by the unhoused population during the first phase of the lock-down was that mobility became one of the first and foremost activities regulated and enforced by the GCBA. To be more precise, unhoused people's daily lives are a constant logistical struggle to find food and water, to clean themselves up, to secure shelter on rainy days, to obtain clothes, to use bathrooms, etc. Needless to say that the "stay at home" national mandate completely ignored the intrinsic problem of being unhoused (Farías forthcoming). Notably, only 10% of the population were exempted from complying to the ASPO mandate, including essential workers such as medical personnel, public transport workers, health providers, who had permission to circulate. In this context, unhoused people even had to go through local and federal authorities, to explain the reasons why they couldn't comply with the lock-down. Added to the population's stigma, the restrictions of mobility generated violent encounters between the unhoused and the federal or local police. The GCBA's neglect toward the unhoused became apparent when, in May 2020, an entire shelter was forced to close due to the escalation of Covid-19 cases, reported to be 79 out of 92 (Télam 2020).

What policies and for whom? Local and national governments' approach to the pandemic

A first look at the policies implemented during the pandemic reveals at least two things. On the one hand, a pervasive invisibilization of the unhoused by the local and federal authorities, despite substantially increasing every year. On the other hand, a lack of knowledge—purposefully or not—of what the living conditions of those without a house and those living in precarious forms of dwelling are (Farías forthcoming).

In relation to policies distributed to lessen the impact of the pandemic across the country, the national government implemented three different categories of emergency assistance. According to Kaplan and Delfino (2021), a first group consisted of cash transfers focused on the most vulnerable sectors (such as a one-time

cash transfer for retirees and for the recipients of the Children's Universal Allowance, the Emergency Family Income and Argentinian Program Against Hunger). A second group aimed at preventing increases in people's living costs, by freezing rent prices and services. These were applied to, mostly, the productive sector (an example of this category was the Labor and Production Emergency Assistance Program). Lastly, a third group included policies to assist the productive sector and to compensate workers in strategic areas such as health, defense, and security forces (Labor and Production Emergency Assistance Program, loans with no interest to self-employed workers, etc.).

Even though the magnitude of the assistance during the pandemic—the number of people reached by one or another measure amounted to close to 21 million, almost half the population of the country (Kaplan and Delfino 2021)—assistance did not always reach out to those at the critical level of vulnerability. For instance, executive order 320/2020 suspended all evictions while extended leases and froze rent prices for a year. Yet, this policy only protected those who had a formal written contract to rent a house. According to the 2010 National Census of Population and Housing, the most recent census, 3% of households were under one of the different modalities of informal renting (including renting in *villas*, tenement houses, family hotels and boarding houses) (Ombudsman Office of the People of the City of Buenos Aires 2021). On top of that, many also worked in the informal sector, and thus, struggled to pay their monthly rent. Even though, official statistics about the evictions were not available during the duration of the executive order, the Housing Council—a grassroot organization fighting for the right to affordable housing in the city—and numerous alternative media outlets persistently denounced the number of evictions, also affecting entire families with dependents (see Romero 2021). The Emergency Family Income (IFE) is another illustrative example. IFE was created by executive order 310/2020 and consisted of a monetary compensation of 10 thousand Argentine pesos meant to help those families who had experienced income shortages due to the ASPO emergency, particularly, the informal working-class. IFE represented the largest welfare policy in the history of Argentina with a coverage of 9 million people. Yet, in many cases, it failed to reach out those who needed it the most due to, ignoring the many layers that cut across vulnerable and marginal populations. For instance, registration to these different programs had to be done online, and internet connectivity is mostly inconceivable for the unhoused population. Clearly, this and other requirements represented considerable obstacles for the unhoused population to access the IFE benefit.[7] Not to mention the fact that many in the unhoused community were not informed about the program's benefits since they did not have immediate access to regular open and public venues of information, such as coffee shops, and/or engage in dialogues with their peers. Despite these limitations, overall, the national government took important steps to compensate for the economic difficulties generated by the pandemic and avoid a large proportion of the country's population entering below the bracket of the poverty line; that would have certainly aggravated the sanitary emergency.

At the GCBA,[8] the emergency policy approach proved to be highly limited and uneven compared to other Argentine provinces'[9] actions towards lessening the social and economic outcomes of the pandemic. For

[7] For instance, the registration required to have the "process number"' handy, a ten-digit long number shown in the national ID card that people are not aware of. Many of the unhoused people do not have the national ID card with them and some never even processed it.

[8] It's important to clarify here that the CBA is a governmental district with a hybrid political-institutional status. Some authors consider it a municipal entity, while others consider it a state. For the purpose of this study, we will refer to the CBA as a state.

[9] The Argentine constitution refers to "provinces", instead of states, to the 24 subnational levels of governments that integrate the federal system of government.

example, the first report by the Human Rights Permanent Assembly (APDH) from mid to April 2020, pointed out that, compared to the emergency policies implemented in other Argentine provinces, the city of Buenos Aires did not react to immediately assist the most vulnerable sections in the context of the health emergency (APDH 2020). More precisely, in many Argentine provinces, "inclusive social and economic policies" were redesigned to assist under-resourced populations with the provision of food, sanitary equipment, educational programs while forbidding layoffs and basic services cuts. In contrast, the first direct purchase of personal protective equipment in the city of Buenos Aires was done on March 17th, 2020, 13 days after the first COVID-19 case was confirmed and six days after the national pandemic was declared by the OMS (APDH 2020: 4). In terms of protecting public employment, assisting the informal sector, and protecting those industries that demand a large labor force, among other critical social aspects to address in the context of the pandemic, the GCBA only implemented measures that predominantly benefited the private sector. These included soft credits for small and medium size companies and tax exemptions, particularly for the gastronomic sector (El Cronista 2021). As for the informal economy, even though the CBA relies on a wide range of informal labor—between 35% and 42.4% in the South of the city and 20.3% and 27.7% in the North—(Trujillo-Salazar and Villafañe 2021), the GCBA did not create specific programs or measures to assist those in the informal economy. In short, the GCBA policies were limited to facilitate access to some cash transfer programs already in place, such as the *Subsidio Habitacional*- a housing voucher that most of the times will not even cover the costs of a room in a tenement house-and a one-time economic relief payment that supposedly supplemented the food cash transfer program, Ciudadanía Porteña. Yet, there's a wide consensus among scholars studying poverty during times of crisis that economic relief and/or assistance is a fundamental tool to help mitigate the unequal impacts of the pandemic within unequal urban settings (Bonnet et al 2010).

The vulnerability in *barrios populares* became evident immediately after the ASPO was officially declared. A report produced by the Center for the Implementation of Public Policies Promoting Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) in July 2020 illustrated higher rates of infection and mortality in the *barrios populares* since the beginning of the communal circulation of the virus compared to the rest of the city (CIPPEC 2020). To the socioeconomic vulnerability and the deficient sanitary conditions its inhabitants daily endure—their impossibility to comply to the mandatory isolation for long periods of time which facilitates exposure the virus; the overcrowding housing conditions; and deficiencies in the provision of running water in those neighborhoods—, we must add the ignorance, neglect, and stigmatization of the local government toward the *villeros*.

The GCBA's approach to assist the unhoused population was equally inefficient. It ranged from incompetence, to neglect, to stigmatizing an already highly vulnerable population. At the onset of the pandemic, the GCBA opened three shelters or *paradores*, which were made available only during winter, and one extra shelter in the south of the city for people to do the mandatory 14-days isolation period before being allocated to other shelters. In addition, as we already mentioned, the *Subsidio Habitacional* was made more accessible, and—allegedly—hygiene items and food were distributed to those who did not seek refuge in shelters including masks. In terms of the *paradores*, the high number of unhoused people mismatched the low number of *paradores* distributed across the city; even worse during a sanitary emergency of this kind. We have described above the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of the *paradores* the unhoused people had to endure if they decided to be sheltered in one, and how that weighed in people's decision to avoid them and stay in the streets.

5. Shaping and expanding care

In response to the existing political and institutional problems described above, a collective of organizations and individuals mobilized an ethic of care, both in the case of the unhoused and the *villeros*, by building long-term and short-term care relationships, and practices of care as we account below.

Caring for the unhoused

Very early in the pandemic, dozens of GOs quickly adjusted their work to the emergent needs of the unhoused and soon many more emerged to help alleviate the impact of the mandatory isolation. Caring through the provision of food was critical at a moment in which, many soup kitchens were forced to close as they were run by elderly population and/or population in critical health conditions to overcome a COVID-19 infection. On top of this, the entire informal economy operating in the streets was forced to stop, thus, leaving unhoused people and people under various precarious housing situations without a source of income.

Thick networks of solidarity emerged across the city; some built over already existing connections among GOs, as well as cultural and community health centers. For instance, on June 2020, the Education and Health Board of San Telmo, integrated by several GOs and institutions, transitioned into the Solidarity Committee of San Telmo-CSST, developed at the neighborhood level to immediately draw old and new organizations concerned with providing food for the housed and unhoused neighborhoods of San Telmo. The CSST became a key actor in terms of sharing relevant information with the unhoused population, organizing the redistribution of donations, and supervising the logistical work of emergent soup kitchens with low experience and "know-how" in the matter (Discussions with members of the CSST during 2020 and 2021). The severe lack of affordable housing in the city as described in section 3 posed enormous challenges to the network of assistance and activism. In effect, many GOs had to reorganize their priorities by discontinuing some of their regular activities and focusing solely on the emergency as we will see with the case of the Popular Assembly of San Telmo-Plaza Dorrego (AST).[10] Additionally, they had to adjust their work to the frequent revisions in the official sanitary protocols. All of these resulted in arduous and costly work.

Focusing on the work of one of the selected GOs, the AST is one the oldest GOs, which has worked for and along the San Telmo community for more than twenty years. The AST usually hosts a variety of educational and cultural activities in the neighborhood, all of which were discontinued during the apex of the pandemic. These activities refer to a literacy program; an after-school program; a mobile office of the local judicial power that advocates for the restoration and preservation of the collective memory in relation to the crimes committed during the Argentinean last dictatorship (1976-1983).[11] The AST also provides a soup-kitchen that opens every Sunday. Notably, it never stopped working throughout the duration of the pandemic, although it restructured its daily operations. For instance, before the pandemic, doors would open at 9 am, and a group of unhoused individuals who attended the soup-kitchen, accompanied by members of the AST, would be in charge of

[10] It is not within the scope of this paper to assess the profound impact the two years of the pandemic had on many GOs but it will be interesting, and necessary, to explore that facet of the pandemic in order to think and prepare for future emergence without running the risk of depleting the human resources that carry out the blunt of the care work for the most vulnerable.

[11] The AST serves on the committee for the detention center that operated clandestinely during the dictatorship, located in San Telmo. It is in charge of building and placing "memory tiles" where victims of State terrorism used to live or worked in the neighborhood.

preparing meals while other activities took place in the dining area. In this regard, the AST members understand that the provision of food is not enough to care for the under-resourced population, and thus, the soup-kitchen also offers entertainment activities, including writing workshops, support groups, movie screenings, open mic, and many others. Unfortunately, since the outbreak, only members of the AST were allowed to work in the soup-kitchen, where they would take different turns to avoid crossing with each other. Food had to be handed out through a window that faced the street for which unhoused people had to line up. Breakfast was served by 10am and each visitor was given a number to later pick up lunch. They were also asked to eat breakfast without gathering in small groups. Yet, it was very difficult for soup-kitchen visitors, in particular unhoused individuals, to avoid gathering in small groups and lingering after breakfast. It was evident that the unhoused people were seeking help and advice from their peers, but were also looking to reconnect with each other, by engaging in small conversations and/or commenting on the news. For those who sleep-rough on their own, they could go days without talking to anybody, primarily because the streets suddenly became empty of pedestrians with whom to interact. In addition, most of their daily stops were closed, including coffee shops, gas stations, and even some centers for people to shower and eat. Under these conditions, AST's members resolved to take turns in pairs, step out from cooking duties, and spend time with those in the line. The premise that AST's members followed was: "if they can't reach us out at the 'Olla', the 'Olla' must reach them out." The term "Olla" is commonly used among members and participants in the soup kitchen, but it also suggests all the other activities integrated around the soup kitchen that we detailed above. Eventually, some of the artistic activists took place again, adapted to the health protocols, including a piano and guitar recital performed by neighbors that set up a small stage inside the building, facing a huge window through which people could watch the performance.

Another important task undertaken by the AST was to help people to access benefits, particularly the Emergence Family Income-IFE commented previously. The lack of connectivity and difficulties accessing information were among the most important obstacles. With governmental offices running on a very limited capacity and schedule, the unhoused people were left to their own means to access the IFE benefit. In this respect, the AST's members were also very involved in helping the unhoused navigate the bureaucracy of the welfare online office (e.g, they created email accounts for the unhoused required to initiate the application, informed them about deadlines, etc.). As a rough estimate, AST's members reported that they assisted over one hundred people to access the IFE during the apex of the pandemic.

Finally, as mid-April 2020, when it was evident that the GCBA would not take firm and concrete steps towards the unhoused, the AST started to distribute a "Hygiene Kit" consisting of bag with hand sanitizer, soap, masks, sanitizing wipes, and a reusable water bottle. The kit also included a flier with reminders about following health protocols, which were also repeated while people were waiting in line for breakfast or lunch. The AST estimates that around 1,000 kits were distributed and hundreds of liters of sanitizer were used to refill the hand sanitizer bottles. It is hard to estimate the impact of receiving the kit, as it was very difficult to follow up with all the people to whom it was given. But it certainly collaborated much with health campaigns, even reaching those outside the reach of local and federal campaigns on the TV or the radio, something that was evident when people came Sunday after Sunday to refill their sanitizer bottles and get extra masks.

The examples narrated above illustrate the kind of caring practices implemented by the GOs at the onset and apex of the pandemic. Even if it may not be seen as meaningful in terms of scope and people assisted, the GOs positively impacted on people's wellbeing and emotional needs, thus contributing to providing the necessary infrastructure to repair and progressively build a caring city (Williams 2017). As a reminder, their work not only involves "maintaining and reproducing a space of care." These organizations, we argue,

mobilized networks of care and assistance rooted in the idea, presented above, of a relational social ontology that politically shaped these actions. To clarify, people felt compelled to do something because of the responsibilities that come with being-in-common (Williams 2017) and the shared responsibilities for the vulnerable situation in which members of society are being socially placed (Farías 2018). Yet, as we have been arguing in this paper, the practices of care provided by the GOs did not excuse the local government from the responsibilities it abandoned. On the contrary, these practices urged immediate responses from the local government, which ultimately, triggered the GOs to enact politically charged care practices.

It is worth noting here that ten years before the onset of the pandemic, the GCBA passed Law 3706 of Comprehensive Protection and Guarantee of Unhoused People's and at Risk of Becoming Unhoused People's Rights. This Law mandated the GCBA to remove the obstacles that prevented the unhoused people from exercising their rights. These included, the provision of education, health, housing, work, leisure, and culture, and the creation of a local public fund to support policies and programs directed to the unhoused population. Even more importantly to note in this study, is the fact that Law 3706 was the result of years of GOs' advocacy and activism, which have focused on advancing change and immediate aid towards the houselessness problem, which the GOs understand is not their responsibility (Heras Moner Sanz and Burin 2013). Right from the beginning of the pandemic, many GOs denounced the extremely harsh living conditions the unhoused were enduring and the risk of exposure to the virus as they neither had where to shelter, nor could they abide by hygiene protocols. The GOs also demanded the local government immediate care and assistance to these populations.

To illustrate, as early as March 15th, the Popular Assembly for the Unhoused-APPSC, which coordinates numerous GOs that work closely with unhoused people, published a statement on its Facebook page expressing its concern about "the vulnerable situation" of unhoused people and demanded all evictions to be suspended —not just for those who fell under the purview of the executive order 320/2020. Interestingly, the statement also remarked that the organizations members of the APPSC would "stand by their (the unhoused) side" even if the pandemic restrictions required the organizations to "hand out food instead of cooking with them [the unhoused], avoid participating in the *ranchadas*[12], and avoid hugging" (APPSC's Facebook page, March 13th, 2020. Our translation). To some extent, this assertion reveals an understanding of the conditions under which unhoused people live based on what Williams calls "care-full justice" (Williams 2017). Yet, our case studies suggest that injustices and care actions always question the State, in this case the local government, as the ultimate provider of services and guarantor of rights. In effect, almost all the APPSC's media posts were accompanied by the hashtag #elestadoesresponsable (the State is responsible), signaling that their actions did not replace the State's obligation to care and secure rights.

In May 2020, the APPSC submitted a letter to the local Ministry of Social Development and Housing that denounced the infringement of unhoused people's human rights and established a series of enquires and demands, including the removal of all red tape so the PSC population could have easy access to the shelters, an increase in the amount of the *Subsidio Habitacional*, and the provision of sanitary units across the city to test the unhoused population for Covid and to offer personal protective equipment. The organizations also

[12] *Ranchada* refers to a native term created and used by the unhoused people to name the physical space they inhabit, usually in groups. There they sleep, cook, and leave their belongings under the supervision of others, as an attempt to create a domestic and familiar space.

included in their urgent demands, sanitary units with portable restrooms, in addition to hygiene supplies, water and food (Facebook's APPSC 2020).

Manifestations and denunciations continued all throughout 2020 and 2021. For instance, on August 20th 2020, Proyecto 7, a GO which has the concession of three of the City's Communitarian Integration Centers-CICs, told a reporter from daily Página 12 that they had to turn the CICs under their purview from daily centers to shelters to respond to the high number of people seeking refuge (Brunetto 2020). Also, the Committee From Below on August 19th 2021, the Unhoused People's Fight Day, carried out a demonstration including a soup kitchen and an open microphone in Plaza de Mayo in commemoration of all the unhoused people who died "in the context of the pandemic and the apathy of the governments of the region" (Facebook's Proyecto 7. Our translation). This is, perhaps, a noticeable and powerful expression, among many others, synthesizing care actions, denunciations and challenges to the local government, for not responding to the unhoused people's needs.

Caring in the Villa

Currently there are 73,000 families who live in 57 *barrios populares* within the city. *Barrio 31* itself has a population of 40,000 approximately. Here, the first COVID case was reported on April 21st, 2020, and in a span of 12 days, it escalated to 107. After one week, in the *Comuna* 1 where *Barrio 31* is located, the infected population had increased to 764%. If we consider that the infection rate in the city at the time was 64%, (Alcaraz 2020), the *Barrio 31*'s infection rate was exponential. On top of this, from April 25th, residents of *Barrio 31* had started to denounce that they were suffering power cuts and water running problems in large sections of *Barrio 31*, precisely when these services were vitally needed for the already infected population. With entire families living in overcrowded housing conditions, sharing bathrooms and kitchens among tens of people, and with frequent contact between people entering and exiting the 108 acres of land, it was estimated that one person infected could spread the virus to 90 people in a span of a few hours. Despite all this, and the number of requests for immediate assistance in terms of food and sanitation, to several local governmental units, including the local Ministry of Habitat and Development, the GCBA aid arrived a week later after the first case was denounced and after 300 residents were infected. On top of that, to a representative of the *barrio*, the assistance was very limited (Pagina12, 2020).

Under these circumstances, individuals and GOs from the *Barrio*, had to improvise sanitary measures and other immediate needs to respond to the escalation of the number of cases but without following an official and approved protocol. "We didn't have any choice but to improvise (...) It was all a collective effort," Eduardo, a representative from El Hormiguero,[13] told us (Interview, December 2021).

For example, a good proportion of *villeros* had to leave their homes to seek immediate health assistance, while the available health promoters who were already working in the *Barrio*, managed to assist daily and urgent cases. Parallelly, as one of the representatives of the *Barrio* told one of us, many families and individuals had to look for soup kitchens outside the *Barrio* as many of them had to close due to the escalation of cases. Over the course of 15 days, starting on April 24th, thousands of *villeros* continued improvising sanitary measures despite the lack of running water.

On May 17, 2020, two long-time residents and representatives of *Barrio 31* died of COVID-19. These were Ramona Medina, *Barrio 31* activist and health promoter from "La Garganta Poderosa", and Victor Giracoy,

[13] A GOs' advocating for affordable housing in *Barrio 31*.

who worked for many years in the soup kitchen "Estrella de Belén". With the number of cases escalating and the lack of provision of basic services, a collective of organizations composed of, 68 soup kitchen and food aid organizations, individuals from the *Barrio 31* and a diverse group of social, political, and religious organizations working relentlessly to alleviate the sanitary emergency, formed a "Crisis Committee" and immediately declared a state of sanitary emergency for the *Barrio*. On May 17, 913 cases were confirmed and reported (Página12, 2020).

This collective also called for a press conference on May 19th, 2020. In this opportunity, representatives of *Barrio 31* read a document and a sanitary protocol (elaborated with the help of the outside organizations for example, CLIC, ODC and IPyPP[14]) informing the public and the local government of the alarming sanitary conditions that residents of *Barrio 31* were confronting. But more importantly, the press conference denounced local government authorities for the neglect and stigmatization of *Barrio 31*'s residents. At the conference, *Barrio 31* representatives condemned the GBCA's authorities for not responding to their hundreds of calls to receive assistance due to the lack of running water, overcrowded housing conditions and the lack of food aid and sanitation. Here's a short excerpt from Susana Borda, member of the Women's House Diana of *Barrio 31*: "(...) we called for a conference to denounce something that we had already denounced (...) that if we had one case in the 31st [referring to the *Barrio 31*] things will start to be unstoppable. We are denouncing something that we had averted a while ago, and that today requires a speedy response than what the GCBA, or the Secretary of Social and Urban Integration (SECISyU) [its executive unit in the *Barrio*] is capable of offering. The situation now is explosive, and we need the GCBA and the SECISyU to take immediate actions because we're going through a [sanitary] emergency due to neglect from the City" (Susana Borda, in Página12, 2020).

Parallelly, the collective of organizations, along with 150 representatives of Barrio 31, crafted an inventory of the *Barrio*'s specific areas where the water was shut off and elevated a series of reports to the local Ministry of Human Development and Habitat to discuss comprehensive methodologies to secure potable water to all households in *Barrio 31* (Sanchez and Baldiviezo 2020). Later, on May 29th the sanitary protocol with measures to contain the spread of COVID 19 in *barrios populares* was finally acknowledged and approved by the local government. This protocol included several measures to prevent, detect early and control the spread of the virus directed to protect the population with a territorial approach, along with organizations, social movements, and representatives from different *barrios populares*. Since then, the GCBA began to deploy regular assistance and monitoring of the cases in the *Barrio 31*, logistically supported by the federal sanitary program, "Detectar" (to detect). All in all, as summarized by Eduardo, the GCBA "[did not] and does not understand the social reality of *Barrio 31*" (Interview, December 2021).

6. Final Comments

By mid-November 2022, Argentina reported 130,011 COVID-19 deaths to the World Health Organization (WTO). Today, data on infections, hospitalized patients, respiratory assistance, deaths, etc. seem to suggest that the pandemic is a sign of the past, especially considering the high levels of vaccinations already administered (109,652,736) to the eligible population across the country (WTO 2022). In the City of Buenos

[14] CLIC (Community Engineering Class); ODC (Rights to the City Observatory; IPyPP (Institute of Thought and Public Policy).

Aires, 98% of the eligible population is currently fully vaccinated, and the use of masks in public transportation and public buildings is still mandatory.

Yet, bitter memories of these last two years pose questions about the ways in which the local government provides care for its citizens in times of emergency, what priorities guide its actions, and whose subjects are considered to deserve or not protection.

In this paper, we accompanied the call of other scholars to include care in our theorizations of cities and in our imagining of urban space (Williams 2017), particularly during times of crisis and amidst an ever-increasing commodification of care (Fraser 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a series of mobilizations and collective actions in the CBA that laid bare the local government's interest in advancing neoliberal policies focused on land-use conversion, real-estate speculation, and the ever-increasing commodification of housing. As a reminder, the cases we selected bring to the forefront the political relevance of care.

Some of the immediate actions these organizations conducted involved the temporary provision of shelter and housing, distributing sanitary equipment, toiletries, and food, while other actions consisted of helping people to access benefits, and, equally important, to provide emotional support. The actions and practices depicted in this paper were all suffused with care, even if they involved an everyday distribution of food, sanitary equipment, toiletries, and clothes. The distributions were a care-full distribution, responding to contextually-specific needs of unhoused people and *villeros*, such as assisting people in accessing medication that they cannot afford to purchase. We argued that the GOs' actions revealed the importance of incorporating an ethics of care to public policy discussions across governmental levels. More specifically, we have illustrated how the relentless work of a collective of organizations at the start of and during the pandemic, have indirectly mobilized and pushed for enacting an ethic of care in three fundamental ways: Firstly, by building and expanding thick networks of interdependence, mutual responsibility, and solidarity, that until the COVID-19 pandemic were not highly visible. Secondly, by providing immediate assistance to the most needed ones, while calling attention to the local government's moral obligation to care. Until then, care and care practices were not explicitly addressed in the GOs claims to the local government. And finally, by denouncing the inaction and negligence of the local government on urgent matters of housing and sanitary assistance during the pandemic. In effect, insofar these organizations were building their networks of care and support, they never stopped demanding the local government to guarantee the rights to affordable housing and an appropriate environment, both established in the CBA's constitution, under article 31st. Yet, as noted before, the GCBA has consistently reduced the budget of the Institute for Housing and facilitated affordable housing to a limited proportion of low-income communities. By constantly mobilizing a language of "rights" while conducting care work, these organizations called attention to the imbricated relationship between justice and care, especially impacting vulnerable populations. For instance, Law 3706 was sanctioned in recognition that unhoused people needed specific protection given their situation of extreme vulnerability. By accompanying their care actions while demanding the enactment of Law 3706 during the pandemic, the GOs exposed the GCBA for overlooking the law, neglecting the vulnerable populations at a critical moment, and denounced the mandatory isolation as an uncaring act.

The Covid-19 pandemic made evident the housing crisis in the city of Buenos Aires and the need to take immediate action on this matter. More importantly, and more than ever, the work of GOs and the emergence of large networks of care became critical to assist the most vulnerable sectors of the population in the city of Buenos Aires. In tandem, the GOs supported by the networks of care, demanded actions to the local government, and further pushed care and care practices in the public agenda as fundamental dimensions of life, and welfare for all.

References

Asociación Civil para la Igualdad y la Justicia-(ACIJ) (2016) Urbanización de Villas y Asentamientos en Buenos Aires, November 18. Retrieved April 22, 2022 (https://acij.org.ar/urbanizacion-de-villas-y-asentamientos-de-buenos-aires/)

Alcaraz, F. (2020). "Coronavirus y dengue en las villas porteñas: sin controles ni protocolos". LATFEM. Periodismo Feminista 4/5/2020. https://latfem.org/coronavirus-y-dengue-en-las-villas-porteñas-sin-controles-ni-protocolos/. Retrieved April 22, 2022

Farías, M. Forthcoming. "Habitabilidades (in)imaginadas: situación de calle, ciudadanía y política pública en Buenos Aires en tiempos de pandemia," Journal of Latin American Geography.

Farías, M. (2021). "Contesting Exclusion: Solidarity Spaces and Changing Political Subjectivities in Buenos Aires," Geoforum, 127, 316-325.

Bartos, A. E. (2012). "Children caring for their worlds: The politics of care and childhood," Political Geography, 31 (3), 157-166 [Published online in 2018].

Bonnet, F., E. Ehmke, and K. Hagemejer, K. (2010), "Social security in times of crisis", International Social Security Review, 63(2): 47–70. https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1468-246X.2010.01361.X

Bowlby, S. (2012) Recognising the Time–Space Dimensions of Care: Caringscapes and Carescapes. Environment and Planning A 44(9): 2101–2118.

Brunetto, S. (2020), "Coronavirus: los que quedaron en la calle por la pandemia", Página12, August 24. Retrieved April 22, 2022 (https://www.pagina12.com.ar/287116-coronavirus-los-que-quedaron-en-la-calle-por-la-pandemia)

Centro de Estudios Metropolitanos (CEM) (2021) Las desigualdades en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. *Documento CEM* 39. Retrieved April 22, 2022. (http://estudiosmetropolitanos.com.ar/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Desigualdades-en-la-Ciudad-de-Buenos-Aires.pdf)

Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC) (2020). Inequidad y COVID-19 en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Cómo afecta la pandemia a los asentamientos informales. *Documento de Trabajo* N°193, 1-29.

City of Buenos Aires' Housing Watch (2018). Documento N°5, Informe sobre situación habitacional de los/las inquilinos/as en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires

Conradson, D. (2003) Geographies of Care: Spaces, Practices and Experiences. Social and Cultural Geography 4(4): 451–454.

Darling, J. (2011). "Giving space: Care, generosity and belonging in a UK asylum drop-in centre", Geoforum, 42(4), 408-417.

Dirección General de Estadística y Censos (2019) Porcentaje de hogares hacinados por comuna en 2019. Ministerio de Hacienda y Finanzas GCBA. Ciudad de Buenos Aires.

Dammert, M. (N/D), "Territorios Urbanos y Pandemia: Necesidad de la Crítica", Investigaciones Sociales, Económicas, Políticas y Antropológicas, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú. Coordinador del Grupo de Trabajo CLACSO "Desigualdades urbanas".

El Cronista (2021) Seminario Pymes Rosario. Cómo hizo la Ciudad de Buenos Aires para ayudar a las pymes en la pandemia. July 7th. Retrieved March 23, 2022 (https://www.cronista.com/pyme/negocios-pyme/como-la-ciudad-de-buenos-aires-ayuda-a-las-pymes-en-pandemia/)

Fisher, B., & Tronto, J. (1990). Toward a feminist theory of caring. In E. E. Abel, & M. Nelson (Eds.), Circles of care. Albany: SUNY Press.

Fraser, N. (2016) Capitalism's crisis of care, *Dissent* 63 (4): 30-37.

Facebook Asamblea Popular por los Derechos de las Personas en Situación de Calle (2020) March 22 and June 23. Retrieved April 18, 2022.

Gabauer, A., S. Knierbein, N. Cohen, H. Lebhun, K. Trogal, T. Viderman, and T. Hass (2022) (ed.), Care and the City: Encounters with Urban Studies, UK: Routledge.

Heras Monner Sans, A. I. and D. Burin (2013), "Experiencias de incidencia en política pública de organizaciones auto-gestionadas: desde la autonomía como proyecto y hacia la democracia como régimen de sentido", X Reunión Antropología Mercosur - Situar, actuar e imaginar antropologías desde el Cono Sur. Julio. Universidad Nacional de Córdoba y Universidad Federal de Río de Janeiro, Córdoba.

Human Rights Permanent Assembly (APDH) (2020) Informe de situación en la ciudad en época de pandemia COVID-19, June 17. Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Retrieved April 22, 2022 https://www.apdh-argentina.org.ar/informes/tercer-informe-sobre-la-situacion-en-caba-politicas-erroneas-e-insuficientes-en-la-ciudad

Johnsen, S., Cloke, P. and May, J. (2005). "Day centres for homeless people: spaces of care or fear?," Social and Cultural Geography 6, (6) 787–811.

Kaplan, L. J. and A. Delfino (2021), "Pandemia, Políticas Públicas y sectores vulnerables: un análisis del ingreso familiar de emergencia en Argentina", Política. Revista de Ciencia Política, 59 (1): 81-104.

Kullman, K. (2014). Children, urban care, and everyday pavements. Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space, 46(12), 2864–2880.

Lawson, V. (2007), "Geographies of Care and Responsibility", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 97 (1): 1–11.

Maneiro, M., S. Fernández Bouzo, S. Nardin, A. Farías, H. Olivera, J. P. Borda, S. Sustas, R. Rivero, and M. Riveiro (2020), "Covid-19 en la Región Sanitaria VI - Quinto Reporte: Un abordaje desde el problema del diagnóstico y la atención", Instituto de Investigaciones Gino Germani.

Massey, D. (2004), "Geographies of Responsibility", Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography, 86 (1): 5–18.

Mee, K. J. (2009). A space to care, a space of care: Public housing, belonging, and care in inner Newcastle, Australia. Environment and Planning A, 41, 842–858.

Morse, N., and E. Munro (2018), "Museums' community engagement schemes, austerity and practices of care in two local museum services", Social & Cultural Geography, 19: 357–378.

Ombudsman Office of the People of the City of Buenos Aires (2021) Desalojos en villas de la ciudad de Buenos Aires. El problema de los alquileres informales durante la pandemia de Covid-19. Ciudad de Buenos Aires. Retrieved April 22, 2022 (https://en.calameo.com/read/00268239917bc7e4b1982?page=1)

Página12 (2020) Coronavirus: Duro reclamo del Comité de Crisis del Barrio Mugica al Gobierno porteño. May 19, 2020. Retrieved April 7, 2022 (https://www.pagina12.com.ar/266627-coronavirus-duro-reclamo-del-comite-de-crisis-del-barrio-mug)

Página12 (2021) La pobreza en la ciudad de Buenos Aires llegó al 27 por ciento, July 25th. Retrieved March 2, 2022 (https://www.pagina12.com.ar/356990-la-pobreza-en-la-ciudad-de-buenos-aires-llego-al-27-por-cien)

Philips, J. (2007) Care, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Power, A., and Hall, E. (2018), "Placing care in times of austerity", Social & Cultural Geography, 19: 303–313.

Romero, L. (2021), "La Casa Santa Cruz resiste", Revista Crítica, 16 de Enero, Revista Crítica. Retrieved, April 22, 2022 (https://revistacitrica.com/la-casa-santa-cruz-resiste.html)

Power, E. R., & Bergan, T. L. (2018). Care and resistance to neoliberal reform in social housing. Housing, Theory and Society, 1–23.

Quiroz Reyes, C. (2020), "Pandemia Covid-19 e Inequidad Territorial: El agravamiento de las desigualdades educativas en Chile", Revista Internacional de Educación para la Justicia Social 9(3) (https://revistas.uam.es/riejs/article/view/12143)

Ruddick, S. (1998) "Care as labor and relationship", in J. G. Haber and M. S. Halton (eds.), Norms and values: Essays on the work of Virginia Held, Rowman & Littlefield, pp.3-25.

Sánchez, S. I. and J. E. Baldiviezo (2020), "Legalidades y trampas en los procesos de transformación de las villas de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: los casos de Playón de Chacarita y Barrio Padre Carlos

Mugica (ex Villas 31 y 31 bis) en contexto", in: S. I. Sánchez, M. Robertazzi, C. F. Guebel (eds.), La Desintegración de la Ciudad: Políticas Urbanas Recientes en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Publicaciones ISU, Problemáticas Urbanas Contemporáneas (pp. 81-150).

Sánchez, S. I.; Robertazzi, M.; Guebel, C. F. (2020). (eds.) La desintegración de la Ciudad: Políticas Urbanas Recientes en la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Publicaciones ISU. Problemáticas Urbanas Contemporáneas.

Staeheli, L. A. (2013), "Whose responsibility is it? Obligation, citizenship and social welfare", Antipode, 45 (3): 521-540.

Stantcheva, S. (2022), "Inequalities in the times of a pandemic. Working Paper 29657 National Bureau of Economic Research", January. Retrieved April 4, 2022 (http://www.nber.org/papers/w29657)

Sternberg, C., (2018) "Middle Class Shifting Moralities in Neoliberal Buenos Aires", in A. Jonas; B. Miller; K. Ward and D. Wilson (eds.), The Routledge Handbook on Spaces of Urban Politics, London/NY: Routledge, pp. 492-503.

Télam (2020), "Cierran un parador para gente en situación de calle por 79 casos positivos de coronavirus", December 5th. Retrieved March 23, 2022 (https://www.telam.com.ar/notas/202005/462891-cierran-un-parador-para-gente-en-situacion-de-calle-por-79-casos-positivos-de-coronavirus.html)

Tronto, J. C. (2013), Caring democracy: Markets, equality, and justice. New York: NYU Press.

Trujillo-Salazar, L, and S. Villafañe (2021), "La dimensión territorial del riesgo de informalidad laboral en la Argentina", Documentos de Proyectos. Naciones Unidas, CEPAL. Retrieved April 24, 2022 (https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/47564/1/S2100799_es.pdf)

Williams, M. J. (2017), "Care-full Justice in the City", Antipode, 49 (3): 821-839.

World Health Organization (2022). Retrieved November 15, 2022 (https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/ar)

Biographical details:

Mónica Farías is Professional Lecturer of the Department of Geography at the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina, and affiliated researcher at the Institute of Geography at the same university. Mail: monicafarias@uba.filo.ar. Mailing Address: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UBA; Puan 480, Office 333b; Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, CP 1406; Argentina.

Carolina Sternberg is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies at DePaul University, USA. Mail: csternb1@depaul.edu. Mailing Address: DePaul University; 2320 N Kenmore Avenue; Schmitt Academic Center, 5 A-H; Chicago, IL, 60614; USA.