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Fonte: <https://journals.scholarpublishing.org/index.php/ASSRJ/article/view/16500>. Acesso em: 16 abr. 2024.

Referência

COSTA, Yuri Nascimento Paes da; LIMA, Carlos Henrique Magalhães de. National housing policies and gender issues: reflections on Argentina's 'habitar en igualdad' program. **Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal**, [S. l.], v. 11, n. 2, p. 166–181, 2024. DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.112.16500>. Disponível em:

<https://journals.scholarpublishing.org/index.php/ASSRJ/article/view/16500>. Acesso em: 15 abr. 2024.



National Housing Policies and Gender Issues: Reflections on Argentina's 'Habitar en Igualdad' Program

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ABSTRACT

Social rights are not easily given as they are built through processes of struggle, mostly led by organized collectives and social movements in situations of vulnerability or imminent loss of rights and lives. The right to housing is included in this category of social rights that needed to be achieved based on demands, especially in Latin America. This article aims to reflect on public policies and gender issues in Argentina, based on the analysis of the interministerial program 'Habitar en Igualdad'. To this end, we base our discussions on Cortés, Montaner and Muxí, Rolnik, Kern, and on Judith Butler's debates about body controls and the precarious lives of the LGBTQIA+ population. The methodology adopted was descriptive, according to Serra and to Gil. As a result, we found a difficulty in continuing public policies dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ population, as well as an erasure of this population group in housing policies, in the face of constant harassment from neoliberal and far-right governments. Therefore, publicizing and encouraging recent inclusive experiences of sexual dissent can be a further step in promoting social rights.

Keywords: Social rights, LGBTQIA+ population, housing policies, Argentina.

INTRODUCTION

Social rights are not easily given. Historically, these are built through processes of struggle, mostly led by organized collectives and social movements in situations of vulnerability or imminent loss of rights and lives. The right to housing is included in this category of social rights that needed to be achieved based on demands, especially in Latin America, which was marked by violent processes of colonization and, more recently, by ideas that result in the precariousness of social welfare public policies. In recent decades of the 21st century, the world has seen the resurgence of far-right governments, as well as attacks on progressive, cultural, scientific, and humanitarian agendas. In this context, groups in situations of social vulnerability (women, Indigenous people, 'quilombolas', Black people, children, LGBTQIA+ population and those who are homeless), defined as precarious lives [1] and as subordinate bodies [2], suffer more severe processes of violence and deterioration in their lives.

Contrary to these far-right governments, in 2019, Argentina elected Alberto Fernández, supported by progressive and traditional groups with social programs in the country. Despite the unfavourable internal and external scenario, the Fernández government manages to advance some public policies, especially those dedicated to the production of housing for socially vulnerable groups. Among these policies, our object of study is an interministerial program opened in 2019 and entitled 'Habitar en Igualdad', which aims to allocate housing, urban interventions, in addition to training women and the LGBTQIA+ population in situations of violence and vulnerability for new jobs.

Our interest in investigating the extent to which gender issues advance in public housing policies in Argentina is due to the fact that it is a South American country, neighbouring Brazil and with a political trajectory and the constitution of housing policies, to a certain degree, similar to the Brazilian experience. However, despite the similarities, the current scenario of national housing policies in Brazil has not found significant advances, especially for the LGBTQIA+ population. With this objective, we seek to answer the questions: 1) What was the context of recent decades which led to the advancement of gender issues in public housing policies in Argentina? 2) What are the main actors and the main mechanisms responsible for the functioning of 'Habitar en Igualdad'? 3) How important is the inclusion of gender issues, especially for the LGBTQIA+ population, in public housing policies?

We assume as a theoretical axis the understanding that city planning is not neutral [3] and that it is directly connected with the process of financialization of the city and housing [4], sponsored by neoliberalism which has the objective of reducing public spending and exempt governments from investing in social welfare policies, but in practice it only increases the precarious state of human life [1]. We also agree with the idea that urban decisions, projects and plans are based on men, cis, heterosexual, white and middle and upper class [2], and that the city and housing serve as a way of maintaining the configuration of a hegemonic and totalizing social order of bodies, reinforcing power schemes that suppress dissident ways of existing [5].

METHOD

In order to analyze the trajectories of public housing policies in Argentina between 2003 and the most recent 'Habitar en Igualdad' program, the descriptive method will be used [6]. This method aims to describe certain characteristics of populations and social phenomena such as the level of service provided by public bodies in a community, the housing conditions of its inhabitants and other social indices [6]. The descriptive method is also addressed in *Research in Architecture and Urbanism* [7], which highlights the possibility of describing, understanding and explaining public policy conjectures dedicated to the sphere of architecture and urbanism. This work will also use the documentary method [6], since documents relating to the national and interministerial housing plan entitled 'Habitar en Igualdad', initiated in 2021 by the 'Ministerio de Desarrollo Territorial y Hábitat' in conjunction with the 'Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros Y Diversidad', both ministries under the administration of Alberto Fernández. Still as a research procedure, we will have as a data source the bibliographical survey on the themes of public housing policies and gender issues, especially more recent advances in the debate [2], [3], [4], [5], and on debates about body controls and the precarious lives of the LGBTQ+ population [8]. The aim is to go beyond the documentary analysis, already mentioned, based on the theoretical foundation that supports the position of the authors of this text.

Contemporary Gender Perspectives on Housing Policies

In April 1968, a week after the assassination of Martin Luther King - followed by a series of popular uprisings - American President Lyndon Johnson sanctioned the new civil rights law entitled 'Civil Rights Act' or 'Fair Housing Act'. Complementing an earlier civil law from 1964, the new law expressly prohibited discrimination by direct housing providers, such as landlords and real estate companies, as well as other entities, such as municipalities, banks or other lending institutions, and home insurance companies, against people for reasons of race or colour, religion, gender, national origin, family situation or any type of disability.

Decades later, in 2020 and during the Covid-19 pandemic, the University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA) in partnership with the Williams Institute produced a study entitled 'LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination and Homelessness' [9], whose aim was to analyze the challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ population in accessing safe and affordable housing in the United States. The study revealed that, in 2020, compared to non-LGBTQIA+ people, the American LGBTQIA+ population had higher rates of poverty, a greater number of homeless people and lower numbers of real estate ownership.

Collecting data from the thirty-five states of the United States of America, the study points out that same-sex couples and the trans population are less likely to be property owners (63.8% compared to 75.1% for the heterosexual and cisgender population). The vulnerability of homeless LGBTQIA+ people is also highlighted when between 20% and 45% of homeless young people identify as LGBTQIA+, at least 2 to 4 times more than the estimated percentage of all young people who identify as LGBTQIA+. The study also highlighted that LGBTQIA+ adults in the United States of America are 15% more likely to be poor than heterosexual and cisgender adults, and if intersectional estimates are made considering issues of race, these numbers are even higher.

In contrast to these statistics, some American cities have implemented policies that seek to mitigate situations of housing vulnerability for the LGBTQIA+ population. One of these examples is the city of New York, which has several legal apparatuses to protect diversity of gender and sexual orientation, and urban studies and diagnoses to form housing policies that assist in processes of guaranteeing the right to housing for sexual minorities.

The New York City Human Rights Law [10] prohibits, for instance, any type of discrimination in the city in the workplace, housing, and public accommodations. Another protective legal apparatus is the creation of the New York City Human Rights Commission, a municipal agency responsible for enforcing laws against any discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation. Among its most important documents is the 2002 Guide to Enforcement of the Law on Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity or Gender Expression [11]. In this document, there is mention of the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and the 2020 United States Supreme Court decision that stated that any form of discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation is prohibited, with such discriminatory acts being classified as a federal crime. New York City is also recognized for containing numerous non-governmental and non-profit organizations that are dedicated to the issue of adequate housing for sexual minorities.

Its actions are varied and can provide studies, diagnoses and even medical, psychological and financial assistance to sexual minorities in vulnerable situations. Among the most recent and

most impactful studies, we can mention the 'Housing Plan for LGBTQ+ Communities' study launched in 2021 by the non-governmental organization 'Citizens Housing Planning Council' (CHPC). The CHPC study reports [12] that the reality of New York is similar to that mapped by 'LGBT People and Housing Affordability, Discrimination and Homelessness' [9], that is, LGBTQIA+ communities face great housing instability in the city. However, the CHPC adds a historical layer by reporting that much of the gentrification and vulnerable situation of sexual minorities in New York was due to the boom in AIDS cases between the 1980s and 1990s, when countless LGBTQIA+ individuals were deprived of their lives and prevented from passing ownership of their properties to their partners and heirs.

The Housing Plan for LGBTQ+ Communities [12] begins the study by reviewing the history of the LGBTQIA+ community in New York City, citing the population's civil rights achievements during the Stonewall uprising. It maps the main neighbourhoods that were occupied by sexual minorities, such as the urban enclaves in Chelsea and the West Village and highlights the importance of preserving these communities for the city's memory and for more diverse urbanism. The study also reports all existing housing programs in New York City that include the LGBTQIA+ population, such as shelters, shelters, community centres, partnership programs for the construction of temporary residences for sex workers and support houses for the population living with HIV in a vulnerable situation. Thus, the study presents the state of the art of all housing initiatives in the city and concludes that, despite the diverse range of housing actions, the city still lacks broader-ranging policies.

CHPC also manages to map the main challenges for implementing a more comprehensive housing policy in the city, such as: i) putting an end to state bureaucracy in access to social housing, ii) funding for LGBTQIA+ scholars dedicated to the issue of housing, iii) preserving LGBTQIA+ enclaves in the city, without gentrifying them, iv) zoning and land use legislation that do not meet the diversity of family arrangements, v) constructing appropriate housing to the elderly and young LGBTQIA+ population, vi) prioritizing location and sense of community to empowerment and ownership of the LGBTQIA+ population, and vii) improving data collection systems dedicated to the LGBTQIA+ population.

Another scenario of housing policies more concerned with gender issues is found in Spain which, according to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association of Europe [13], was elected as the second-best country for LGBTQIA+ population living in Europe. In recent decades, Spain has stood out in promoting quality for the LGBTQIA+ population and other women. A large part of these achievements came from the great mortgage crisis of 2008, when many inhabitants went into debt to acquire housing during the years of real estate boom and were then unable to pay off their debts due to abusive contracts, the economic crisis and the decrease in the power of purchase of salaries [4]. Through the 'Rapporteurship for the Right to Adequate Housing at the United Nations (UN)' between 2008 and 2014, the effects of the global financialization of housing were observed, when several reports of evictions, demolitions, expropriations began to emerge around the world after the 2008 mortgage crisis [4]. In 2015, several Spanish architects and urban planners, unhappy with the housing crisis, began to dedicate themselves to political life and public service in search of novel solutions for the situation [4]. It is in this context that architect Josep Maria Montaner took over the Barcelona Housing Department in 2015 and that his wife, also an architect, Zaida Muxí, began

working at the Santa Coloma de Gramenet city hall, under the management of mayor Núria Parlón.

In 2021, the Municipal Plan for the Right to Housing was launched in Barcelona, with the main objective of presenting guidelines and regulations to meet the needs of a plurality of inhabitants, including the LGBTQIA+ population and other women. Even though the focus was not exclusively on these two population groups, the plan represented a milestone and progress for the housing policies of the city of Barcelona, as one of its main premises included general guidelines that sought to guarantee the right to housing which is suitable for all people, regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation [3]. Barcelona's Municipal Plan for the Right to Housing provides mechanisms to guarantee accessible housing for LGBTQIA+ people and women in vulnerable situations with social housing projects, temporary shelters, affordable housing, social rents, as well as encouraging mediations and rent adjustments. The aim is to serve different age, income and vulnerability groups. The Plan also establishes guidelines for preventing evictions, and protecting housing and neighbourhoods, the aim is to prevent real estate speculation and the tourism industry from reducing the availability of affordable housing or excessively increasing rental prices in the city.

Other elements also include the Barcelona Municipal Plan for the Right to Housing [3], such as the addition of social housing units, rehabilitation of degraded areas or situations of decay, greater financial support for housing projects in vulnerable communities and encouragement of pluralism of housing typologies that are capable of meeting the diversity of gender identities and sexual plurality (collective, shared, intergenerational housing, among others). Despite not having specific housing policies that include sexual minorities, we can observe different perspectives in other cities around the world. Berlin, for example, has been investing in intergenerational social housing projects for the LGBTQIA+ population and women since 2002, the most emblematic example is 'Schwules Wohnprojektq' also called 'Lebensort Vielfalt' [14], a project that brings together LGBTQIA+ elderly people in situations of vulnerability, abandonment and care, and young LGBTQIA+ population, women and refugees.

The project, upon its inauguration, already had a waiting list of two hundred residents. Over the years, other social housing units were built in the city supported by the largest state-owned construction company, 'Wohnungsbaugesellschaft Berlin-Mitte' (WBM). The most recent launched in 2023, dedicated to lesbian women and the queer community in Berlin. The project foresees, in addition to seventy apartments, which will include social housing and social rent (at a rate of 6.90 euros per square meter), the construction of a queer cultural centre to reinforce the community feeling and housing units adapted for queer elderly people and for queer people with disabilities. In Vancouver, Canada, actions range from government housing policy agencies, such as BC Housing [15], whose aim is to offer affordable housing for vulnerable communities, as well as social rental programs and subsidies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population in vulnerable situation, to non-governmental organizations such as 'RainCity Housing and Qmunity Housing', whose actions include resources and support related to housing for the LGBTQ+ community in Vancouver [16].

Initial Approaches to Debates on Gender in Housing Policies in Latin America

In Latin America, gender perspectives in housing policies are in a difficult process of consolidation and do not present a diversity of programs and typologies that cater to sexual

plurality. In recent decades, many national programs for financing or producing social housing have placed women as a priority group with a view to establishing gender equality. However, this model still reproduces a cisheteronormative logic that no longer serves the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations that contemporary times contemplate. Programs such as 'Programa Vivienda Digna for female heads of family' in Mexico [17], 'Mi Casa Ya' in Colombia [18], 'Programa Nacional de Vivienda Social' in Ecuador [19] and 'Programa Minha Casa Minha Vida' in Brazil [20] have as their priority eligibility criteria women, cisgender women, heterosexuals and mothers, leaving out other pluralities of women and other sexual minorities (trans, intersex and non-binary women and men, for example).

In these countries, not only is there a reinforcement of the binary structure of gender, but there is also an erasure of pluralities since the LGBTQIA+ population is not included in national housing policies. Public policies that address this population segment focus, for the most part, on issues of sexual health (combating STIs, especially HIV), public safety (combating homophobia, lesbophobia and transphobia) and assistance and social services (program of temporary shelters, eradicating hunger, combating and mitigating the use of narcotics), a legacy of the 1980s and 1990s, during the peak of cases of death from AIDS, that the cisheteronormative system tries to homogenize all LGBTQIA+ bodies within a single dimension. Despite this context, in Brazil some local governments are making efforts through their State and Municipal Housing Plans or through draft laws by state deputies and councillors, to expand the list of priority groups that currently exist in 'Minha Casa Minha Vida', to include the transvestite population, transsexuals and same-sex couples in the right to priority registration in housing programs. This is the case of the State of Pernambuco, which in 2020 began to guarantee LGBT family units the right to enrol in popular housing programs developed by the State Executive Branch. Natal is another example of new perspectives as law No. 6,910 of 2019 [21] was sanctioned by the municipal authorities, guaranteeing the right of same-sex couples to register as a priority group in the municipality's popular housing programs.

As of 2023, the city of Belém began joint efforts to include LGBTQIA+ family centres in 'Minha Casa Minha Vida' [22]. In relation to the largest Brazilian housing policy, 'Minha Casa Minha Vida', restored after the 'Minha Casa Verde Amarela' years, there was no evolution of more specific guidelines that consider other pluralities of gender and sexuality. However, in May 2023, federal deputy Camila Jara, parliamentarian representing Mato Grosso do Sul, presented Bill No. 2327/2023 [23], which aims to include couples in a stable union or same-sex marriage, and the transvestite and transsexual population with the right to priority registration for all government housing projects, including 'Minha Casa Minha Vida' [20]. The Bill is under discussion in the National Congress and is currently the subject of analysis by the 'Commission on Human Rights, Minorities and Racial Equality' of the National Congress, with no prediction of any type of vote or progress yet.

Partial Conclusion: Collective Dimensions of the Policies

Thus, despite the resurgence of neoliberal policies in a global context, several entities, collectives, associations and activists are starting to focus more efforts on promoting gender and diversity issues within public policies. It is widely elaborated in the field of social movement studies that reactions to the political field emerge in different contexts, whether in the streets, in marches and protests; in collectives organized as residents' associations; or in institutional spaces [24]. The new "repertoires" of political action [25] and collectivization

strategies within LGBTQIA+ social movements influenced domains of representative politics and other deliberative spaces. In the academic field, debates have also expanded, contributing to the construction of new ideas regarding housing policies.

The constant structural violence, promoted by governments and neoliberalism, can give rise to resistance and new ways of living and relating to the world and others [8]. These contemporary experiences can also be understood as a response to the docile spaces [5]. Architecture and urbanism, as well as their policies, can contribute to the configuration of a hegemonic and totalizing social order of bodies, which reinforce power schemes that suppress dissident ways of existing under a cloak of neutrality and efficiency of public spending. Therefore, the existence of these new incursions into the ways of living, concerned with the ethical-moral recognition of the other [1] causes the discourse of rational, functionalist and cisheteronormative homogenization of cities to be dismantled. It is in this context that we place the reference case that will be discussed in the next topic.

Housing Policies in Argentina between 2003 and 2019

During the 1990s, most Latin American countries were hit by a serious economic crisis, mainly due to external debt and high interest rates imposed on countries by Europe and the United States, the main creditors at that time [26]. Latin American economies, within a neoliberal context, are now perceived as out of control, with excessive spending on developmental state policies and with a low capacity to resolve acquired credits [27]. In Argentina, neoliberal reforms virulently removed the State's ability to provide social welfare policies throughout the 1990s [28]. Therefore, Argentina is experiencing a stagnation of public policies dedicated to providing quality of life for its citizens, while trying to convince its creditors, especially the United States, to adjust and balance its accounts. It is in this system of (dis)investment in public policies that housing policies are also reformulated.

The 'Fondo Nacional de la Vivienda' (FONAVI), main housing production policy, began to have its administration decentralized and weakened, while 'Banco Hipotecario Nacional', the main coordinating body for real estate financing, was privatized in 1998 [29]. FONAVI's housing production and Banco Hipotecario Nacional's financing were mostly intended for the middle class rather than the low-income working class, their disarticulation and privatization during the 1990s led to a stagnation in housing production in Argentina [30]. Thus, in compliance with neoliberal guidelines, the Argentine State limited itself, as well as in other economic areas, to simply ensuring that the market acted in the most efficient and profitable way possible, not intervening in the process and regulating as little as possible.

Starting in 2003, with the election of Nestor Kirchner, public policies went through a historical inflection point [30]. From this moment on, having identified the overwhelming consequences of neoliberalism for the country's economy, the federal management led by Kirchner began a process of resuming the country's development, positioning the State as a central agent in decision-making, diverging from previous administrations that advocate for non-state intervention in economic and social sectors. Thus, Argentina is undergoing a reactivation of social welfare policies, new health programs, a new economic plan and a new structuring of ministries. As a result, housing policies are also undergoing a recovery, since FONAVI, the main instrument for production and financing of Argentine housing, was paralyzed by the drain on investments and the severe economic crisis.

From 2003 onwards, successive federal plans became an attempt by the government to respond to the social crisis in which the country was immersed after years of stagnation [30]. It was during this period that the Ministry of Federal Planning, Public Investment and Services was created and, concomitantly, the Sub-Secretariat of Urban Development and Housing. Other federal programs emerged from 2003 and 2004, such as the National Housing Emergency Program, whose objective was to provide housing and basic infrastructure for families below the poverty line and in vulnerable situations (people in emergency and marginalized situations) [30]. Another program is the Housing Solidarity Program, similar in nature to the Housing Emergency, although focused on certain areas of the country that have a higher rate of poverty and housing urgency.

It is important to highlight that both the FONAVI reactivation plans and the new federal housing plans innovated by introducing professional training and the generation of new jobs as elements added to the new housing policies. Thus, at the same time that housing was created, residents were also qualified, offering training in new trades in the construction, infrastructure and sanitation sectors. It is also at this moment that women, heads of households, and other sexual differences (trans and transvestite populations, for example) are included as priority groups for the benefit of housing policies, facilitating their access to the right to housing and recognizing gender as one of the elements to be observed in the production of housing policies. It is important to specifically point out that the Housing Emergency Program was the result of the involvement of several ministries in the country and that it also innovated to encourage the meeting of heads of families in work cooperatives, with the aim of creating work fronts in the face of the difficulty of generating of stable jobs for the most popular classes. These two factors: interministerial involvement and cooperative associations are important points that will reappear in 2021 in the implementation of the 'Habitat en Igualdad' program, when an association of transsexual women from La Rioja petitions the federal government for housing and professional training.

It is worth mentioning that in 2012 the Argentine 'Bicentennial Credit Program for Single Family Housing' (Pro.Cre.Ar.) was created, through presidential decree 902/2012, as a countercyclical policy to reactivate the economy and respond to the housing crisis in country [31]. Pro.Cre.Ar. was developed to focus on the middle and middle/low-income classes, with the creation of a trust fund with resources from the National Treasury and real estate transferred to the national government, with the aim of facilitating access to housing and generating employment [30]. The Program was created during Cristina Kirchner's second government and stood out from other housing programs until then due to its territorial reach and ability to adapt to diverse types of family profiles.

From 2015 onwards, Argentina's housing policies went through another moment of rupture, when the Cambiemos coalition managed to elect the former mayor of Buenos Aires Mauricio Macri to the presidency of the republic. Macri's administration entailed a break with the public policies and management model of Kirchnerist governments with the aim of changing the distribution of power in Argentine society [32]. Cambiemos was elected from a new moment of neoliberal rise [33], defined as late neoliberalism [32], with arguments that the housing programs of the Kirchnerist period did not have long-term thinking, that its policies were tainted by corruption, cronyism and fiscal irresponsibility. Based on these premises, and with a state apparatus mainly influenced by businesspeople and representatives of the financial

market, the Macri government presented a new scheme for regulating beneficiaries of housing programs.

However, it was clear that the policy paths implemented by the Macri administration failed to achieve their objective [33]. The 2018 currency crisis, which raised living costs and reduced consumers' purchasing power, combined with the Macri government's business profile focused on medium and high-income social strata, worsened the country's economic situation. Thus, the state's strategies for reducing social spending, fiscal austerity policies, privatization of public services, and the efforts to deregulate and make working conditions more flexible, taken up by Macri, exemplify how neoliberalism is the way capitalism finds to perpetuate precariousness in human lives [1].

In this sense, the only objective pursued by Macri was to increase company profits and reduce costs for the Argentine state, but in practice it ended up generating an increase in the precariousness of the lives of various social groups in vulnerable situations. This precariousness is exemplified in the data presented in research [34] which revealed that despite Macri's government's attempt, after popular pressure, in 2019 Argentina's housing deficit affected 1 in every 3 families, with a need to build 1.5 million houses and 2.5 million houses in precarious conditions.

The Kirchnerist administrations left a legacy of 1,150,083 housing solutions, including new homes, renovations and financing from Pro.Cre.Ar. and Macri's government invested exclusively in mortgage policies, reduced the housing budget by 44.3% and completely emptied other policies such as FONAVI and the 'Action Program for the Construction of Social Housing' [34].

Using data from the Municipal Ombudsman's Report, data from the public budget and fiscal balance sheets made available by Macri's administration itself in 2019/2020, research [34] revealed that in addition to the emptying of housing policies, sanitation and infrastructure were sectors that grew least within the public budget and were seriously hit by inflation. The increase in the default rate on rent and mortgage financing was also revealed, demonstrating that the policies employed by the Macri administration only benefited banks and did not produce positive effects on resolving the housing issue. The thought is accompanied by research [35] which points out that the impacts of Macri's government housing policies were null and resulted in an accumulation of mistakes that were unable to contribute to housing production, only worsening the housing deficit and leaving a legacy of debtors who were unable to pay off their mortgage debts.

'Habitar en Igualdad' Program: Advances and Challenges in Promoting Diversity and the Right to Housing

According to an analysis by a journalist and political scientist [36] of the first years of Alberto Fernández's government, it faced a "triply complex" situation. Firstly, the difficulty encountered by Fernández at the international level. Since the time of his election, his government was surrounded by right-wing and extreme-right governments (Chile, Uruguay, Bolivia, Brazil and the United States of America) [36], which made commercial agreements and transactions difficult given the climate of political hostility.

The second factor mentioned [36] was the economic crisis inherited from the Macri government, which failed in its economic plans and left a country in recession, more impoverished (35.5%), inflation of 53.8% and devaluation of the Argentine peso by almost 550%. The third and final factor that hinders more progressive advances in the Fernández government were internal political factors [36]. The Frente de Todos coalition which elected him tried to bring together progressive forces against the advance of the extreme right in the Argentine elections. However, since its beginning, it showed signs of difficulty in dialogue between each other and with the electoral dispute won, internal disputes between Peronists and other political sectors began to emerge and cause paralysis of the federal government's forces.

In this regard, research by the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina (CONACETI) [35] highlights that the Macri government implemented an economic process of late neoliberalism, with the release of the foreign exchange market, suppression of subsidies for services and public policies, and uncontrolled growth of external debt. For Fernández's management, it was left to implement a reform to resume the path of the previous twelve years of Kirchnerist governments, however with financial difficulties, right-wing and extreme-right governments, devaluation of national commodities, the covid-19 health crisis and more recently the destabilization of the international market driven by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine [35]. Influenced by the resumption of development, housing policies are also going through a new phase under Alberto Fernández's government. The institutional hierarchy and the variety of approaches and actors were the first highlights of his government. The creation of the Ministry of Habitat and Housing as one of the government's first measures signaled that one of its main bases would be tackling housing issues.

Decree no. 7/2019 that established the Ministry represented a milestone for the struggles for the right to housing in Argentina, as it allows greater participation of popular sectors in the organization of their housing and defends the socio-urban integration of popular neighbourhoods, in addition to instruments for regularization soil and urban planning. The decree expressly recognizes housing as a social right that must be implemented through various national policies and through programs that meet the diversity of places and individuals. In this regard, research [35] highlights that the decree also designated the Ministry of Social Development as competent to promote decent housing for the Argentine population. It is precisely an interministerial partnership between the 'Ministerio del Desarrollo Territorial y Hábitat' and the 'Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad' that in 2021, through Joint Resolution nº 04/2021, the national housing program entitled 'Habitat en Igualdad' was created, with the objective of promoting housing and urban development policies from a gender perspective, aimed at women and the LGBTQIA+ community. In accordance with the general guidelines ('lineamientos generales') of the Joint Resolution, the program aims to generate lines of action that allow the inclusion, participation and training of women and the LGBTQIA+ population in processes linked to access to housing construction, as well as training of associated trades and the generation of a more inclusive urban space [37].

The general guidelines also determine the specific objectives of the program: a) boost gender and diversity perspectives in public policies for access to decent housing and in planning, development and construction policies for urban and rural facilities, b) promote the participation of women and the LGBTQIA+ population in the processes of design, planning,

development and supervision/monitoring of public policies for access to decent housing, land production and urban development, c) foster equality for women and the LGBTQIA+ population both in access and improvements of housing, as well as the design and use of public space, d) develop jointly between ministries, prioritization criteria for the allocation of housing that particularly address the needs of people in situations of gender-based violence.

It is important to highlight that 'Habitar en Igualdad' arises from a scenario of implementation of several programs focusing on women and the LGBTQIA+ population. Research [38] attributes these advances to the promulgation of the Gender Identity Law [39] in 2012 as a milestone for changes in legislation and public policies. Thus, Argentina is undergoing changes to official State forms, which include new gender fields in addition to the male/female binary, such as the mandatory establishment of training for public servants in matters of gender and diversity (Law No. 27,499 of 2019), as well as the possibility of voluntary termination of pregnancy for women and other people capable of carrying a child. Starting in 2020, new programs such as 'Programa Igualar' [40] and 'Programa Producir' [41] establish guidelines for gender equality and diversity at work and the development of economic independence policies for women and LGBTQIA+ in situations of violence. On the other hand, the 'Casa Propria' program [42] created in 2022, complementing Habitar en Igualdad, launches preferential financing quotas for women who suffer gender-based violence (3%), women heads of families (20%) and diversities (3%), completing a progressive scenario in terms of public policies dedicated to women and the LGBTQIA+ population.

Still on the 'Habitar en Igualdad' program, it is important to highlight that this is related to the 'Plan Nacional de Partes Interesadas' – PPPI [43] and the 'Proyecto de Habitación y Suelo Urbano' – PHAYS [44], the first developed by the 'Ministerio del Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible' and the second by the Ministerio del Desarrollo Territorial, both pursuing objectives of the environmental and social framework of the World Bank (BIRD), which, according to its own definition, intends to establish objectives for the eradication of extreme poverty among its member countries. Among the PPPI [43] and PHAYS [44] subprograms, we find 'Proyectos de Fortalecimiento del Capital Social y Humano' – PFCSyH [45] and the 'Proyectos de Iniciativas Comunitarias' – PIC [45], which help finance 'Habitar en Igualdad', in addition to establishing the hiring of interdisciplinary field teams, formation of participatory workshops, technical assistance, training and community communication to strengthen the participation of women and the LGBTQIA+ population for low-complexity works and for production processes of participatory designs that take interests into account specific to this population group.

The first province to join the 'Habitar en Igualdad' program was La Rioja, located in northern Argentina, as a result of the mobilization of transvestite and trans activists and the 'Vamos a Andar Foundation', managed by deputy and activist Hilda "Beba" Aguirre. The deputy was responsible for organizing for more than fifteen years the conquest of lots on the southern outskirts of the capital of Rio de Janeiro for the ownership of the transvestite and trans collective. However, it was only in 2021, through financial resources from the province and the interministerial program 'Habitar en Igualdad', that the construction of twenty-five homes and urbanization in a neighbourhood for the beneficiary public began. Currently, through information from the 'Vamos a Andar Foundation', works in La Rioja are advanced and some housing units have already been completed and inhabited. After decades of liberal policies with an attempt to reduce the welfare state and costs by the government, after also the Macri

government's recent foray into outdated neoliberal practices and, despite the external and internal outlook unfavourable to Fernández' government, 'Habitat en Igualdad' and its related policies recognize the importance of making visible and destigmatizing sexual minorities, especially the LGBTQIA+ population, through investment in housing, work and social inclusion policies.

Investment in public policies that guarantee social rights to groups in vulnerable situations is crucial for the formation of more just and egalitarian societies, since neoliberal policies are responsible for perpetuating the state of precarious human lives [1]. In this sense, it is important to identify otherness as an instrument of ethical-moral recognition of others, especially those who live in precarious situations, only in this way can we allow the recognition of the humanity of others and the construction of ethical and moral bonds with those who live in precarious conditions.

For the LGBTQIA+ population, the formation of family centres and homes through communities and affinities is an important form of resistance and strategy for their own precarious condition [8], since for the LGBTQIA+ population to establish their life and family outside of the cisheterosexual system can mean, in many cases, being exposed to threats to its own existence. In this sense, in capitalism, human life is characterized by vulnerability and precariousness, human life is constantly exposed to threats, such as extreme poverty, violence, discrimination, forced displacement, lack of access to basic resources such as housing, food, health and education [1].

Research recognizes the importance of responding to the limitations that cities homogeneously designed for cis, heterosexual and white men exert on subordinate bodies (women, the elderly, children, the LGBTQIA+ population and people with disabilities) [2], highlighting the need to promote the collective ways that these groups created to protect themselves and experience cities. These subordinate bodies constantly experience fear, which even translates into geographical limits, whether in looks of harassment, violence and brutalization of dissident bodies or segregation and racism [2].

Despite this cisheteronormative and violent scenario, it is important to engage and deepen the debate on the experiences of vulnerable, marginalized and stigmatized groups, such as the creation of the collective of trans and transvestites in the province of La Rioja who fought for 21 years for access to housing and who recently achieved through 'Habitat en Igualdad'. Such experience exemplifies the power of resistance that can be extracted from the state of mourning perpetrated by the precarious condition of some human lives.

Public housing policies such as 'Habitat en Igualdad' can still represent a means of rescuing the character of social welfare and safeguarding social rights, distorted by the financialization of cities [4] that went through after the recent economic and real estate crises to see land as a store of value and as a new frontier for capital. It is necessary to find ways to publicize, implement and guarantee continuity of such public housing policies, since, in the capitalist system, having a right of occupation does not necessarily mean having security of tenure, as changes in political parties, economic crises reveal the potential for discretion and instability of these rights, which can be suspended at any time without adequate reparations or compensation.

CONCLUSION

With the development of this work, we aim to outline reflections on public housing policies and gender issues. To this end, we sought to base our discussion on researchers and authors from different areas who spoke to some extent with our object of study, among others.

Thus, firstly, we discussed current housing policy scenarios and gender issues, introducing the importance of the current debate in several countries around the world. Secondly, we outlined a history of recent decades regarding housing policies in Argentina. The purpose was to create a time frame that would explain the resumption of the progressive agenda and social welfare in the housing policies of the current Fernández government, until reaching the main object of study: the interministerial program 'Habitar en Igualdad', responsible for promoting housing, public spaces and new jobs for women and the LGBTQIA+ population in situations of violence and social vulnerability.

By analysing the trajectory of housing policies in Argentina from 2003 to 2023, we can observe how social rights are never completely guaranteed, even more so in the face of the constant harassment of neoliberalism and, more recently, the advance of the extreme right in several governments around the world. Despite having a long history with housing policies for vulnerable groups, such as low-income populations, only since 2019 has Argentina advanced the debate from a gender perspective, especially women and the LGBTQIA+ population. However, such advances will face a new setback given the already announced extinction, by the new government elected in 2023, of the ministries of 'Desarrollo Territorial and Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad', responsible for creating and coordinating the 'Habitar en Igualdad' program. Even though 'Habitar en Igualdad' will probably have a short life, it is important to publicize its advances and achievements and continue studying gender issues in public housing policies, especially in Latin American countries that have a large contingent population lacking housing and public social welfare policies. In this sense, the current public housing policy responses in Latin America, based on cisheteronormative dogmas, no longer serve to understand the complexity of the housing needs of its population.

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