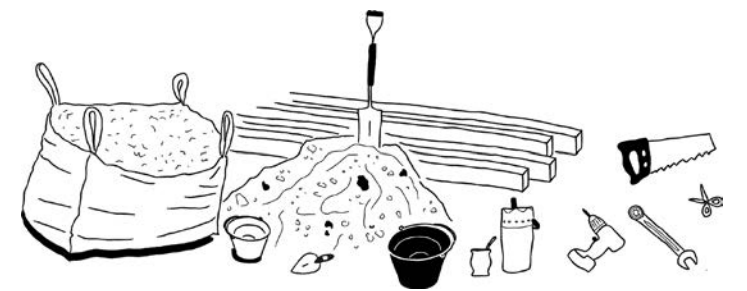


(re)searching care in La Biblioteca Popular

a situated perspective (in pandemic times)
in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires

Franziska Dehm





(re)searching care in La Biblioteca Popular

a situated perspective (in pandemic times)
in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires.

October, 2020

The thesis is based on collective knowledge that has been re-assembled and expanded by me. The illustrations and photographs are own representations, unless otherwise specified. It was created in the processing period for the purpose of achieving the masterdegree in Urban Design at Hafencity University Hamburg and during Proyecto Urbano of Taller a77 at the Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo of the Universidad de Buenos Aires.

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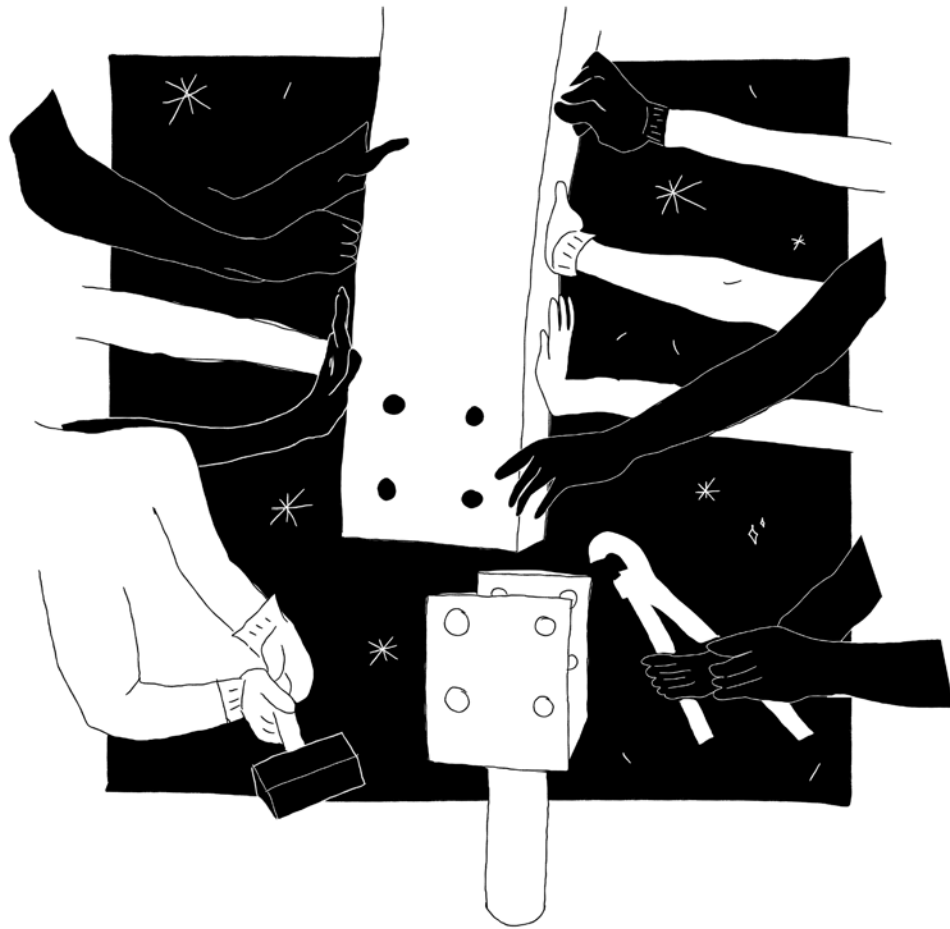
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[1]

(RE)SEARCHING CARE IN LA BIBLIOTECA POPULAR

This work examines La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova, a self-managed communal popular library, in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires under the spectrum *on care* in current feminist discourses and urban studies. It is a situated perspective in pandemic times of 2020. The issues of this work move between current reports and effects due to the coronavirus crisis, the understanding of educación popular and acting in prácticas autogestionadas (-> auto-agency practices), collaboration projects between architectural faculties and informal districts and draws a broad picture of the place and its context, filled with illustrations, storytellings and imaginarios urbanos.

By taking up contemporary academic and artistic positions *on care*, the case is analyzed in its practices by means of which the social, built and discursive structuring of its materialization is problematized. The every-day realities in a highly vulnerable and marginalized neighborhood that was built and emerged informally bring manifold challenges and problematics that are *not taken care of*. The aim is to take stock, locate and study specific moments in urban production in order to find out interconnections and interdependencies in the local context. I critically examine what ethics of care mean in relation to architecture and urban design, how these dimensions are spatially and socially (re)produced and how they can be (re)imagined.

Esta tesis está dedicada a quienes tienen el coraje, de embarcarse en proyectos, aunque parezcan utópicos. Que no se cansen de discutir y que compartan el deseo de un mundo mejor, de justicia social, acción emancipadora y, sobre todo, de futuros más cuidadosos. ¡Por que nunca dejemos de aprender!

This thesis is dedicated to those who have the courage to embark on projects, even if they seem utopian at first. Who do not tire of discussing and who share the desire for a better world of social justice, emancipatory action and, above all, of more care-taking futures. Because we never stop learning!

Diese Thesis ist jenen gewidmet, die den Mut haben sich auf Projekte einzulassen, auch wenn sie zuerst utopisch erscheinen. Die nicht müde werden zu diskutieren und den Wunsch teilen nach einer besseren Welt der sozialen Gerechtigkeit, des emanzipatorischen Handelns und, vor allen Dingen, sorgetragender Zukünfte. Weil wir niemals auslernen!

GRACIAS!

Antes que nada quiero agradecer al equipo de la Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova, en particular a Gisela y Waldemar. Su trabajo comunitario me conmueve mucho y el cariño me llega de verdad. Gracias a todxs lxs del Taller a77 de la FADU-UBA, a Adri, Lucas y Gustavo. El maravilloso trabajo en grupo con Maca, Tati y JuanPe. Un besote a las pibas Cami, Lu y Majo por el aguante, reflexiones profundas y la movida en casa! Especialmente a Cami siendo una gran amiga y por haberme apoyado con tu hermoso ojo de sacar las fotos. Gracias Leila por el soporte brindando mi castellano.

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A warm and sincere thanks to my supervisors Monika and Antje! Your encouragement and trust guided me well and inspired me on the journey of (re)searching, (re)thinking and (re)drawing - especially in this particular situation over distance. A huge thank you to Johan and Yohanna for reading and commenting this work, it really supported my process in this intellectual project.

DANKE!

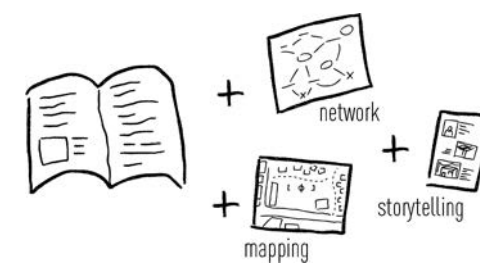
Nicht zuletzt ein riesen Dank an meine Familie und Freund*innen!! Besonders an die fem research gang mit Kiki, Nina und Anna, an Therese und die ganze UD Klasse. Ich danke dem DAAD und dem Waterfront e.V. der HCU für die finanzielle Unterstützung dieser besonderen Studien- und Lebenserfahrung in Argentinien.

LANGUAGE

I try to use language in a playful and flexible way in my thesis. Therefore, direct quotations and titles are sometimes in Spanish, but always explained in English as well. With this bilingual approach, I intend to reflect my research process and engagement with the place – having been living in Buenos Aires for the entire processing period of the thesis. Yet, I regard English as the main language of the book as adequate and seek to make the debates accessible to a wider public.

All field work and communication with the actors was conducted in Spanish, and a large part of the data material as well. A personal collection of colloquial terms and neologisms that have appeared frequently during this process are listed as a Glossary in the Appendix.

I've always been moving between the three languages, considering German as well, that from time to time I literally felt myself *lost in translation*. However, at the same time, this has led to a sensitive use of language and the simultaneous questioning and searching for appropriate terms. I practiced to express, explain and justify my thesis project in different languages, depending on which person I was speaking to. I see it as an opportunity, to tell these stories and to make knowledge visible and accessible, for perhaps another audience. Considering calls to decolonize the production of knowledge (among others Robinson 2006), it is important to me to include non-western contexts in research programmes and discuss these practices through politically informed perspectives.



Before we start, I'd like to make a few recommendations on how to read the book. The Eng/Esp translations are always placed after the terms and marked with an arrow (->). Translations of the titles are in a black box on the outer edges on the pages. There as well you find direct quotes, further notes or short explanations.

The book is complemented with two fold-out posters: a collaged mapping and the actor network, as well as the storytelling. This is meant to take out, and read next to each other, to get an overview and follow the references. Like leafing through a book, one can jump from different chapters...

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1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 OUTLINE

The thesis is structured in seven sections. In the »Beginning«, I reveal my motive and personal positioning and take a stand on the topicality of the research in this unprecedented situation in which we are on a global scale living through due to the covid-19 outbreak. I elaborate on the crisis phenomenon and the emerging effects in Buenos Aires and its informal neighborhoods. The understanding of *»Educación Popular«* and academic discourses on collaborative architectural projects in the so-called Global South give evidence to the framework of this work. This is followed by the research question, field entry and purpose of the thesis. In the second section »Research Approach« I write about the difficulties of doing research in a pandemic, my methodological approach as situated knowledge, embodied practice, action research and *»imaginarios urbanos«* and the set of empirical methods that are briefly reflected on their application.

In the third section »La Biblioteca Popular« I explore the case by re-telling its making considering process and time with descriptive texts, photographs and illustrations. The socio-spatial context is portrayed through mappings in different scales to introduce actors and actants in the field. The fourth section »Considering Care« reviews current discourses on care. After introducing the concept of the relational space model as the underlying understanding of space, contemporary positions on care are outlined. Regarding the dimensions of which the care concept can be applied to architecture, I elaborate in *»Caring Architecture«*. In the end of this section, I discuss what the pandemic crisis means related to care. In the fifth section »De-constructing Practices of Care«, the empirical material is discussed in relation to the theoretical framework under the four focus topics: 5.1 *Aguante la autogestión y procesos colaborativos (-> Endure auto-agency practices and collaborative processes)*, 5.2 *Acompaña la educación y saberes populares (-> Carry out popular education and knowledges)* and 5.3 *Valora la Potencialidad de la Basura (-> Valora la Potencialidad de la Basura)*. It provides actor constellations, figures and storytelling regarding the interconnected urban and social fabric of the place.

An interim conclusion follows in section six »Envisioning Practices of Care« in order to enroll specific needs and principles for future scenarios. Situative proposals that draw on already existing infrastructures, possible forms of care and practices of communal life. In the final part »Reflecting on Practices of Care« I recapitulate my research process and close with personal, methodological and theoretical reflections.

NI LAS TIERRAS
NI LAS MUJERES
SOMOS TERRITORIOS
DE CONQUISTA

1.2 MOTIVE

A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON URBAN DESIGN

Modern cities were thought from a patriarchal perspective according to the uses, needs and desires of men with (re)productive capacity (Hayden 1988). Rigid cities full of borders and dichotomies, presenting a socio-spatial segregation according to demands of the market and capitalist rationality in which places, activities, roles and powers are assigned to a persistent sexual division of labor (Federici 2012).

A feminist view on architecture and urban design within critical urban studies open up possibilities to understand and imagine other ways of inhabiting the city, relating on how everyday life is actually lived and marked by different and many bodies. Seeing and appreciating this interwoven web of many conditions, matters and practices is one step in knowledge production with a feminist stance. This is followed by making the complex intersections visible and re-assembling these findings to tell other stories that can be applied to prospective future imaginaries. With this political positioning as a fundamental motive, I see valuable potentials which cannot be left out in scientific, political and planning discourses about modes of (re)production and use in urban spaces. By allowing rational and emotional knowledge in the research boundaries between academia and activism can be broken up. Own subjectivity replaces illusory objectivity. In this context I understand my own involvement as an embodied practice and therefore imaginations and storytelling as an academic tool.

Donna Haraway (2016: 12) invites us to stay with the trouble, allowing us to be attached to the field of research and commit to our matters of care: *»It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.«*

At the very beginning I ask myself: How can we tell urban stories in a way in which they make a difference and matter to care?

[2] »Neither the Earth, nor Women are Territories of Conquest«, inspired by a graffiti I saw in Buenos Aires.

ON CARE

One of the fundamental issues within a feminist perspective is the Ethics of Care. On the one hand understood as interpersonal capacity and work looking after the physical and emotional needs of others, but on the other hand also broadened to local and global dimensions. It is discussed as an extended relational process of action: *caring about, caring for, caregiving, care receiving and caring with* (Tronto 2013; Bellacasa 2017). Spanning forms of reproductive work, to hands-on care, to the question of taking responsibility for living beings, (im) material subjects or the environment, the term invites us to think about an understanding of the interdependencies of social, economic, political, historical, cultural and ecological matters (Fritz/Krasny 2019) as well as questioning the prevailing underlying gender norms (Butler 2009).

Care is our individual and common ability to provide the conditions which allow the vast majority of people and living creatures to thrive – along with the planet itself. The concept has occupied a prominent position in feminist theory since the 1970s, in particular through the analysis of reproductive labour and maternalism, as it is deeply rooted as a critique of the neoliberal capitalist system. This market logic unravelled civic engagement and dismantled the welfare state by prioritizing profit over people. It keeps us from taking care of the flourishing and co-existence of our fellow human beings. The members of the activist reading circle Care Collective (2020: 11) state that this trend has made *»our world in one, in which carelessness reigns«*. People and infrastructure are more often taught and shaped to be autonomous and constantly resilient, quasi self-sufficient figures, than to models of kinship taking care of their surrounding world (ibid.: 28): *»this notion that care is up to the individual derives from the refusal to recognise our shared vulnerabilities and interconnectedness, creating a callous and uncaring climate for everyone«*.

Today in these unsettling days of covid-19, talk about care is everywhere. In response to Joan Tronto's radical statement *»Care is not utopian, markets are utopian«*, the curators (Bailer/ Karjevsky/ Talevi 2020: 40) of the ›New Alphabet School‹ program of HWK Berlin ask: *»How do we dare not to dream in grand ways, but to maintain? Dare not to innovate, but repair? Dare not to discover but recuperate? Dare to put a limit to growth, and start to care?«*.

POSITIONING

As an urban designer and feminist, I see my ethical and political duty to re-negotiate the interdependencies in our world and contribute to different futures: imagining situated, relational and embodied perspectives in space and architecture. My understanding of space is based on the city as a process and open form in which space is continuously created, (re)negotiated and (re)produced through the mutual relationship of practices (Lefebvre 1991, Löw 2001). This means that space, practices and unequal distribution of power, resources and knowledge can be changed. The desire for a better world of social justice and emancipatory action unfold the right to the city in the right to participate in a radically different reproduction of the city, the *»urban impossible«* (Chatterton 2010).

As a researcher, I see my responsibility to deal with knowledge constructively as to find narratives, always with a *»radical appetite for change«* and experience with matters that seem *»impossible, unknown and out of reach«* (ibid.: 235). In reference to Frichot (2016: 5), I seek to alter *»prevalent practices that rely on (bad) habits, (mere) opinions, and (prejudiced) clichés [...] To take risks, but also to take care«*. I am aware of my personal position within the field of research and privileges that I have as an educated, white, european, young woman and I try to deal with this self-critically. I try to challenge established perceptions and concepts. The current pandemic crisis gives even more relevance to question how a more just and care-taking restructuring of anti hegemonial urban futures could be like – futures that are now being made.

HACERNOS VISIBLES
HACERNOS PRESENTES
POTENCIARNOS
PARA PENSAR CIUDADES FEMINISTAS
SORORAS, DIVERSAS,
SENSIBLES Y EN RED

»Let's make us visible
Make us present
Potentialize us
to think Feminist Cities
of Sisterhood, Diversity
Sensibility and in Networks.«

[3] in La Ciudad que resiste
(Bilmes/Lina 2019: 17)

1.3 ACCESS

RESEARCH INTEREST

The research interest arose from working in a collaborative construction project between *La Biblioteca Popular de La Cárcova* and the chair of *Taller a77* at *Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo, Universidad de Buenos Aires (FADU-UBA)* in the winter term of 2019/20 during my exchange year in Buenos Aires (Bs As), Argentina. *La Biblioteca Popular* is a non-profit and community-based cultural and educational organization, located in the informal district *La Cárcova*, in *Grl. San Martín* in the metropolitan area of *Bs As*. Over several weeks, together with inhabitants and other students, we built a wooden structure in the public space in front of the library. Through this, I got to know the place with its very own story, memories and actors. I found this exchange very valuable and sought to build on the collective learning from and with each other. The reflection of this process and the interest to work deeper with this context forms my research interest and field entry.

The experience of a research project in a context like this raises questions about (self-)responsibility, initiative and positioning of the own disciplinary role and in the production of urban spaces. It also forms the framework for a discourse about (academic) knowledge production and architectural interventions in a territory that is characterized by marginalization and is located on the edge of *El Conurbano Bonaerense*, the suburbs of Buenos Aires.

Crucial concerns about social inequality, urban poverty and informal living and working unfold in certain realities, which remain invisibilized and unrecognized by the state power and in conventional academic work. In the article *Re-assembling Austerity Research* Hilbrand/Richter (2015) discuss the issue of studying practices of collective organizing that clearly emerged out of scarcity utter strong ambivalences in the political discursive field. These inquiries

[4], [5] Collaborative Construction Project between Universities (FADU-UBA, UNSAM) and La Biblioteca Popular, October 2019



provoke controversies, when scholars point out the emancipatory potential, practices of commoning or self-made organized structures in precarious living conditions, and maybe are better described as strategies to survive. It must be reflected by not silencing poverty and considered critically in the methodological approach. I agree with the authors that *»we as urbanists need to make peace with our modernist impulses, and work collectively to develop a paramodern sensibility«* (Schafran 2014: 328 in Hilbrand/ Richter 2015: 176). I follow a sensitive approximation to the research field and topic in my methodological approach. Likewise it is reflected in the theoretical concept of care.

STATE OF RESEARCH

Even though the literature on city and gender in Europe and North America has been published more frequently in the last decade with the topic being discussed on individual panels in academic contexts, the recognition of a gender perspective within architecture, planning and urban research is a quite *new or recent trend* in Latin America. According to Soto (2016), theoretical and empirical considerations of gender have not yet been consolidated as a central subject in latinamerican urban research and it is only at the beginning. However, especially in the last years, claims for a feminist urbanism has more frequently been articulated from Argentinian authors (Falú 2007; Muxí 2018; Lina/Bilmes 2019; colectiva Ciudad Del Deseo 2019). This paradigm shift is supported in close cooperation with the Madrid based collective *col.lectiu punt 6*, for example in joint publications (Muxí 2013; Ciudad Del Deseo 2019) and online collaborations.

Argentina stands in the centre of recent waves of feminist marches in Latin America, (re)claiming public space and calling for *»Ni una Menos«* (-> *Not One Less*) and rights for legal, safe and free abortions (-> *»Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal Seguro y Gratuito«*), the end of misogynist violence and justice for the LGBTQ community. I reflect on personal experiences of my participation in such marches and political gatherings in *»Cities in resistance. Practicing feminist strategies in public space«* (Dehm 2020). This academic essay was an afterthought on Gender and Public Space in the seminar Transformations II held by Fraeser/Grubbauer at HCU Hamburg. I demonstrated that *»El Feminismo Popular«* as contemporary feminist movement in Argentina appeals broadly and in a pluralistic sense, as well as being deeply rooted in a class-based understanding of society (ibid.: 8). Feminist voices are loud and persistent in the streets of Buenos Aires. Due to this current, maybe new, shift in academic and societal debates, I consider a case study in Bs As for the addressed topics of my thesis to be well chosen.

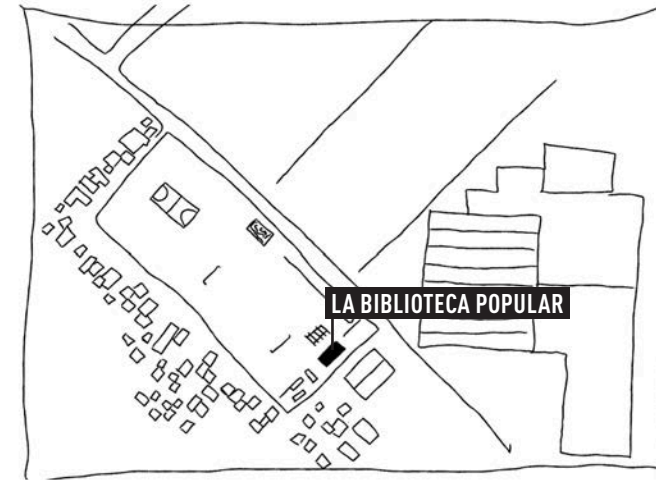
Academic publications in the fields of Urban Theory, Architecture and Urbanism and Feminist Perspectives that I have read during the journey of my master studies in Urban Design at HCU Hamburg, range from re-thinking di-

chotomies of private and public spheres (Arendt 1958; Fraser 1990; Low/Smith 2006; Bondi/Rose 2003), asking ›What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like‹ (Hayden 1988), re-negotiating gender and space (Massey 1994; Butler 1990; Haraway 1988), feminist critique on capitalism and (re)production (Gibson-Graham 2008; Federici 2012; Solnit 2014), planning theory (Jacobs 1961; Wekerle 1984; Sandercock 1992; Dörhöfer 1990), intersectionality (Lorde 1984; Crenshaw 1991; hooks 2000), self-organization practices (van Heeswijk 2017) and feminist strategies in urbanism (Schalk et al. 2017; Petrescu 2017; Kern 2020). All these works have inspired me a lot and shaped my understanding of this world and thus my disciplinary positioning. Addressing the care discourse in my thesis, I consider the positions put forward by Tronto (2013), Bellacasa (2017), Krasny (2019) and of the Care Collective (2020) as relevant in order to relate it to the current pandemic situation and to the field of architecture and urban design.

In regard to the case study of La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, academic works concerning my addressed issues are limited. So far, publications that engage with the location are: Political scientist Alvarez (2010) investigated political relations and social impacts of the garbage fill CEAMSE in the area. As well as Cubilla (2015) who, from a sociological point of view, examined the link between informal work of ›cirujas‹ (-> *garbage pickers*), garbage and the villa. In the field of educational sociology, Bussi (2013) analyzed pedagogical devices in a secondary school in the context of urban poverty. The chronicle of journalist Ortega (2017) reveals structural violence by police forces in the so-called ›Masacre de la Carcova‹ and gives an insight into daily life in la villa. In the empirical work of Soledad (2019) the library is studied to problematize the link between art/aesthetics and politics/rights in contexts of social vulnerability, by elaborating the right to arts as a promoter for political rights. Besides these academic publications, there are materialistic analyzes and architectural projects for the context of La Biblioteca Popular and the villa La Carcova from the universities that are part of the 1: 1 network.

The named publications dealing with La Biblioteca Popular from varying disciplinary perspectives are all written in Spanish by Argentinian authors. With my european (knowledge) background and by writing in English (plus integrating some Spanish), I intend to open up the transfer of knowledge and thus make knowledge stocks more accessible.

For all these reasons mentioned, I am convinced that this research will help stimulate international discussions and the interdisciplinary integration of the fields between urban theory, architecture and planning and a feminist perspective.



[6] Location Field of Research

FIELD ENTRY

My access to the research field is definitely a personal one. Out of pure curiosity, or coincidence, I chose this university project a year ago. By the start of the collaborative project, I did not immediately think that my master thesis topic would unfold out of this experience. Somehow, it did not let go of me and I wanted to continue working with it. It has captivated me. During the collective construction process we developed a certain feeling of belonging with the place and I see great value in the *cooperación en lxs compañerxs* (-> *feelings of friendship and camaraderie*). I understand this process as an embodied practice and as a way of expressing care-taking action.

I chose to move to Bs As out of the desire to experience something else and widen my personal and academic horizon. In a way, I followed my intuition. The term ›el azar‹ in Spanish describes random possibilities which we may not choose directly, but lead us to something, maybe to other ways of doing. Due to the pandemic, I have stayed in Bs As much longer than I actually planned to. This brought new challenges and uncertainties on the way, but also opened up other opportunities for me and my research process. In the end, we can see everything that occurs unexpectedly as coincidences, but the question is how to value and admit these possibilities. Whether you get involved and follow the path or not.

1.4 TOPICALITY AND RELEVANCE

THE CRISIS PHENOMENON

Crises intensify mechanisms and undoubtedly reveal (in)visible problems of inequality, poverty, access to health care, migration, unjust territories and decent housing. The novel coronavirus outbreak is a new global crisis, a pandemic crisis, as declared by The World Health Organization on march 11th, 2020 (WHO, 2020). It has advanced the understanding of the (deadly) effects of neoliberalism, natural resource exploitation and interconnectivity in our global cities simultaneously on a vast amount of tangible bodies around the world. Yet the current crisis is not only the result of a new type of pathogens circulating around the world. It is not just a sanitary crisis, it is also a ›Crisis of Care‹ (Butler 2020; Care Collective 2020; Dowling 2020; Preciado 2020).

Actions trying to minimize the spread of the virus include restrictive and repressive political measures that affect the everyday life of people. These imply imposing curfew, border closures, suspension of (in)formal work and a politicization of care. Here, it has to be highlighted that previous debates and movements against precarization, austerity politics and underfunding of public health systems are crisscrossing this crisis; these have been there before and are claims of years of (feminist) struggles. The so-called normality before the crisis was and remains the real problem that needs to be problematized. Normality as such does arguably exist and must be critically questioned. US-American Black Activist, Author and Poet Sonya Renee Taylor notably said in April 2020 in a public speech: »We will not go back to normal. Normal never was.«

In the state of crisis we become aware of fundamental necessities in our societies. Feelings of a common ground are intensified while at the same time, other aspects of community are activated by a city in profound need of care. Among this line of thought, Rebecca Solnit (2009: 305) opened up the discussion in the context of the natural disaster in New Orleans, where hands-on solidarity emerged side by side with the exposure to the suffering of others. The writer and social activist (ibid.) points out that in times of crisis, generosity between strangers derives from a longing for connection and attachment that stays unrealized in ordinary life: »The history of disaster demonstrates that most of us are social animals, hungry for connection, as well as for purpose and meaning. It also suggests that if this is who we are, then everyday life in most places is a disaster that disruptions sometimes give us a chance to change.«

»We will not go back to normal. Normal never was. Our pre-corona existence was not normal other than we normalized greed, inequity, exhaustion, depletion, extraction, disconnection, confusion, rage, hoarding, hate and lack. We should not long to return, my friends. We are being given the opportunity to stitch a new garment. One that fits all of humanity and nature.« Sonya Renee Taylor (@sonyareneetaylor on instagram 2020)

[7] »We will not go back to normality, because the normality was the problem.« This statement (in spanish) was screened on a wall of a housing complex in Santiago de Chile, in april 2020.

NO VOLVEREMOS
A LA NORMALIDAD
PORQUE
LA NORMALIDAD
ERA EL
PROBLEMA

However, not wishing to relativize the coronavirus crisis, we have to see that there have been (other) crises before. The exhibition ›Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a broken planet‹ (Fritz/Krasny 2019) at Architekturzentrums Vienna in 2019 thematized our ›Broken Planet‹ related to the care discourse: addressing human-made disasters by the current ecological crisis as well as mechanisms of social injustice and presenting resulting tasks within architecture and planning on specific cases around the world. The curators encourage to see buildings and urban contexts not simply as objects, but as »collections of relationships, an unfolding process that extends both backwards and forwards in time« (Fritz/Krasny 2019: 16). This point of view is similar to Latour's (2008: 80) understanding that buildings are not »static objects, but moving projects«.

Where do the building materials come from? Who will use, change and sustain a structure in the future? There should be more emphasis placed on practices of maintenance and repair, the political interests that design represents and considerations made both on the social (labor, inequity, justice), the natural (ecologies, plants, animals, resources) and the ethical (negotiations, funding sources, labor practices, good governance, social justice). It leads us to again ask, in what kind of world are we living in and what kind of world do we want to create? How can we (even in and due to the crisis) foster a different planning culture and produce architecture in a more careful way?

COVID TIMES IN BUENOS AIRES

As in many places in the world, the coronavirus crisis enormously sharpens the view on social and economic effects in the urban environment in Buenos Aires. The political measures not only entail social, economic and organizational, but also spatial effects. In an article published during the outbreak of the virus, scholars from different countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (translated from Proyecto Habitar 2020: 2) state: »This unprecedented situation puts our countries in the face of their complex realities characterized by urban inequality. An unjust territory in its social, economic and cultural dimensions, with deep socio-economic segregation, wide-spread processes of informal urbanization, commercialization of public spaces and modes of coexistence.«

The Argentinian government passed a swift and rigorous response to the virus, imposing a mandatory, nation-wide lockdown of all nonessential activity in march 2020. *El Aislamiento Social Preventivo y Obligatorio* (-> *Mandatory and Preventive Social Isolation*) was being enforced by military police forces and included immediate punishment when violating the law. Here, a frequent abuse of state violence on the part of the police with the pretext of protecting the quarantine was reported (cf. Johnson 2020). The confinement signified that everybody must remain in their usual homes, only being able to make minimal movements and to stock up essential supplies such as food, medicine and

»Esta inédita situación pone a nuestros países frente a su compleja realidad caracterizada por la desigualdad urbana. Un territorio injusto en sus dimensiones social, económica y cultural, con una profunda segregación socioeconómica, extendidos procesos de urbanización informal, mercantilización de los espacios públicos y de los modos de convivencia.« (Proyecto Habitar 2020: 2)



[8] Political manifestation claiming ›más raciones‹ (-> more food rations and servings)

Registro Nacional de Femicidios 2020 Observatorio ›Mujeres, Disidencias, Derechos‹ del 01/01 al 30/08: de las 208 muertes violentas sufridas por mujeres/trans/travestis fueron 181 femicidios. Hubo 167 intentos de femicidios. 193 niñas y adolescentes quedaron sin madre. (MuMaLá 2020: 2)

-> National Registry of Femicides 2020 from 01/01 to 08/30: of the 208 violent deaths suffered by women / trans / transvestites there were 181 femicides. There were 167 attempted femicides. 193 children and adolescents are left without a mother.

›Efectivamente, la distribución de estas tareas entre los géneros es marcadamente desigual. Las mujeres realizan el 75 % de estas tareas, y los hombres, solo el 25 %. Incluso una mujer que trabaja (fuera del hogar y de manera paga) en una jornada completa dedica más horas a estas tareas, casi 6 horas en promedio, que un hombre que se encuentra desempleado, que les dedica apenas 3 horas diarias« (DW, 2020)

hygiene products. The national borders were closed and a ban for all commercial flights was issued, which has not yet been repealed (until October 2020). Strict social distancing measures remain the only option to fight the spread of the disease in Argentina. Measures to sustain *la paz social* (-> social peace) include the suspension of dismissals of workers, prohibition of cutting services and evictions, implementation of emergency family income and social policy packages, freezing of rents and setting fixed prices for certain foods to keep inflation low (ibid.). Thousands of workers of informal and manual labour are being

left jobless. The economic situation in Argentina was already in deep recession before the coronavirus crisis with phases of sudden, massive inflation, debt crisis and frequent negotiations and new deals being struck with the International Monetary Fund.

Due to actions taken in a state of emergency, realities in public and private space are totally shifted – and threatened. The freedom of movement and use of public spaces is drastically limited, even prohibited. The isolation in the private sphere carries many risks and not all bodies have the possibility to stay at home, because they encounter gender based and intrafamilial violence and cannot escape from their perpetrators or access social protection services. The steep rise in domestic violence, where the abused are mainly women and children, during the state-mandated confinement is one fact to show how care returns to the smallest unit: *the own four walls*. Gendered, sexualized and racialized violence increased because of pandemic restrictions. The number of more than 180 official reported femicides in the National Registry of Femicides of the Argentine Justice (MJyDH 2020) in the period of March until August 2020, along with 167 women escaped from attempted femicides, highlight the need to de-idealize *the idea of home as a safe place*. It stresses once again the importance of public accessible spaces that provide secure places for marginalized and vulnerable communities.

Furthermore, with schools being closed, the elderly sheltered and the sick quarantined at home, domestic and family workload is all the more unequally distributed. In Argentina, unpaid domestic and care tasks are, for the most part, carried out by women. A recent study by the *Ministerio de Economía argentino* (Argentine Ministry of Economy) quantifies the existing *gender care gap* (term used as indicator for gender equality) with 75% women dedicating on average almost 6 hours a day on domestic and care work (dw 2020). This forms an immense economic disadvantage for women, working outside of the paid labor market. Also, it brings permanent tensions about care responsibilities in the everyday lives of women and exposing them to greater health risks, even more in Covid-19 times. Krasny (2020: 9) elaborates on gender inequality during the coronavirus crisis and states that we could also call the pandemic *›the crisis of the women‹*.

COVID TIMES IN ›BARRIOS POPULARES Y VILLAS‹

As it is the case, crises affect the poor, the vulnerable and marginalized groups the most. Covid-19 is throwing social and gender inequalities in stark relief at different scales of social life. Staying at home in quarantine is a question of privilege. The societal differences are exacerbated by the question of who can afford to socially distance themselves, who has sufficient internet connection and the corresponding device to study or work from home, and who can afford to buy disinfectant sprays, when there is not even access to running water at home. The national quarantine with the slogan *›quedate en casa‹* (-> stay at home) was already after a couple of weeks adopted to *›el barrio cuida al barrio‹* (-> the barrio cares for the barrio), allowing the inhabitants to move around in their closer neighborhoods and not being obliged to stay at home.

The existing largely class-based divide is exacerbated now even more between urban (categorized as formal) districts and barrios populares (-> working class districts) and *villas* (-> informal districts). In these contexts, the inhabitants are endangered, specifically vulnerable and without being able to work, now even more dependent on existential needs, such as the distribution of food, hygiene products and medicine. The people who are considered as *›essential workers‹* often have a low financial security and protection against possible infections. In contrast, those, who are involved in militant and political organizations and now voluntarily carry out necessities are not recognized as *›essential‹*. But still collaboration networks in the communities are reinforced and multiplied to face the situation.

›Popular‹ organizing is strongly rooted in Argentinian history. Latin-American Historian Craig Johnson (2020) states, that the country has learnt a lot of lessons from *›popular resistance‹* in the face of crises in the 1970s, in 2001 and 2008, which is crucial in re-acting in the situation now: *›in response to the crises, they've organized [...] in horizontalism‹* (-> *›horizontalidad‹*). This term is ascribed to social movements that resulted from the economic crisis in the early 2000: such as worker's unions, cooperativas and neighborhood assemblies.

Recent popular organizing manifests in *Comedores* (-> community kitchens) or organizing *Ollas Populares* (-> popular meal) in the face of despair. Neighbors help out to access the internet for homeschooled children and to print homeworks. *Cooperativas* (-> cooperative political organization) organize programs to take care of children and family members of infected persons. Not just in the day-to-day life before the crisis, but now even more, society organizes itself – filling in the gaps left by the state's failure to meet basic needs and survival of the inhabitants. The hashtags *#lasalidaesentretodxs* (-> *the exit is between us all*), *#lasalidaescolectiva* (-> *the exit is collective*) and *#nadiesesalvesolx* (-> *nobody gets well alone*) on social media underline the need for collective action, collaboration and solidarity – and to pressure the government to take responsibility.

barrio - neighborhood

barrio popular - working class district, from ›clases populares‹ (popular classes)

villa - informal district, from ›villa miseria‹ (misery village)

cooperativa - cooperative political organization

olla popular - popular plate with meal / common cooking pot

›EDUCACIÓN POPULAR‹

The pedagogic and social concept of ›*Educación Popular*‹ (-> popular education) offers active learning methods that can raise social awareness, stimulate critical and creative thinking and lead to action for social change. Freire (cited in hooks 1994) reminds us: »*to begin always anew, to make, to reconstruct, and to not spoil, to refuse to bureaucratize the mind, to understand and to live life as a process – life to become*«.

Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970) mainly defined critical pedagogy and became renowned for the revolutionary approach that he developed through his work with poor and disenfranchised communities in Latin America in the 1960s and '70s. Mobilizing and organizing in popular movements has a long tradition within Argentina's history and is a powerful pillar of the understanding of and participation in society as such. A translation in the general sense of ›*popular*‹ would be ›*of the people*‹ or ›*the masses*‹. It refers to the popular classes in Latin America, which include the working class, illiterate people, peasants, the unemployed and the lower middle.

In his book ›*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*‹ (1970), Freire analyzed the particular circumstances of the oppressed as a social class based on his experiences with illiterate adults in Brazil. This understanding goes in line with the oppressors-oppressed distinction which is a fundamental element of Marxist analysis.

With ›*conscientização*‹ (-> *critical consciousness*) Freire refers to an in-depth understanding of the social contradictions of the world. This enlightenment can be used to put into practical actions against the oppressive elements in one's reality (Freire 1970). This holistic approach to education is understood as joint work and action in horizontal relations, in which learners and teachers are equally involved. The teacher-student contradiction is reconciled. Students should not be treated as passive consumers, or containers to be filled by the teacher like in a ›*banking model*‹, but as co-creators of knowledge. Freire (1970: 126) emphasizes: »*they have the opportunity to become collectors or cataloguers of the things they store [...] knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other*.«

Author and social activist bell hooks continued this thinking from a feminist community motivated perspective to critical studies in education. In ›*Engaged Pedagogy*‹ she (hooks 1994: 21) claims »*teaching practices a site of resistance*« in which dialogues of knowledge can unfold without reinforcing existing systems of domination. Rather, they empower and allow both students and teachers to grow through collective critical thinking processes. She reminds us that knowledge is meaning- and powerful.

The model of popular education is understood as an emancipatory practice with the purpose to decolonize, depatriarchize and democratize and is carried out in community work by political and social organizations.

The idea of La Biblioteca Popular La Carcova is rooted in the class based understanding of Educación Popular. Popular libraries are autonomous civil associations created by community initiative. To be recognized in the National Commission of Popular Libraries (-> *Comisión Nacional de Bibliotecas Populares conabip*), certain criteria must be met. For instance, having opening hours at least twenty hours a week with free access and attention to all public, counting a certain number of people from the community that work and operate within the library and having direct access from a public street to the library's indoor rooms (cf. conabip 2020). Due to still open legal points, La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova is not yet a member of the conabip national registry.

In my tesis, I do not aim to evaluate the pedagogical learning goals in the sense of popular education, nor the formal compliance with criterias of popular libraries. However, as a theoretical background the approach of Educación Popular serves to understand the socio-political framework of the case study.

(RE)PRESENTATIONS OF GLOBAL SOUTHS

Theoretical debates and professional practices in architecture and urban design increasingly deal with self-organised and informal urbanism in cities in the so-called Global South. This north-south divide is a socio-economic and political division of the world and was introduced as a concept by the World Bank to classify high- and low-income countries. It is a post-cold war alternative to the term ›*Third World*‹. The term describes economically disadvantaged nation-states that frequently share a history of past colonialism and are negatively impacted by contemporary capitalist globalization. According to this concept, nation-states in the north tend to be wealthier, considered more democratic and more developed that export technologically advanced manufactured products. Hence, the north-south split is not exclusively a geographical division, but also an economic one. The concept would both capture a political collectivity and an ideological formulation from lateral solidarity between the multiple souths. In consequence, the plurality implies that we cannot speak of one south, *but of many* (Roy 2011). We cannot assume that there is one postcolonial urbanism, *but many* (Grubbauer 2019).

Cartographic projections are condemned to distort our world in some way, a sphere flattened by the southern and northern pole. The first maps that we study in geography in school, still go back to an atlas of the 17th centuries' *Mer-cator projection*, that shape and fundamentally affect young people's perception

popular - of the people, the masses



[9] Joaquín Torres García (1943): América Invertida. Nuestro norte es el Sur.

of the world. Critical geographers challenge the hegemonic, eurocentric view and our ways of thinking about space, place and maps. The geographical activist kollektiv orangotango (2018: 13) state *»maps are by no means just representations of reality, maps articulate statements that are shaped by social relations, discourses and practices [...] hence maps are always political.«* It is evident that truth and knowledge are deeply linked to power and therefore evoke ambivalences and contradictions. These representations have been challenged on a number of grounds.

With the claim *»nuestro norte es el Sur«* (-> our north is the South) Uruguayan artist Joaquín Torres García subverts this view in his 1943 work *»América Invertida«*. This representation features a depiction of Latin America which has been turned around from what is perceived as standard. In the ink drawing the continent appears with the South at the top. This is a clear political statement and is used in cultural diversity education. It is connected to the artists efforts to form a *»Constructive Universalism«* to counter American imperialism and European colonialism and putting traditions and influences of indigenous Americans back into contemporary art (fundación telefónica 2016).

In addition, this critical concept is taken up by the Argentine cartoonist Quino in his comic *»Mafalda y Mapamundi«* (self translated from 1970):



[10] Joaquín Salvador Lavado Tejón as »Quino« (1970): Mafalda y Mapamundi

Mafalda: *»...but Liberty, you are putting the map upside down!«*
Liberty: *»upside down regarding what? the Earth is space, and in space there is no above and no below. That the northern hemisphere is the one on top is a psychological trick invented by those who think that they are above so that we believe that we are below. And if we continue to believe that we are the ones below, we continue to be the ones below. But from today, this is over!«*

In another scene the little revolutionary Mafalda wonders *»¿Qué habrán hecho algunos pobres sures para merecer ciertos nortes?«* (-> What would some poor Souths have done to deserve certain Norths?) when she realizes different spatial injustices that occur between the South and the North.

It brings the discussion back yet again to the question of social inequality in our world. Through her many studies on urban poverty and informality, Ananya Roy (2005) proves that much of the space production around the world takes place outside of formal and regulated planning frameworks. Informal housing and land markets are therefore not to be understood as exceptions, but as realities, when almost 30 percent of the global population live in informality (Roy 2005: 149). In Latin America, one out of four urban dwellers lives in informality in a slum, villa, favela or camp (Techo 2020). Although not invisible, but invisibilized, these populations must subsist on their own, with constant violation of human rights and the exhausting test of their everyday resilience. For some, informality seems to be a land use problem and is therefore often confronted with attempts to *»restore this order of the urban landscape«* or to somehow *»bring it into the fold of formal markets«* (Roy 2005: 155). Roy argues that the most fundamental issue at stake in informality is the unequal distribution of wealth and property ownership, the types of markets that work in our cities, and how they affect and limit affordability. Informality also indicates the questioning that ownership (of land, housing, things, ...) can have multiple and contested answers. With this in mind, Roy (ibid.) states that the study of informality offers planners *»important lessons in the tricky dilemmas of social justice«*.

In a similar way, Sociologist Asef Bayat (2000: 543) argues that the global restructuring of the economic markets has triggered and intensified the increase of a *»marginalized and deinstitutionalized subaltern in Third World cities«*, collectively referred to as *»urban marginal«, »urban disenfranchised«* and *»urban poor«*. With the term *»quiet encroachment«* Bayat (ibid. 546) describes subaltern self-made micro-politics as *»non-collective but prolonged direct action by individuals and families to acquire the basic necessities of their lives in a quiet and unassuming illegal fashion«*. These practices are strategies of survival and every-day resistance. Foucault (1978: 95) reminds us *»wherever there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power [...] power is everywhere and circulates«*. Therefore, Bayat (2000: 543) states that plazas, streets and public space in general serve as *»the only locus of collective expression«*, where struggles of unequal power relations and the claims for one's rights can be addressed.

Theoretical debates of *»postcolonial urbanisms«* though are not yet sufficiently recognized within urban scholarship, architecture and urban design practices and there are certain *»disconnects and disengagements«* between urban theory and practice (cf. Grubbauer 2019: 470). According to Grubbauer (ibid.), such detachment can be seen in the dominant figure of the global architect who tries to spread the assumed solutions of western modernity around the world, following a colonial-like way of thinking. Unequal dominant positions are reinforced when Northern scholars claim wanting to learn from the South and should be critically questioned. Furthermore, the (academically) led discourses and carried-out projects lack a truly inter- and trans-disciplinary perspective.

The insistence of the dualistic view on urban theory and architecture hampers a more systematic reflection and contributes to alienation between the disciplinary fields. The critical discourse highlights that it is evident that this knowledge needs to be co-produced and aimed towards overcoming the theory-practice divide. I agree with Grubbauer (2019: 481) that *»there is no need to establish categorical differences between North and South«* in the close links between theorising and practicing, as it would blur the fact that it is just as equally relevant for scholars from European and North American countries, as it is for scholars from the Global Souths.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND ›VILLA‹

As stated in the previous section, practitioners and theorists in the fields of architecture and design, mainly from Europe and North America, have shifted their focus to cities and urbanization processes in the so-called Global South. Their aim has been to learn from informal processes while engaging with real-life situations. Examining a collaborative project between an architectural faculty studio and a villa in my thesis, opens up my view on the debate about *socially engaged architectural projects*.

Recently more occurring design proposals, architectural interventions and 1:1 projects that derive from collaborations of university studios in informal settlements, can be described with the notion of a *›social turn‹* in architecture and design, which is currently under debate (Grubbauer 2019; Richter/ Göbel/ Grubbauer 2017; Tonkiss 2013). Temporary projects such as design/build studios at architecture and planning schools seek to widen the disciplines' potentials of inclusive and cohesive development processes. Arguably, this praxis is also a way of expanding not just the potentials, but also the responsibilities of the architectural field. Co-design is aimed at generating a direct social impact in the neighborhoods, whilst also serving as a learning process for students. These new approaches explicitly emphasize hands-on action and acknowledge the contribution of non-experts in defining problems that need addressing, rejecting established concepts of professional expertise or institutional forms of participation.

In the article *›Designed to improve? The makings, politics and aesthetics of ›social‹ architecture and design‹* the authors (Richter et al. 2017: 772) argue that the frequently used, yet often unquestioned term *social* as *›means of improvement or as a placeholder for various social connotations«* would blur the lines between disciplines concerned with the social. They accuse a lack of normative reflection in the self-proclaimed promises addressing social and environmental concerns and their respective improvements in the making of such projects. For instance, when using local building traditions is sufficient to argue for a posi-

tive social impact it seems to *›succumb to a fetish of the vernacular in assuming an authenticity«* (Grubbauer 2019: 478). This makes the notion of being socially engaged *›perhaps less a turn than a tactic«* (Richter et al. 2017: 770). Tonkiss (2014: 108) recalls that *›there is a great distance between the DIY urbanism of a resting creative class in the cities of the rich world and the subsistence strategies of get-by urbanism in the cities of the poor«*. Moreover, the authors (Richter et al. 2017: 772) stress that the social matters of these projects often revolve around the small and local scale, with an interest in re-defining agency and a community building approach. In their modes of action formal lines are transgressed, by for instance the critical query of briefs, disobedience of formal instructions, the acceptance of non-monetary forms of exchange and payment and the proactive initiation of projects to *›build networks, join forces and share knowledge«* (ibid. referring to Awan/Schneider/Till 2011: 39). Grubbauer states (2019: 478) that *›Spatial Agency‹* depends on the social production of space rather than *›the static objects of display that constitute the foreground of so much architectural production«*.

However, the marginalization of the urban poor and the unequal distribution of political power in many cities of the Global South are certainly serious obstacles to community building. Even with a critically minded design and the intentions to address real-life problems and confront inequalities, it can be doubted that in all cases there will be a lasting transformation. What is however certain, is that these projects should not simply act as a temporary commitment for a social learning experience for students. Rather that, for a serious engagement with local communities the processes should be accompanied and endured over a longer period of time.

Following this line, I agree with the authors (Richter et al. 2017) on the actual need to study and discuss these kinds of social projects in order to nurture other ways of doing (architecture). This practical approach, when academic thinking is put into real practice outside of faculty rooms and their prevailing restrictions, is also, and no less crucial, an expression of discontent with traditional teaching and learning practices. They (ibid. 776) recommend rather than *›designing to improve or to build socially«* to focus on *›un-build[ing] the anti-social architecture of current urbanism*.

Over the course of time, this kind of projects have gained more attention and entered new emerging categories in renowned inter- and national architectural or art prizes. As most memorable, Richter et al. (2017: 769) name as examples the interdisciplinary design practice Urban ThinkTank (Brillembourg/ Klumpner), which was given the Golden Lion at the 2012 Venice Biennale di Architettura for the documentary about Torre David in Caracas; the British architect collective Assemble awarded with the Turner Prize in 2005 for a community project in Liverpool; and Chilean architect Alejandro Aravena winning the Pritzker Prize in 2016 for his villa verde housing project.

Distant from this level of artistic scene and fame, but still a mentionable fact is that the wooden structure that we have built with La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova was granted with distinction for ›Arquitectura Argentina Solidaria‹ (-> Solidary Architecture Argentina) in September 2020. The awarding was part of a public call which aimed at gathering architectural ideas and initiatives with a sense of solidarity and inclusion in social issues, initiated by the Chamber of Argentinian Architecture and Urbanism (CPAU) and the Central Society of Architects in Buenos Aires (SCA). Interestingly enough that the fundamental part, the roof that makes the structure a pavilion and sun protection as addressed objective, is still missing. The construction process has been on hold since the quarantine was declared. So even if the project is not finished yet, it has already been distinguished and awarded public recognition.

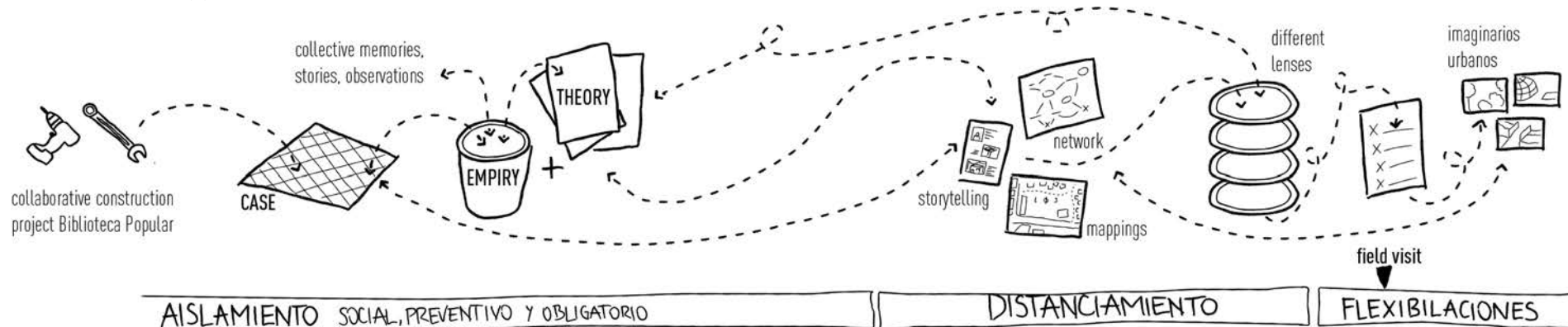
News article: ›Premio Arquitectura Argentina Solidaria: <https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/948210/arquitectura-argentina-solidaria-proyectos-premiados-que-reflexionan-sobre-inclusion-y-solidaridad>

1.5 RESEARCH PROCESS

STRUCTURE

The research question is answered with the help of a reflective methodological approach and a chosen set of methods that are explained in detail in the following chapter (2) Research Approach. A portrayal of the case study and disclosure of actor and actant constellations in connection with mappings bring evidence to the practices of (3) La Biblioteca Popular. In-depth work on theoretical concepts of Care are elaborated in (4) Considering Care. The findings emerge from the heterogeneous data corpus of theoretical and empirical material and are classified in a catalogue in (5) De-constructing Practices of Care. The lenses through which they are studied represent an attempt to depart from established methods or understandings in urban research and follow a theory from practice approach. The comprehensive study of the case, forms the basis for searching and imagining future scenarios (6) Envisioning Practices of Care. Learning from these practices and with an agency-centered perspective, situated Imaginarios Urbanos for the context of La Carcova are drawn. I close with a reflecting on personal impulses, theoretical considerations and some afterthoughts in the (7) Reflection.

[11] Research Process



Quarantine Fases in Bs As:

ASPO Aislamiento social, preventivo y obligatorio (-> mandatory and preventive social isolation)

DSPO Distanciamiento social, preventivo y obligatorio (-> social, preventive and mandatory distancing)

Flexibilaciones -> flexibilizations

RESEARCH QUESTION

La Biblioteca Popular emerged due to a lack of public infrastructure and educational, cultural and social facilities in the barrio La Carcova, situated in J. L. Suarez in the province of San Martín, metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. As argued, La Biblioteca Popular serves as an exemplary case study of *prácticas autogestionarias* (-> auto-agency practices) to investigate. The every-day realities in a highly vulnerable neighborhood that was built and emerged informally bring manifold challenges and problematics that are *not taken care of*. The subject is current and takes up a relevant field in the interdisciplinary discourses in critical urban studies. With the motive of understanding the theoretical and practical implications of care, the case is analyzed in its practices by means of which the social, built and discursive structuring of its materialization is problematized. This is done via the research question: *How is care as motive manifested in and around La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova?*

It is supported by sub questions: *Who takes care in and around La Biblioteca Popular and out of which motive? How and with what kind of practices? About what is (not) taken care? What can we learn from it?*

AIM

I seek to understand relevant relations, practices and spatialization in and around La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova. A broad picture of the place, filled with subjective narratives of the context and personal experiences of the collaborative construction process, is contextualized within the academic discourse on care. The aim is to take stock, locate and study specific moments in urban production in order to find out interconnections and interdependencies in the local context. Dealing with the theoretical framework is meant to serve as a re-thought of care-taking in the presence and futures. I critically examine what ethics of care mean in relation to architecture and urban design, how these dimensions are spatially and socially (re)produced and how they can be (re)imagined.

2

RESEARCH APPROACH

Doing research in a Pandemic has brought some cha(lle)nges in the application of method(ologie)s. I approached the research subject with a sensitive and reflected 2.2 Methodology of being situated (p. 39), taking action (p. 40), performing embodied (p. 41), and imagining futures (p. 42). The set of methods of my 2.3 Empirical Toolbox (p. 43) are cataloged and briefly explained and reflected.

Assuming that neither planners nor architects primarily produce the urban, but rather many people who enliven the urban space through their actions, it is them who need to be observed and studied. Although, or just because, this research is essentially inspired by my extensive, previously lived experience in the field, no claim is made to a neutral and ultimately true representation. Taking the empirically observable world as the starting point in an open approach goes along with the claim of Dell (2016: 10) that we need to »recognize that uncertainty, which allows the urban in its relationality to be thought first and foremost as a context of action and references«.

However, I made most of the actual lived experiences in the field prior to my research process. Due to the restrictive political measures during state-mandated quarantine, I could not access the field and therefore worked a lot in a retro perspective. Nevertheless, I tried to follow my methodological approach as far as possible because my standpoint does not change even though I had to act from home. For these very particular reasons my methodological approach was still met, but sometimes meant more figuratively.



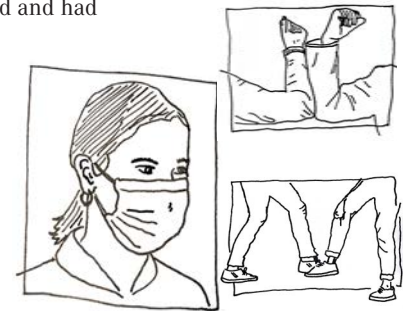
[12] Home-Office:
my desk and my laptop screen
become my research territory.

2.1 DOING RESEARCH IN A PANDEMIC

WORKING IN THE OBLIGED HOME-OFFICE

The pandemic rules have put us in a new starting position. I was not able to carry out fieldwork the way we have learned in our Urban Design studies nor in the way I had planned at the very beginning of my research process. Around the globe, social movements, activists, critical thinkers and scholars were quick to react to this new condition and have been busy sharing interim research strategies in pandemic times. After only a couple of weeks in lockdown, an open-access online platform with a collection of methods was published.

Ethnographic research involves varied degrees of immersion in the social world of people, whose lives are, and may be for some time to come, in turmoil. The increased vulnerability of the communities requires a different handling to approach and conduct field work. I had planned to study everyday practices, to make participant observations and interact face-to-face with local people, which in the end was not feasible respecting active social distancing. I would have liked to have been on site in a more hands-on mode. Because of the severe restriction in circulation, I was not allowed to visit the research field and had to do the work from home. My desk became (more or less) my research territory, a virtual approximation to the territory. I walked on google maps and found out that the google street view car does not drive into a villa. I sketched in my field diary and made notes while listening whatsapp audio messages of interview partners. To get at least some fresh air, I sat with my clipboard and a pencil on our roof terrace and drew. I have been in the same city, but could not go to the field of research, or rather I was forbidden to do so. That was and is a strange situation and challenged me a lot.



[13] Pandemic times

In constant uncertainty, with the imposed restrictions being extended every two weeks, for a period of more than six months, I followed what was happening. The current situation has not only affected me in a practical way, not being able to use the methods that I had actually planned, but also in an emotional way. At some points it put me in a methodological shyness because I stepped back and did not want to take up space. My thesis is by no means essential in comparison to the Covid-19 situation. The urgent emergency in the realities on site which are flagrant must be respected. As an observing researcher, it was also an interesting period and I had to use other ways to reach out. Just three weeks before the submission of the thesis was the one and only time I was able to visit the place and meet some people of La Biblioteca Popular. All other encounters and conversations had to be conducted online - including cuts of the internet connection, switch-offs phones in the middle of a conversation, and frozen faces on the laptop screen while a video interview.

Blog: Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic
<https://nwssdtpacuk.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/doing-fieldwork-in-a-pandemic2-google-docs.pdf>

The quarantine surely has limited and restricted all people emotionally, socio-economically and corporeal in different ways. It created a particular situation for me, in which I felt quite distanced, sometimes alone. This situation has definitely changed my thinking process and has shifted my ways of thinking regarding social inequality and inaccessibility in our fragmented cities. In every way, the given pandemic situation and the obliged quarantine in Argentina must be taken into account in the overall picture of my thesis work. If I had worked on the same question at a different time, I might have gained other results.

EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE, BUT VIRTUALLY

Parallel to the thesis, I continued studying at FADU-UBA and participated in ›Proyecto Urbano‹ (PUr) that complemented the project from last year. However, this semester was a completely different experience. The project's working mode is twice a week from 7pm - 11pm in the evening in a group of more than 100 students participating, now from their private spaces at home. Suddenly everything takes place in the same room without having a transit. The boundaries between privacy and public are displaced. With this permanent virtuality it is difficult to have a place of retreat to switch off. Trying to withstand ›la virtualidad‹ (-> dark virtuality) with online teaching formats, group work via video calls and whatsapp groups was almost unbearable and has limited my working modes. The laptop screen being the only space where I met my fellow students and professors - both the ones in Hamburg and the ones in Buenos Aires.

Nevertheless, I learned a lot in the virtual classes of the PUr. The debates with my Argentinian fellow students in my group work gave me further insights and have brought up other questions. In the classes sometimes distinct understandings and perspectives collided, but overall it was a valuable process and we shared beautiful moments of learning together. In the course of the project a lot of material was made online available, including testimonials of inhabitants, planning documents and literature which has expanded my data corpus. Some results of my PUr group work were taken up and reassembled in the thesis.

Proyecto Urbano (Pur) of Taller a77, FADU-UBA the working mode was organized in three phases: (1) Lectura de con-texto (-> reading the context), (2) Principios y Constelaciones Urbanas (-> Principles and Urban Constellations), (3) Composición Urbana (-> Urban Composition)

2.2 METHODOLOGY

BEING SITUATED AND NON-OBJECTIVE

I base this work on a dialogical and situated research strategy, in which as a researcher I am part of the field to be researched. This makes it possible to see which position I am speaking from, in order to understand and classify the material not as an objective representation, but as ›situated knowledge‹ (Haraway 1988) by focusing on the embodied nature and contingencies in knowledge production. Science is never objective but always constructed.

In feminist knowledge production, most memorably Donna Haraway describes the subjective construction of situated and context-dependent knowledge. Age, gender, origin, Global South or North, university etc - all these factors play an essential role in the process of knowledge production. Haraway (1988: 583) argues: ›So, not so perversely, objectivity turns out to be about particular and specific embodiment and definitely not about the false vision promising transcendence of all limits and responsibility. The oral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision‹.

In saying so, Haraway puts particularity and embodiment against the idea of a disembodied concept of objectivity and criticizes the conception of an abstract, absolute, autonomous and universally valid knowledge. She refutes the assumption that minds could be unfettered from socio-cultural shaping, places or bodies, more or less disembodied. Intellectual work is always connected to the situative and bodily engagement and oriented in the present, past and future. It is also mobile, because it is shaped by multiple knowledges. The core principle of the concept is a fundamental situation-dependent approach to any research question instead of a generalization and supposed objectivity of knowledge.



TAKING ACTION AS POLITICAL AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

In the understanding of ›Action Research‹, a strict separation of political engagement, scientific work and personal practice is intentionally overcome. Being aware that every action is political, I lean on Denzin (2007: 147) »*qualitative research, like art, is always political*«. While traditional social science research is characterized by a monological process of a subject-object relation, action research follows a dialogical process in subject-subject-relation. Instead of relative truths, social truths emerge that are derived from the discourse of the joint research process (Kromney 1998: 517). In this sense, participation is recognized as a technique of negotiation and conflict is appreciated as a driving force (Fezer/ Heyden 2007: 95). The research should not provide technological knowledge for any purpose, but rather change social reality to abolish social oppression and be based on the interests of the marginalized (Chatterton 2010: 243). Therefore, research topics are not chosen arbitrarily, but considered and selected according to one's (personal) motive and (political) interests. This presupposes a self-critical reflection and opens up to think about what is relevant and worth knowing. Following this research strategy enables me to postulate concrete interests in knowledge and to dissolve the academic/political as well as professional/personal separation.

Due to the coronavirus situation, I could not be and work (physically) active in the field, however, my action research approach still came to bear, in a virtual way: by participating in joint zoom meetings of local political organizations, whatsapp video calls, voice messages and phone calls. I would have liked to have been out on the street more taken real action, but during this time political affiliation and engagement may also mean hanging out on the couch.

[15] The Personal is Political, even from the couch at home.



PERFORMING EMBODIED BECAUSE ›BODIES MATTER‹

It is my body that moves with curiosity, stays and listens, thinks and functions as an instrument of inquiry. With my body I take up space and have the potential to change space: »*each living body is space and has its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space*« (Lefebvre 1991: 170).

It is my body that I use to create, build and perform things as a tool of process. Our experience is fundamentally bodily. We exist from and through our bodies. Judith Butler's (1991) concept of performativity tells us that ›Bodies Matter‹. Embodied identities, embodied space by one person or in a jointly produced urban space reflect (subjective) powers and performances of every-day life. It is the many different bodies that can make spaces ›Of Other Spaces‹ (Foucault 1984). Relationships between gender and space manifest themselves in the bodies, that »*cannot exist without minds and [...] our minds are always embodied*« (Keinänen / Beck 2017: 518). Moving myself sensitively and conscious with my body is my emancipatory practice to take, to perform and to embody space.

Subjective sensation and physical experience are rarely documented and taken into account in research practice. By ›putting the researcher's body back into play‹, Wacquant (2009: 511) highlights the importance of the body and the deliberate use of physicality in ethnographic field research. Through and with our body we perceive ourselves, how we are perceived and how the perception of space is: »*even as [the body] constitutes [...] his or her ›first instrument of knowledge since it is through her sensing and acting body that the sociologist conducting fieldwork enters into contact with the lived world whose logic she is trying to grasp*«. Field research must reflect (every-day) knowledge that can be experienced physically and sensually, not only in terms of the social and cultural meaning, but also as physical intervention and positioning in the field.

THINKING IN ›IMAGINARIOS URBANOS‹

To (re)present my inquiries of past and present days and as well as to imagine the gained knowledge in possible futures, I ask myself: How could urban realities that put care front and centre be like in their practices and forms? How do these forms function? Who is involved in its making? How will they be maintained, repaired and taken care of?

I lean on the understanding of ›Imaginaríos Urbanos‹ (Silva 1992). The Imaginario is by no means to be understood as opposing reality and the social world and not to be mistaken as a kind of fantasy image. In contrast, thinking in Imaginaríos enables the interweaving of subjective space perception and experience, discourses and narratives with the social organization of every-day urban life (Hufschmid/Wildner 2013: 21). It is understood as an individual and collective imagination and (co)production of urban realities. It is an emerging method in latinamerican urban research and design and highlights that urban experience is not limited to it's materiality, but includes the subjective perspective of the actors, their emotions, memories, dreams, fears and wishes (Silva 2001 in Soto 2016: 11). The represented and imagined forms are not only chosen to imagine a scenario, but are also an analytical approach to (re)present urban complexity.

Every proposal is tied to an idea of how to live together, individually and collectively. With every image different ideas are evoked. In ›Politics of Aesthetics‹, philosopher Jacques Rancière (2009) discusses that images create and communicate so-called regimes. In turn, these regimes are attached to social power relations that are determined by subjective perception of the viewer of the illustrated content. For me as a planner, creating images or Imaginaríos is a tool and skill to communicate concrete ideas. In this sense, the visualized Imaginaríos contain discursive ideas and wishes that imply multiple means of re-imagining contested spaces, shaped by many people and powers, but leave room for one's own imagination.

Chatterton (2010: 236) reminds me to dare utopian thought experiments, always with a radical appetite for change: »The task of the critical urbanist is to be an advocate for different and more just urban worlds, to set up processes that can create alternatives, make them seen feasible, doable and respectable, and make what we have now seem absurd or just downright unjust. Each building, public space, policy document, speech or strike, is an opportunity to intervene, educate, build alliances, propose alternative and signpost new directions.«



2.3 TOOLBOX

In the (mostly) digital fieldwork I made use of a variety of qualitative tools to investigate, decipher and (re)present the field in an explorative way. This was done in an iterative research process in which findings are generated from questions and vice versa. Ethnographic tools are valuable because they require dealing with the indefinite and the foreign. But instead of exoticizing the *otherness* of the observed place, often described as *othering*, I enter the reality myself and leave my comfort zone in order to better sense the world around me.

I put together a fitting toolbox of diverse methods and formats and briefly outline them under the following practices: [walk+think](#) (p. 44), [listen+talk](#) (p. 45), [map+document](#) (p. 46), [draw+\(re\)present](#) (p. 47), [relate+connect](#) (p. 48), [decode+propose](#) (p. 49).

The empirical material consists of my experiences made in the previous year and new information collected during the research process. The challenge was not to generate material, but orientate and select it in its complexity. One of the main tasks was to create a retro perspective of what I already experienced.

[16] A través de mi ventana.
(-> through my window) Trying to leave my comfort zone to sense the world around me.

WALK + THINK

Literature, planning documents, newspapers, blogs, social media channels (instagram and facebook), short videos, documentaries and academic talks on youtube were viewed, read and searched for information. The material collected was noted in a research diary.

This helped me to remember, write/map down quick thoughts and to keep an overview.

The results are subject to a long thought process and arose not only while sitting at my desk, but also while relaxing in the hammock, taking a walk or a shower. They were carried on through joint discussions, in the thesis colloquia and informal chats. Walking as a practice to understand the city through experience and even as a revolutionary act has a long tradition: leaning on Walter Benjamin's figure of *Flâneurs* (1930), the drifts and strolls of the Situationists *dérive* (1957), Michel de Certeau's *rhetoric of walking* (1980) and Lucius Burckhardt's *strollology or promenadology* (1994).

The *Walking-for thinking* method as deliberating practice for intellectual pursuits affords freedom of thought and tickles out rushing ideas that come *»out of the inner uro and may otherwise be quietened«* (Keinänen/Beck 2017: 523). Walking outside holds the possibility to get other perspectives. It supports the focus on things that matter outside of the private home. The authors (ibid.: 527) claim that moving while thinking deconstructs *»binaries such as mind/body, conceptual/corporeal and gender«*. Using embodiment is fuelled by care-giving duties which is an example of how I also integrate my theoretical framework into my methodological approach.

Particularly during the strict quarantine in which I was told to stay inside more frequently and my personal freedom of movement was very limited as I could only move around in my close neighborhood, I enjoyed it a lot going out for a walk to free my mind and think.

LISTEN + TALK

In the form of internal conversations, mail contact, whatsapp chats and voice messages, telephone and video calls I got in touch with people. Key questions were thought up following a semi-structured interview line. But due to the difficulty of talking to each other virtually, the conversations turned out to be very flexible. In most of the cases, the narrative threads of the participants were followed and I adjusted the guideline of the questions. The virtual (dis-)connectedness also meant that conversations were interrupted and continued with sending audio-messages over whatsapp over several days. My direct contact to the involved actors was very useful because I was able to ask a question very spontaneously and got answers immediately. Therefore, the material of the conversations is not based on single interviews, but diverse fragments over time.

The conversations were conducted in Spanish which is the common language between the participants and me. I need to highlight that even though I am fluent in the foreign language I do not have a perfect command of it. Not everything was always understood and special implications and information may be lost on the way of transcribing and translating the conversations. In order to organize the material, I created transcript sheets per person in which I added the collected material gradually. Translation alone has taken a lot of time and thought processes and can be viewed as another methodological loop in itself.

Moreover, I listened to various public debates and academic talks, all of which are suddenly online available due to increased virtualization that has occurred by moving academic work from universities to our homes.

MAP + DOCUMENT

Individual perception of space and experienced realities can be made visible through mappings. This method enables me to represent space in a psychogeographical way. Mappings frame, codify, categorize, represent *»aspects of thinking about space, time and agency as an assemblage of actions, objects and relationships«* (Awan 2018: 40). Over the process, the mapping was complemented with (im)material, territorial and social, explicit and implicit information on different scales. It can be seen together as a complete works, but is also broken down in separate thematic maps. In *»Reading the Map«* Wildner (2019) states *»Maps are a powerful instrument of urban research. They direct our gaze towards specific questions, bringing selected phenomena to view while hiding others: maps always involve a hierarchization of information as well as (in)visibilization of narrations.«*

I follow the idea that mappings are by no means just representations of reality. They articulate and transmit knowledges that are shaped by social relations and powers. Hence, the mapper depicts political ideas and perceptions in the mapping, as Rekaceqicz (2006 in orangotango 2018: 13) explains: *»in this interplay between facts and perception, the cartographer is both witness and actor. [...] In order to create, or, more accurately: to invent »[her/]his worlds«, [s]he finally arrives at a subtle mixture of the world as it is, and the world as [s]he desires.«*

DRAW + (RE)PRESENT

As experimental ways of knowledge production, I use *Storytelling* to understand, as well as to represent urban complexity. Appreciating the autonomous character of a hand drawing, I use visual and written artefacts as a carrier of realities and futures. They hand down a very own perception and interpretation of the material. This opens up the possibility to tell the process from a subjective perspective with its performative character and inter-acting relations. The comic drawings have the strength to highlight and communicate quickly a message, while not depicting everything like in a pure photograph. Likewise, they tell the story about labor, who did the drawing and tell about the context in which it was created, and therefore expand narratives. This unfolds a relation between making, situation and time.

With an analytical perspective, I lean on Sandercock (2003: 12) to liberate and think about the power of story and that *»planning is performed through story, in a myriad ways«*. In the article *»Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice«* Sandercock (ibid.) declares *»in order to imagine the ultimately unrepresentable space, life and languages of the city, to make them legible, we translate them into narratives. The way we narrate the city becomes constitutive of urban reality, affecting the choices we make, the ways we then might act.«*

The creation of the comic as retroperspective of the collaborative construction process has enabled me to reflect collectively about the process. I discussed the work in progress with my fellow Argentinian students and the accompanying text was created collectively. The comic can be used as a participative tool.

RELATE + CONNECT

To be able to relate the social fragments of relational interactions, manners, customs and structures between actors (inhabitants, workers, municipality, universities, agents of care, ...) and actants (things, planning documents, politics, policies, norms, nature, ...) I made use of the Actor Network Theory (ANT). The networks are based on the notion that human actors and non-human actants both act, relate to each other and have agency. Latour (2002: 376) defines network as a *collective* that, in contrast to the term *society*, focuses on and traces the associations of actors and actants. The ANT does not look for context of meaning that sooner or later reduces its complexity to individual contexts (Färber 2010: 104). Rather, it is an attempt to reproduce complexity through a non-classifying representation in which unequal entities are linked associatively (ibid.).

This perspective thus contradicts classical social science research which aims at a structural context of meaning behind every situation. The ANT opens up possibilities to arrange urban fragments differently without always asking *why*, but rather *how*. Bruno Latour and Albena Yaneva (2008: 88) point out this shift towards performativity and the overcoming of the separation between subject and object: »Tracing pluralities of concrete entities in the specific times of their co-existence«. The social as element is not given solely, but is produced by the many interconnected links and practices.

DECODE + PROPOSE

To evaluate the material, I pass it through several iterative loops using an interplay of data collection, analysis and theory thinking in the sense of the Grounded Theory Method (GTM). The focus of the analysis is not just that masses of data are collected and sorted, but rather that the »variety of thoughts that come to the researchers mind are organized« (Strauss/ Corbin 1996: 51). The GTM is inductively derived from the investigation of the phenomenon it depicts. Starting point is a wide area of investigation and not a theory or a concept at first. With open, axial and selective coding, the material is »explored and broken up« (Müller 2018: 153) and it enables process-based work in loops to determine key points.

As a working platform and tool, I used an online *miro* board to view, re-assemble and (de)code the heterogeneous data material and to make it manageable. This board offered an infinitely large webspace in which the diverse material could be placed, moved and connected in a cross-scale perspective. It allowed me to distance (zoom out) and to step closer (zoom in) and gave a quick overview of the entire material without losing any of its complexity. It was an integral part of the research process to show the raw material and let it speak without representing over-hasty finished results.

3

**LA BIBLIOTECA POPULAR
DE LA CARCOVA**



[17] Entrada Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova: «¡Atenti un libro es libertad!»
Entrance of the Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova: «Be aware, a book means freedom»

In this chapter I present the place of my case study and proceed from the small scale of [3.1 Un Referente del Barrio](#), the exceptional situation in quarantine [3.2 La Biblio en Cuarentena](#) (p. 69), to the idea of [3.3 Un Territorio Educativo](#) (p. 84), to the bigger scale of the socio-spatial constitution of [3.4 Un Contexto Humilde](#) (p. 90) of La Carcova in the district José León Suárez, Provincia de San Martín, metropolitan area of Buenos Aires (AMBA). It is represented in mappings, illustrations and photographs.

AMBA - Área Metropolitana Buenos Aires (-> metropolitan area of Bs As)

First, I introduce the library's self-conception [La Biblio](#) (p. 54), their practices that go beyond usual tasks of a library [No sola una Biblioteca](#) (p. 55) and as a non-state subsidized institution being confronted with a constant search for funding and public recognition [Reconocimiento y la Búsqueda de Fondos](#) (p. 61). I briefly outline the life story of Waldemar [De Pibe chorro a Sociólogo y Bibliotecario](#) (p. 62) from having been in custody, obtaining a university degree in sociology and founding La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, claiming the right for education [Por un Derecho a la Educación](#) (p. 65). Then I tell the coming into being of the place [Una Casita de Madera](#) (p. 66).

During the coronavirus crisis, [3.2 La Biblio en Cuarentena](#) had to adapt their activities and carried out virtual workshops [Talleres Online](#) (p. 69) and set up a [Campaña Solidaria](#) (p. 70).

In the third section [3.3 Un Territorio Educativo](#) I outline the idea of [El Parque Público y Educativo de La Cárcova](#) (p. 84), the [Proyecto Colaborativo entre Villa y Universidad](#) (p. 84) which resulted in the construction of a pavilion [El Techo Sombrilla](#) (p. 88) and future plans for [1° Piso y Centro de Infancia](#) (p. 89).

The socio-spatial constitution is portrayed in the fourth section [3.4 Un contexto humilde: La Carcova](#) (p. 88), related to the topic of garbage [Basura y ¡La Quemac!](#) (p. 93), [Partido Gral. San Martín](#) (p. 93) and [Área Río Reconquista](#) (p. 94).

3.1 «UN REFERENTE DEL BARRIO»

One summer day in January 2020 during a day of construction at La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, I was *compartiendo un mate* (-> sharing a mate tea) and talking with Waldemar, who is the initiator of the library. He described it as *«un referente del barrio»*. It made me think. *Referente* originating in the Latin word *referens* is used to describe a person or object that *refers to* or *reflects a relationship* or *is something/one*. It is usually used to name someone/-thing that stands out and is, therefore, an exponent or a symbol. A reference does not exist alone, but is always related to something/one. It can be a place, a thing, a person.

As a preliminary assumption for the selection of my case study, based on my previous made experience, I argue that it serves as an exemplary case study to investigate *prácticas autogestionarias* (-> auto-agency practices).

A REFERENCE IN THE BARRIO

referente: con origen en el vocablo latino *referens*, la noción de referente sirve para hacer mención a la persona u objeto que hace referencia o refleja relación a algo. El término suele aprovecharse para nombrar a quien sobresale y es, por lo tanto, un exponente o un símbolo dentro de un determinado ámbito.

Waldemar Cubilla founder of La Biblioteca Popular.

The library takes up practices in the sense of *care giving*: be it for political organizing, offering primary and secondary studies for adults, supporting imprisoned persons and their families with legal aid, offering workshops for children and women and is a place in the villa for people just being there.

In addition, Waldemar (2019) states that *»we [the library] militate [meaning: being politically active] that no kid is born a thief«* (-> *»ningún pibe nace chorro«*). Further, he adds *»with the library we steal time from drugs and crime with books«* (-> *»le robamos tiempo a la droga y a la delincuencia con libros«*).

»Nosotros militamos que ningún pibe nace chorro, pero hoy me doy cuenta de que solo biológicamente es así, porque socialmente uno está puesto ahí para eso y tiene que pasar algo extraordinario para salir« (Waldemar 2019)

LA BIBLIO

LA BIBLIO

La Biblio - short form for La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova

**in order not to repeat the name too often, i also use this short form in the thesis. It is meant as the Location and as the Team of the library.*

La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, local people call it *»La Biblio«* for short, is a non-profit and community-based cultural and educational civil organization. Located in La Carcova in J. L. Suarez in the so-called Área Reconquista. The first thing that caught my eye is the saying above the entrance door *»atenti un libro es libertad«* (-> be aware, a book means freedom). This statement touches the notion of being free/detained and, if knowing the story, bridges La Biblio and imprisonment. The library is located in the periphery of Buenos Aires' biggest garbage fill CEAMSE, where 20 tons of garbage of the whole AMBA are deposited daily, generating labor on the one hand, and permanent contamination and spots for garbage dumps in the surrounding neighborhoods on the other hand. It's located as well in close proximity to *El Complejo Penitenciario Bonaerense de Gral. San Martín* (-> a prison complex).

Location in google maps: <https://goo.gl/maps/vEw95hWVPTfwTdx19>

La cancha - sports field

The library was founded in 2012 by Waldemar Cubilla in the villa, where he grew up. It is setted in the only big public space in the barrio next to a *cancha* (-> sports field) on the intersection of the *Calle Combet y Fray Luis Beltrán*. These two streets form the transition between formal and informal urban structure, which is visible through the paved and unpaved streets and the differentiated forms of dwellings. The library is thus located at the border between the formally planned city and the informally built and emerged villa. Next to the library is another cultural institution, *El Tropezon*, and a hut with a *Gauchito Gil* (-> folk religious figure) shrine. The land of the publicly used, but privately owned space is the property of the neighboring *CIMET Company*, who it has delivered as a loan to the *Municipality of Gral. San Martín*. The usage rights and further developments of the space of *La Cancha* are in constant negotiation processes within these actors.

Gauchito Gil - folk religious figure

»Fundamos la Biblioteca Popular, para realizar un trabajo sostenible, de formación y proyección de vida y trabajo. Que permita de modo cooperativo expresar, discutir y reflexionar las distintas formas que asume la educación, la formación profesional y el trabajo asociado, el deporte, el arte; en el ámbito de la familia y el trabajo. De este modo, encontrar un espacio para prevenir situaciones extremas; como puede ser la prisionalización, las adicciones e incluso la delincuencia; males sociales que afectan a los jóvenes, a partir de experiencias de conflictos con la ley penal de jóvenes y la falta de espacios de socialización en la comunidad. La biblioteca pone en cuestión nuevos modos de hacer cultura, trabajo y educación« (Biblioteca Popular, 2020)

The Biblio's mission-statement reads (translated from La Biblioteca Popular, 2020): *»We founded La Biblioteca Popular to carry out sustainable work, training and projection of life and work. [A place] that allows cooperatively to express, discuss and reflect on the different forms assumed by education, professional training and associated work, sports, arts – in the field of family and work. In this way, find a space to prevent extreme situations, such as imprisonment, addictions and even crime, bad social behaviours that affect young people, based on experiences of conflicts with youth criminal law and the lack of spaces for socialization in the community. The library questions new ways of doing culture, work and education.«*

NO SOLA UNA BIBLIOTECA

As objectives for La Biblio's practices I conclude: filling a gap in the lack of social public spaces, offering a space for education, work and self-learning, as well as preventing extreme situations by offering support in coping with matters that are related to custody, addictions and crime. The terms in the mission statement are kept open and can include many practices. Practices that go far beyond a conventional concept and understanding of a library. La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova is not just a library (-> *no sola una biblioteca*). It is a place of practices that sustain and maintain communal life.

The motive of La Biblio is rooted in the class based understanding of *Educación Popular*. To carry out mutual horizontal learning and creative thinking practice, create an environment of respect and thus generate confidence and change in oneself and the community. I notice this in the statement, that it is a place, where *»participants can find themselves doing together and/or with the other, thus generating confidence in oneself and the compañerx.«* (Biblioteca Popular, 2020).

NOT JUST A LIBRARY

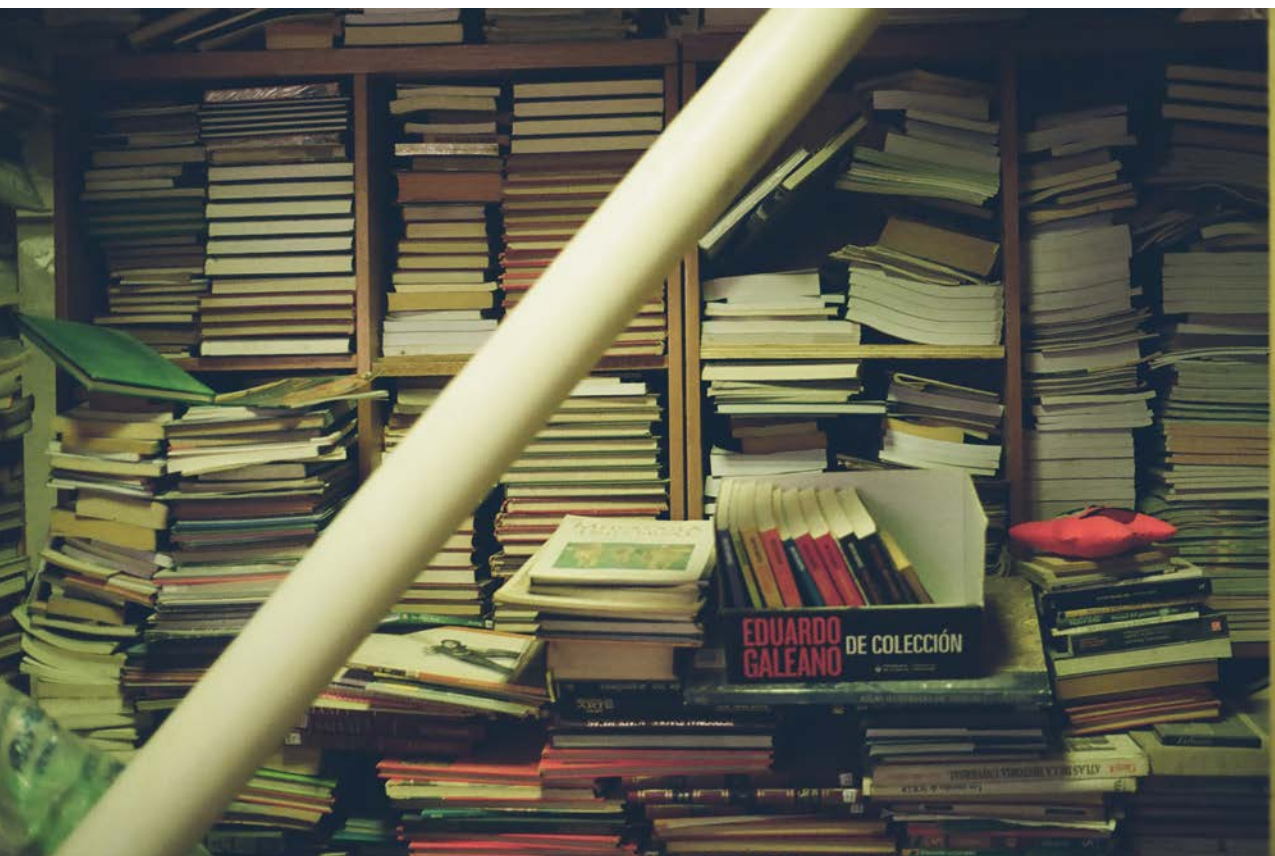
[18] Fachada de La Biblioteca
Facade of La Biblioteca





[20] Work in Progress

[19] Libros guardados en tiempo de pandemia
Books being kept in pandemic times



Compañerx means friend, co-worker, colleague, companion, fellow student, neighbor – a term for a relation of friendship and mutual respect. Their mission is to be a bridge between different institutions: educational, artistic, cultural, both public and private and to contribute in a concrete way in the projection of life of the people, girls and boys in the barrio (Biblioteca Popular, 2020).

The values, or even said ethics, of La Biblio are to transmit *«la educación, la libertad, la igualdad de género y la humildad fundada en la solidaridad y la cooperación»* (-> education, freedom, gender equality and humility based on solidarity and cooperation) (Biblioteca Popular, 2020).

They form part of various barrial networks and local organizations and participate in political gatherings. Besides that, the political and ethical positioning is made explicit by online communication. For instance, claiming civil and human rights and *«basta de niñez encarcelada»* (-> enough with children imprisonment) referring to a hunger strike of prisoners, being in favor for pride and demanding gender equality on Pride Day, and commemorating the victims and missing people of the dictatorship in the 1970-80s in Argentina's history. In a conversation with Gisela, who manages the organization of the course program, collaborations and fundings, she says that La Biblioteca Popular is a *«movimiento desde abajo, estamos ahí en el barrio por el barrio»* (-> a movement from below, we are here in the barrio and for the barrio) (Gise, 2020).

The building is in constant adaptation, expansion, repair and restructuring. The various times when I visited the library, in a period of almost a year, every time the interior looked different and the furniture had been re-arranged, the floor was newly tiled or a new window was built into the wall. At present, the building consists of a big room that can be divided into three smaller units with a room dividing element, a smaller room, a little kitchen and two toilets. The equipment includes books, games, handicrafts, building tools, tables, chairs and a ceramic oven.

«[Un lugar] donde los participantes puedan encontrarse haciendo juntx al otrx y/o con el otrx, generando de esta forma confianza en unx mismx y en lx compañerx.» (Biblioteca Popular, 2020)

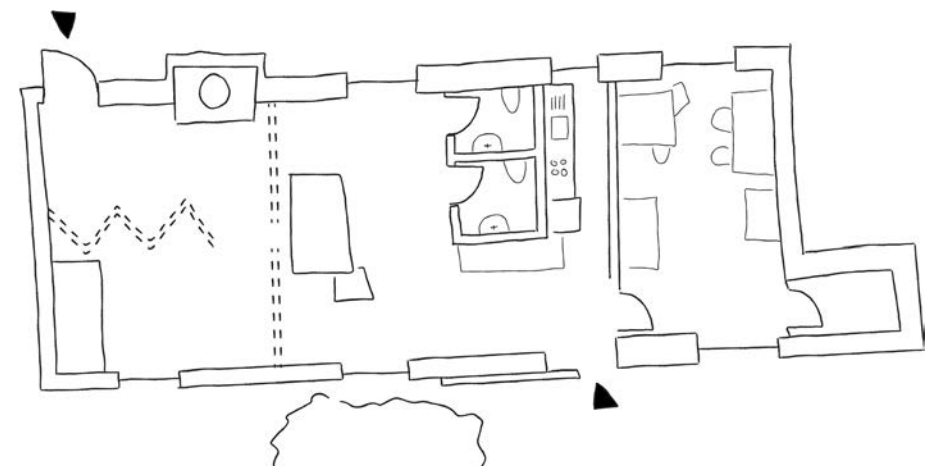
«Nuestra misión es ser un puente entre distintas instituciones: educativas, artísticas, culturales; tanto públicas como privadas; para contribuir de modo concreto en la proyección de vida de jóvenes, niñas y niños de nuestra comunidad.» (Biblioteca Popular, 2020)

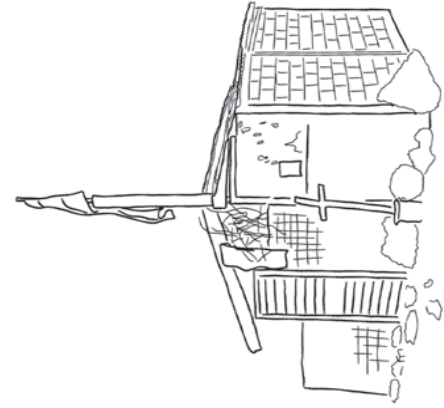
«...como organización educativa germinante de libertades, basta de niñez encarcelada.» (...as an educational organization germinating of freedoms, enough of imprisoned childhood.) 08-12-2019, Biblio on instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B50ft0ZJQjz/>

«Amor es Amor. Seamos Libres. #díadelaorgullolgbtq» (-> love is love. let's be free. on pride day.) 28-06-2020, Biblio on instagram: https://www.instagram.com/p/CLB_luP-ACuO/

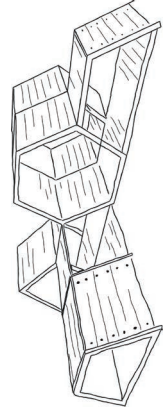
«Hacer memoria resulta un ejercicio actual de pensar quiénes desaparecen hoy, quiénes padecen torturas en la actualidad» (-> Remembering is a current exercise in thinking about who is missing today, who is currently suffering torture) 24-03-2020, Biblio on instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-HonUXAxi6/>

[21] inside the building of La Biblio

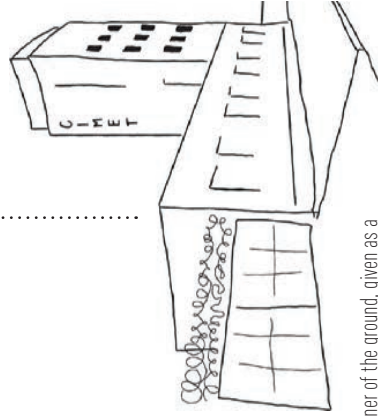




Gauchito Gil
shrine, folk religious figure of
Argentina's popular culture



Seating element
banco de trabajo, participative design with
students from FADU and La Biblio

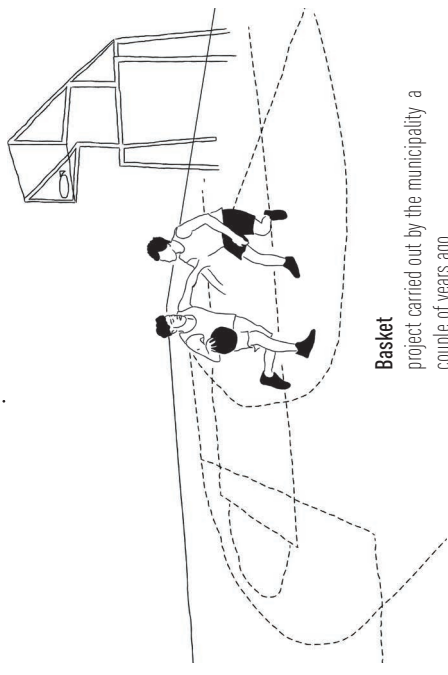


CIMET S.A.
factory, landowner of the ground, given as a
loan to the Municipality of San Martín

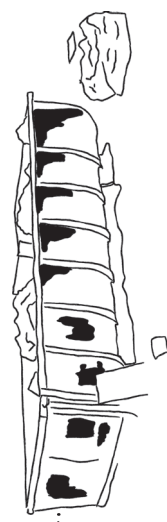


Canilla comunitario
community tap, water access
located next to La Biblio

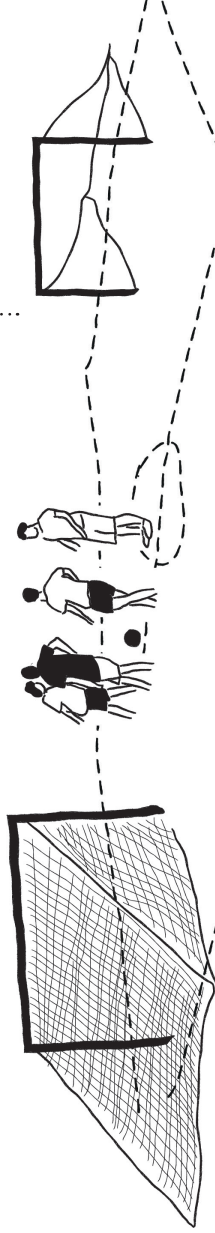
[22] Alrededor de La Biblio: La Cancha, La Villa y La Fábrica
Around La Biblio: the sports field, the villa and a factory



Basket
project carried out by the municipality a
couple of years ago



Basura
open waste collection



Cancha
sports field



[25] Dale... no tires basura
Come on, dont throw garbage

[24] Nada se pierde, nada se crea, todo se transforma
Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed



The participants that attend La Biblio are children, teenager and adults of the villa (also called *villerxs*) taking school support classes (-> *apoyo escolar*), completing primary and secondary studies (-> *Plan de Finalización de Estudios Primarios y Secundarios, FinES*), or participating in artistic and cultural activities: ceramics, photography, plastic arts, theater, poetry, bookbinding, cinema, graffiti, percussion and music. The program always depends on »*who can offer a workshop, who is available*« (Gise, 2020). The library also provides legal assistance to detained neighbors and their families (-> *asistencia jurídica*), a space for young people with problematic use of psychoactive substances (-> *espacio de jóvenes*), a circle for women (-> *ronda de mujeres y saberes*) and offers workshops in the women prison (-> *cárcel 46 de mujeres*). In addition to the regular courses, they organize particular events, like barbecues (-> *asados*), sport events and other social events for the community.

The workshops and events are always free of charge. The library's team consists of nine people and the workshops are partly organized in cooperation with the Universidad Nacional de San Martín (UNSAM) and nearby schools.

RECONOCIMIENTO Y LA BÚSQUEDA DE FONDOS

Popular libraries are self-managed (-> *autogestionadas*) civil associations created and run by community engagement, unlike state libraries that are created and run by the Municipality. In practice, anyone could set up or found a popular library, but the formal recognition, being registered as *Biblioteca Popular* in a National Registry, is associated with various requirements and legal obstacles.

The *Comisión Nacional de Bibliotecas Populares*, in short *conabip* (-> National Commission of Popular Libraries) is a state body of the Ministry of Culture recognizing popular libraries in a registry and offering financial support. To be credited by *conabip*, seven criteria must be fulfilled: (1) initiated by someone of a community in areas lacking a nearby popular library; (2) be formally constituted as a civil association, exclusively to function as a library and with legal status as such; (3) be open at least twenty hours a week, with free access and participation to all public; (4) put the name of the library and its opening hours on a visible outside facade; (5) count among the associates a certain number of people from the barrio in which it is embedded; (6) have a reading room with direct access from a public street; (7) possess a basic and diverse bibliography, with a wide theme and for all ages (translated from conabip, 2020).

La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova actually fulfills all these points, but are still not recognized in the registry. In the quest to find fundings for the activities, not being renown in the conabip registry is a disadvantage. The missing recog-

villerxs - inhabitants in a villa

»El programa depende de quién puede, viste, quién puede ofrecer un taller, quién está acá, que podemos brindar« (Gise, 2020)

RECOGNITION AND SEEKING FUNDING

conabip: Comisión Nacional de Bibliotecas Populares, Argentina

- (1) Surgir por iniciativa de la comunidad, en localidades, zonas o barrios carentes de una Biblioteca Popular cercana.
- (2) Constituirse formalmente como asociación civil, con exclusividad para funcionar como Biblioteca Popular y con Personería Jurídica como tal.
- (3) Estar abierta al menos veinte horas semanales, con acceso y atención libre y gratuita a todo público.
- (4) Exponer en su fachada un cartel con la denominación de la Biblioteca, su carácter de Biblioteca Popular y el horario de atención.
- (5) Contar entre los asociados y asociadas con un número determinado de personas de la comunidad o barrio en el que funciona.
- (6) Contar con una sala adecuada destinada al uso específico de la Biblioteca Popular, con acceso directo desde la calle.
- (7) Poseer un fondo bibliográfico básico y heterogéneo, de amplia temática y para todas las edades.

»en esta búsqueda de buscar recursos económicos de las actividades de la biblioteca, nosotros a un paréntesis a no ser conocidas a la conabib, no recibimos ningún tipo de subsidio. entonces, ese reconocimiento nosotros nos imposibilita a tener subsidios nacional, provincial y municipal, así que todo que nosotros estamos haciendo.« (Gise, 2020)

OEI: Organization of Ibero-American States (Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura)

Iberbibliotecas - Ibero american libraries network

»desde la municipalidad no tenemos ningún tipo de ayuda, en realidad tenemos muy buen dialogo, muy buena comunicacion, pero solamente eso, asistencia de subsidios o alimentos, no.« (Gise, 2020)

FROM THIEF TO SOCIOLOGIST AND LIBRARIAN

* I found sources for this text in personal conversations, newspaper articles, video interviews and radio contributions (all in Spanish). They are all listed in the Appendix under »Further Readings«. For the sake of simplicity, in this part, I do not give every source explicitly. The material was re-assembled and translated by me.

»La Biblioteca está construida sobre basura apilada« (Waldemar, 2020)

CEAMSE - garbage disposal site

Cirujeo - person that goes to collect materials on the garbage hill

tion does not allow to have national, provincial or municipal subsidies (Gise, 2020). In order to have the capacity to pay the wages of the *talleristxs* (-> workshop leader) they have to find other funding for social, cultural or educational projects.

Since 2018 La Biblio has been part of the network of *Iberbibliotecas* (-> ibero american implies the Spanish and Portuguese language areas in Latin America plus Spain and Portugal). As part of this network they are registered by the OEI. Gisela participated in an exchange program in Spain, where she could make contacts and this year they gained OEI funding together with another library in Peru. The aim of the *Iberbiblioteca* organization is to contribute to the consolidation of the ibero-american cultural space and reaffirm social functions of libraries (iberbibliotecas, 2020).

La Biblio is recognized as a *»punto cultural«* (-> cultural point) in the district San Martín by the Ministry of Culture. Gise describes the relation towards the municipality as *»a very good dialogue, very good communication, but just this. We do not get any subsidy or food assistance«* (Gise, 2020). Apart from a small subsidy for workshops in prison, which are carried out by workshop leaders from the library, they do not receive any funding from the local municipality nor the national state.

»DE PIBE CHORRO A SOCIÓLOGO Y BIBLIOTECARIO«

Many stories, newspaper articles and interviews have been written about the moving journey through life of Waldemar Cubilla: a story of overcoming, a path of perseverance and transformation. From having been in custody, obtaining a university degree in prison and founding La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova. A story about clusters of despair and unease hang over those who, far from surrendering, fight against the indispensable reality with outdated weapons.

Waldemar claims that the best weapon to fight crime is education. He grew up in la villa de la Carcova, collecting garbage as a kid. The ground on which La Carcova is located today was a former garbage dump. *»The library is build on piled up garbage«* says Waldemar. Due to the proximity to the CEAMSE, the kids who are born in the villa have an almost immediate relationship with *»el cirujeo«* (-> person that goes to collect materials on the garbage hill).

In his teenage years, he began to steal, because it seemed to be a way out of extreme poverty (-> *»no merezco vivir así, y no quiero estar más en la pobreza extrema«*). On average, he stole three cars a day. In December 2001, at the epicenter of the economic crisis in Argentina, he was arrested at the age of 17. By that time, he was one year away from finishing high school. Being detained, he



could not get the proving school certificate when he wanted to continue and finish school, so he had to do it all over again. During the period of imprisonment he re-made the highschool degree and realized that there were prisoners who actually were pursuing university degrees.

When he was transferred to another prison, to the unit 48 which is the jail close to La Carcova, he started to imagine how it would be to study in prison. With some other inmates they formulated a very simple letter and sent it to the rector of the UNSAM (University of San Martín). Telling him that, like everybody else, they have the right for education. Out of this initiative, in 2008 CUSAM was born, which is the university branch of UNSAM within the prison.

Still being detained, Waldemar became the jail librarian and started studying Sociology. By the time he was released from prison, he was only missing one course and then graduated as a Sociologist. Waldemar remembers: *»Sociology gave me tools to interpret life and relations. For example, relationships with other prisoners. It's like, crazy, if we had the same life, you are from one villa and I from another, let's not stab each other«*. His objective from then on was *»que ninguno caiga en cana«* (-> that no one will go back to jail) and with some other ex-inmates he founded La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova, which was almost like the library they had inside prison, but now outside and in freedom. Waldemar is convinced that books save lives (-> *»los libros salvan vidas«*).

[26] Atravesar Crossing, Going through

UNSAM - Universidad de San Martín

CUSAM Centro Universitario San Martín en el interior de la Unidad Penal N.º 48 (university centre inside a prison in José León Suárez)

»La sociología me dio herramientas para interpretar la vida y las relaciones. Por ejemplo, las relaciones con los otros presos: loco, si tuviéramos la misma vida, vos sos de una villa y yo de otra, no nos apuñalemos« (Waldemar)



[27] El entorno habitado con vista a la cancha
The inhabited environment with a view to the soccer field

In august 2020, journalist Victor Hugo Morales had a conversation with Waldemar in the morning show of @radioam750. I translated a part, where he is reflecting about his life journey and about how the university can be a passable territory for the villerxs.

Victor: *»¿When you look back in time, do you have reproaches or pride?«*

Waldemar: *»It's a mix I would say. I'm proud of the current situation, in some way showing the possibility of professionalizing, that we villeros have, for me is a great responsibility. Becoming university students and giving it back to our community and everything that the public university could give us, right? Reproaches, perhaps some about me and about the path I had to go, but more than anything, questioning the miserable conditions that a person living in a villa seems to have. The conditioning of living in a villa as well as the conditions in which we live in order to build a life project.«*

Victor: *»As the circumstances changed you, Waldemar, making good use of the opportunities, ¿have you already been able to influence the lives of other muchachos, villeros, cirujos, in a way how it happened to you? Have you been able to do something for others and you feel a satisfaction?«*

Waldemar: *»Yes, I really feel it. It's not a minor thing that La Carcova today has a Biblioteca Popular. I believe that the action of La Biblio and the entire team work that makes up this task somehow, we could say, builds a bridge between the villa and the university. Understanding that the university can be passable territory for us. This is perhaps the biggest influence that I am being able to give back with my work at this time.«*

POR UN DERECHO A LA EDUCACIÓN

Demanding *the right for education* within a prison, was the beginning of the creation of el Centro Universitario San Martín (CUSAM). It is a branch of la UNSAM within the *Unidad Penal N.º 48 del Servicio Penitenciario Bonaerense (SPB)*, that is located in José León Suárez, in the same district like La Carcova.

The curricular offer is made up of careers in sociology and social work, as well as offers in artistic workshops and trade oriented training courses. Unlike other educational spaces that operate within prisons, at CUSAM the detainees study together with the employees of the prison. This is considered as a *»unique experience in the region«* (cf. unsam, 2020). The project proposes a social transformation of subjects and institutions: the university, prison and the territory (ibid.). It was founded around 2008 based on the concern of a group of detainees, including Waldemar. It was set up with the main objective to guarantee the right to

»orgullo por la situación en la actual, de alguna manera mostrar la posibilidad de profesionalizarnos que tenemos los villeros para mí es una gran responsabilidad. esto de volvernos universitarios y volcar para nuestra comunidad y de todo lo que la universidad pública nos pudo dar, no? y reproches quizás, algunos sobre mí y sobre el camino que tuve que recorrer, pero más que nada poniendo quizás en tela de juicio las miserables condiciones en las que una persona viviendo en una villa parece. y los condicionamientos que tiene vivir en una villa y en las condiciones en las que vivimos para poder construir un proyecto de vida.«

»Si, realmente la siento. Esto que hoy La Carcova tiene una Biblioteca Popular no es una cosa menor. Creo que la acción de la Biblio y todo el equipo de trabajo que compone esta tarea de alguna manera construye un puente podríamos decir, entre la villa y la universidad. Hacemos saber que la universidad puede ser un territorio transitable para nosotros es quizás la mayor influencia que estoy pudiendo trabajar en esto tiempo.« (Waldemar en conversación con Victor Hugo Morales, radioam750)

FOR A RIGHT TO EDUCATION

CUSAM Centro Universitario San Martín en el interior de la Unidad Penal N.º 48 (university centre inside a prison in José León Suárez)

education to those who had not previously had the opportunity to study. In this way, it sought to *«mitigate the vulnerability of those who, even before prison, experienced the worst consequences of social exclusion and violence»* (ibid.). Through academic activity and different artistic and cultural interventions, it is proposed to provide tools to *«counteract this social vulnerability»* (ibid.). As of today, the CUSAM has eight former detainees and two prison officers received as sociologists, including Waldemar Cubilla.

A WOODEN HUT

UNA CASITA DE MADERA

The first built structure of La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova was set up in 2008 with recycled materials, pallets, dirt floors re-collected from the garbage hill. Nicolas, a Biblio's team member remembers: *«The Library as an idea, actually was born taking Mates (-> traditional tea drink) in the library in a prison, which is the unit 51, it's very close here, located also in José León Suárez. Principally, the library arose there as a place of encounter and as an opportunity as well, to change people's reality. [...] and when some compañeros who were inside there, when they were released, the proposal was: to build a library in our neighborhood.»* (video documentation ›construcción‹, 2020).

The small wooden hut was located a few meters further from the place where the building is today, next to the Gauchito Gil shrine. Waldemar's mother, Doña Nena, who is also part of the team of La Biblio memorizes: *«The kids were the first ones that came. They went to play football at the cancha and little by little they got closer and were curious. They asked what we were doing here, in the Biblio. I remember that it was summer and at night when we gathered all the kids to read stories. I think that was the first event. Yes, we made a bonfire and ate tortas fritas (-> fried pastry), some were taking a Mate. This phase was very nice. I really liked it.»* (ibid.). In the first workshop, a storytelling workshop with children, they were working *the dialogue, the word, the listener*. These are attitudes often neglected in difficult situations at home, according to Nicolas. La Biblio is a space precisely to promote these attitudes and to foster the community (ibid.).

With the idea in mind, they were looking for a place, Gisela (2020) tells *«we had the idea that we want to do something educational, una Biblioteca Popular»*. So they were talking with some neighbors, where it would be a good place. The person, who had built the Gauchito Gil shrine, proposed to build the library next to it. *«Well, just take a piece of land here.»* (ibid.), he said to them. So, the initiating group was collecting materials and with some neighbors they started to build *una casita de madera* (a wooden hut). The first inhabitant of the little house was a horse, remembers Juan. It was being built step by step, and after a while *«todo de materiales»* (-> everything in material). A building *de materiales* refers to the material improvement of a built structure, meaning from a wooden hut to a house with bricks for example. *«Y así seguimos»* (-> this is how we conti-

* text inspired by and quotes taken from the short video documentation ›Construcción‹ by Diego Villaverrián, UNSAM (2020): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Zi255CBtWM&ab_channel=CineDocumentalIAMKUNSAM

«Los primeros que se acercaron fueron los chicos. Venían a jugar a la cancha y de a poquito se venían y se juntaban. Y preguntaban qué hacíamos en la Biblio. Yo me acuerdo que era verano y a la noche juntábamos a todos los chicos a contar cuentos. Hacíamos fogatas y tortas fritas. Algunos tomaban mate con pava. Era una etapa muy linda. A mí me gustó mucho.» (Doña Nena)

«un taller de cuentos, donde trabajamos el diálogo, la palabra, el escucha, actitudes que muchas veces, con la violencia cotidiana y situaciones difíciles de dónde vienen los chicos, tal vez no están tan aireadas y la biblio es un espacio justamente para fomentar estas actitudes, y obviamente la comunidad entre las personas.» (Nicolas)

«Le habíamos planteado que queremos hacer algo educativo, una Biblioteca Popular, surgió en este momento. Y bueno, tomense un pedazo de tierra acá, nos dijo.» (Gisela)

«Esto es la Biblio original: una casita de madera con un caballo de habitantes» (Juan)

«se fue construyendo de a poquito, así todo de materiales, y así seguimos.» (Doña Nena)



[29] Waldemar con Barbijo
Waldemar with facemask

[28] Charlando y preparando
Talking and preparing





[30] work in progress II

nue), adds Doña Nena in the end.

3.2 LA BIBLIO EN CUARENTENA

The coronavirus measures have restricted the library's program, like it applied to all cultural and educational institutions. In the strict phase of quarantine in the beginning, La Biblio had to suspend all their public activities. They responded with workshops in online formats and use of the time to repair.

TALLERES ONLINE

The *capacitación virtual* ›Reivindicando el derecho a jugar‹ was an online training under the topic ›claiming the right to play‹ consisting of four virtual meetings promoting children's rights and a playful way of reading. The offer was shared on their social media channels and an internal call in the network of La Cultura Popular in San Martín was made. Immediately, 243 people signed up and participants from different parts of Argentina, Paraguay, Peru and Chile joined the online events (Gise, 2020). Gisela called it a beautiful experience to have been connected with so many people from different places, which is a completely different range and audience than when you act in the locality (ibid.). They have never had this amount of participants in a workshop before. In fact, it was planned to do it in person with meetings, sessions and talks outside of the Biblio. They noticed that not many women and compañerxs from the Área Reconquista joined due to the (non)accessibility: ›we understand that the virtuality for our territories is quite thorny for different reasons‹ (ibid.). Further, she reflects ›we reached other recipients, it's like, they are not from here, not direct from the library‹ (ibid.). This disconnects the work with the place and they are unable to work with the group in the library. Gisela doubts that they will be left alone with the post-production because the virtual formats do not encourage people to participate and engage on site, as it usually does when they are already in the place participating in a workshop (ibid.).

At the same time, another online activity ›un desafío de lectura‹ (-> a reading challenge) named ›compartiéndonos‹ (-> sharing between us) was initiated to encourage participants to tell a story, a fragment of a tale, a poem, a drawing or record a sound. It was destined for the neighborhood to re-encounter reading something and share the experience via social media. It was in the beginning of the quarantine, when activities in social media networks were all the rage (›era muy el auge de las redes, estar ahí en las redes‹ -> it was like a peak, being there in the networks, ibid.) Gisela tells me that the self-encounter with a book, as paraphrase for reading and learning, is very fragmented in the neighborhoods and there are a lot of school dropouts. She calls the (dis)connection with reading in the daily life of the families as ›lecturgia‹, which is a made up word between *lectura* (->reading) and *liturgia* (-> liturgy). I interpret it as understanding reading and learning as something sacred, like a ritual, a common practice, active

›en la capacitación virtual se anotaron 234 personas. sí, bastante gente. el objetivo era como poder hacer una capacitación para las mujeres, y las participantes de la biblio, de la comunidad, del área reconquista. se sumaron gente de distintas partes de argentina, de paraguay, peru y chile. que fue una experiencia muy bonita, el intercambio. [...] pero está muy fragmentados en nuestros barrios, viste.‹ (Gise, 2020)

›entendemos que la virtualidad para nuestras territorios es medio engorrosa por distintos motivos [...]. Llegamos a otro destinatario, como que, que no son de acá, no directxs de la Biblioteca‹ (Gise, 2020)

›nos deja en la producción digamos, no nos habilita para trabajar con el grupo en la biblioteca. así que estamos viendo cómo hacemos esto, no sé‹ (Gise, 2020)

«el concurso estaba destinado muy al barrio, encontrarse con el libro, con el papel, porque nuestra comunidad, como que, hay muchas deserciones escolares, yo la llamo, la lecturgia, como el encuentro con la familia con el libro, está muy fragmentada en nuestros barrios» (Gise, 2020)

«por lo menos dar esa iniciativa y trabajarlo con las escuelas del barrio, acercarlos, que motoren desde su grupo de whatsapp con los alumnos, fue muy bonito. Hubo también mucha respuesta positiva y ganaron todas mujeres. Para que tenerlo en cuenta, la participación fue de un noventa por ciento de niñas y de mujeres. Muy poca participación del hombre. Hay una gran participación de mujeres siempre en nuestras actividades.» (Gise, 2020)

reflection and self-building.

With this online activity *«un desafío de lectura»* La Biblio wanted to take the initiative to stimulate reading at home in quarantine and open up the space of encounter and to exchange ideas with other participants. The call was shared by school teachers in the barrio, through whatsapp groups with their students and they got a lot of positive feedback, tells me Gisela (ibid.). But the schools are not a central actor or participant, they just supported the initiative by sharing it. These are two different things: La Biblio does not act like a formal school (*«son dos cosas distintas, no somos una escuela formal»*, ibid.). Ninety percent of the participants were girls and in general there is always a greater participation of women than men in the activities of La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova (ibid.).

Besides these two activities, after a while, they re-activated more online workshops: *Taller de Arpillera* (-> sacking workshop), *Taller de Arte Virtual* (virtual art workshop), *Ronda de Mujeres y Saberes* (-> women circle), *Taller de Musica* (-> music workshop), *Apoyo Escolar* (-> school support), *Taller de Arte para Niños* (-> art workshop for children). The virtual classes of the workshops are uploaded to youtube to give the participants the opportunity to plan their time or watch it several times (ibid.).

As well, games were collected and handed out to kids of the barrio at *«El Día de la Niñez»* (-> *Children's Day*). For the participants of the workshops they organized *«Kits de Arte y Lectura»* that included a book and crafting materials like crayons, glue, scissors, eraser and paper. Another new project is *«Una Huerta Colectiva»* (a community garden) which is created by a group of adolescents.

SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Campaña solidaria 2020 «Sumate a la Biblio» during coronavirus quarantine: <https://donaronline.org/biblioteca-popular-la-carcova/sumate-a-la-biblioteca-popular-la-carcova>

CAMPAÑA SOLIDARIA

As well in quarantine the Biblio's team have set up a website with a donation campaign called *«me sumo a la biblio»* (-> I join the Biblio) in order to get financial means and to provide necessities for families in the barrio. *«Ya estamos ayudando a 56 familias, cada 15 días con una canasta, con verduras y alcohol en gel»* (-> we are already helping 56 families, they get a basket with foods, vegetables and gel alcohol) (Gise, 2020). On the website are different donation options. It's currently being tried out as a testing phase, to see whether it can be used for fundings of other specific events or workshops in the future, explains Gise (ibid.). In addition, they have collected used smartphones and give out cell phone credit for children in the barrio, because many don't have a corresponding device to take part in the virtual school classes. As a next step they will try to negotiate with the Municipality to get a wifi hotspot that the municipality would provide and La Biblioteca Popular can create a place with internet access, which is particularly important now in times of virtual homeschooling (ibid.).



[32] Cocina
Kitchen

[31] work in progress III





[34] Dale, vamos a trabajar juntxs
Okay, let's work together



[36] El primero que llegó
The first one that arrived

[33] Encuentro de lxs Pibes Liberadxs, delincuente juvenil
Meeting of the freed teenage boys, young delinquents

[35] Mate con Facturas: Un Clasico.
Mate with pastries, an Argentinian classic.





[38] Abriendo la puerta
Opening the door

[37] Ganarle tiempo a la vida.
Win time in life (written inside of La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova)



[40] Bienvenidos Biblioteca Popular
Welcome in the Biblioteca Popular

[39] Recuerdos como empezó todo: el primer logo, un foto de la casita de madera y un palo
Memories how it all started: the first logo, a foto of the first wooden hut and a wood stick





[42] Plaza La Carcova



[44] Saludo sobre una valla
Greeting over a fence

[41] Nos vamos a ir yendo. We're going to go going. Argentinian way to say: Let's go. (with three forms of the same verb *ir* in one saying)



[43] Trabajo
Work





[46] La Cancha
Soccer field

[45] Cuidemos la Huerta
Let's take care of the garden



[48] Vecinxs de la Biblio: El Tropezón y Empresa Cimet
The Biblio's Neighbors: cultural organization El Tropezón and Cimet company

[47] La huerta recién creada
The newly created garden



»La Biblio nace en un proyecto de una biblioteca en la cárcel, que es la Cusam [...] y pide realmente la posibilidad de hacer un proyecto similar a este, pero libre, en el barrio donde nació, donde me crié. Estamos ahí en familia. La Carcova.« (Waldemar)



»The Biblio was born in a project for a library in prison, which is Cusam [...] and it really asks for the possibility of doing a project similar to this, but free, in the neighborhood where I was born, where I grew up. We are there as a family. La Carcova.« (Waldemar)

2008



»That was all garbage [...] and from above the garbage we began to build the La Carcova Popular Library.« (Gisela)

»Eso era todo basural [...] y de arriba de la basura empezamos a construir la Biblioteca Popular La Carcova.« (Gisela)

»Los primeros que se acercaron fueron los chicos. Venían a jugar a la cancha y de a poquito se venían y se juntaban. Y preguntaban qué hacíamos en la Biblio. Yo me acuerdo que era verano y a la noche juntábamos a todos los chicos a contar cuentos. Hacíamos fogatas y tortas fritas.« (Doña Nena)

»The first to come were the boys. They came to play on the field and little by little they would come and get together. And they asked what we were doing in the Biblio. I remember that it was summer and at night we gathered all the boys to tell stories. We made bonfires and fried cakes.« (Doña Nena)

»This is the original Biblio: a wooden hut with a horse as inhabitant« (Juan)



»Esto es la Biblio original: una casita de madera con un caballo de habitantes« (Juan)



...así comenzamos en el año 2012.

2012



»La Biblioteca como idea, en realidad nació tomando mates en la biblioteca en un penal, que es la unidad 51, que está acá cerquita, también en Jose Leon Suarez. Surgió en principio la biblioteca ahí como un espacio de encuentro y como una oportunidad también para cambiar la realidad de la gente. [...] y cuando algunos compañeros que estaban ahí salieron en libertad, la propuesta fue: construir una biblioteca en su barrio.« (Nicolás)



»The Library as an idea, was actually born taking mates in the library in a prison, which is unit 51, which is very close here, also in Jose Leon Suarez. In principle, the library arose there as a meeting space and as an opportunity also to change people's reality. [...] and when some colleagues who were there were released, the proposal was: build a library in their neighborhood.« (Nicolás)



»Le habíamos planteado que queremos hacer algo educativo, una biblioteca, surgió en este momento, una biblioteca popular. bueno, tomense un pedazo de tierra acá.« (Gisela)

»We had suggested that we want to do something educational, a library, a popular library emerged at this time. well, take a piece of land here.« (Gisela)



[49] Construcción Biblio I
Process of construction



»Después se fue construyendo de a poquito, toda de materiales. Así seguimos.« (Doña Nena)

»Later it was built little by little, all of materials. So we continue. «(Doña Nena)

crecimiento.

growing.

»La idea era generar un espacio de encuentro, de diálogo, y principalmente un espacio educativo. Que le permite a la gente modificar su realidad, crecer profesionalmente y por supuesto uno de las bases de la biblio es que terminen sus estudios. Tenemos varios talleres de arte porque nos parece que es una herramienta fundamental para abrir la perspectiva de la gente. Para romper los cascarones que nos hacemos, encontramos con otros y ver otras posibilidades de vida más amena y más grata y más amorosa. Eso es un poco el mensaje que tiene la biblio para el barrio.« (Nicolás)



»The idea was to create a space for meeting, dialogue, and primarily an educational space. That allows people to modify their reality, grow professionally and of course one of the bases of the biblio is that they finish their studies. We have several art workshops because it seems to us that it is a fundamental tool to open people's perspective. To break the shells that we make ourselves, meet others and see other possibilities of a more enjoyable and more pleasant and loving life. That is a bit of the message that the biblio has for the neighborhood. «(Nicolás)

2019 - ...

PARQUE PÚBLICO Y EDUCATIVO

»no hay mal que por bien que venga se dice generalmente por aquí, eso sería una buena explicación. Por decir, bueno, en este momento de pandemia, estamos aprovechando para fortalecer los vínculos para que cuando tengamos de construir ya no hay ninguna problema. «(Gustavo)

»There is no evil that, however good it may come, is generally said here, that would be a good explanation. To say, well, at this time of a pandemic, we are taking the opportunity to strengthen ties so that when we have to build there is no problem. «(Gustavo)



Even with the drops that fell on our heads, even with the earth under our nails, still with the lime on our feet from the pastones. We found ourselves with the utopia of having our Popular Library. «(Waldemar)



»Our intention is that the Cárcova is also an educational territory and possible university intervention. «(Waldemar)

ampliando.

expanding.

»Nuestro intento es que la Cárcova también es un territorio educativo y posible intervención universitaria. « (Waldemar)



»Aún con las gotas que caían en nuestras cabezas, aún con la tierra debajo de nuestras uñas, aún con la cal en nuestros pies de los pastones. Nos encontramos con la utopía de tener nuestra Biblioteca Popular.« (Waldemar)



[50] Construcción Biblio II
Process of construction

2016



firmando.

signing.



3.3 UN TERRITORIO EDUCATIVO

»venimos trabajando en pos de que el Área del Reconquista sea entendida como un territorio educativo más allá de un territorio delictivo narcótico como todavía mucha gente está creyendo.« (Waldemar, 2020)

»El mejoramiento de la cualidad del edificio de La Biblio y todo lo que llamamos Parque Educativo con el objetivo de mejorar la calidad de vida de quienes están ahí alrededor de La Biblio, lxs villerxs.« (ibid.)

La Biblio has been working towards a distinct understanding of the Área Reconquista as an Educative Territory beyond the narcotic criminal image as many people are thinking, according to Waldemar: *»La marginalidad, la pobreza, la delincuencia, en este caso nuestro intento es que La Carcova también es un Territorio Educativo y posible intervención universitaria.« (-> marginality, poverty, crime, in this context our intention is that La Carcova is also an educational territory and possible university intervention.)* (Waldemar, 2020). It is an indication to improve quality of life in the villa and of the villerxs (ibid.).

In addition, the Educative Territory is a concept that the UNSAM has established as an objective to define the transfer of its knowledge in the areas most in need, closeby the university. From this concept, it has been agreed to work jointly with the executive department of public space within the municipality.

PARQUE PÚBLICO Y EDUCATIVO

For this purpose, the project of expanding the Biblioteca Popular and the broader strategy of the development of *»El Parque Publico y Educativo« (Public and Educative Park)* has evolved. The objective is to improve the quality of life and a long-term protection of the use of the public space, against a possible sell-off (Waldemar, 2020). He states: *»Taking the land, as many neighbors do to build their houses, but in this context, it is for us to preserve public space. If we occupy the land, the reason is to make it public. And that it does not get sold.«*

The implementation is thought over time and with manageable scales, *»de a poquito« (-> little by little)*, and in permanent negotiations with the different actors. The idea is already quite mature: what uses there would be, how it could get divided and where a new road would be installed (ibid.). It's important that the Municipality and the CIMET company realize that it is meant seriously (*»que la cosa va en serio.«*) (ibid.). In the working group the professors of UNSAM and FADU-UBA are also included. This proximity of the team of La Biblio as target organization and the support of the universities allow a process of participatory work and consensus building within the institutional actors, inhabitants and universities.

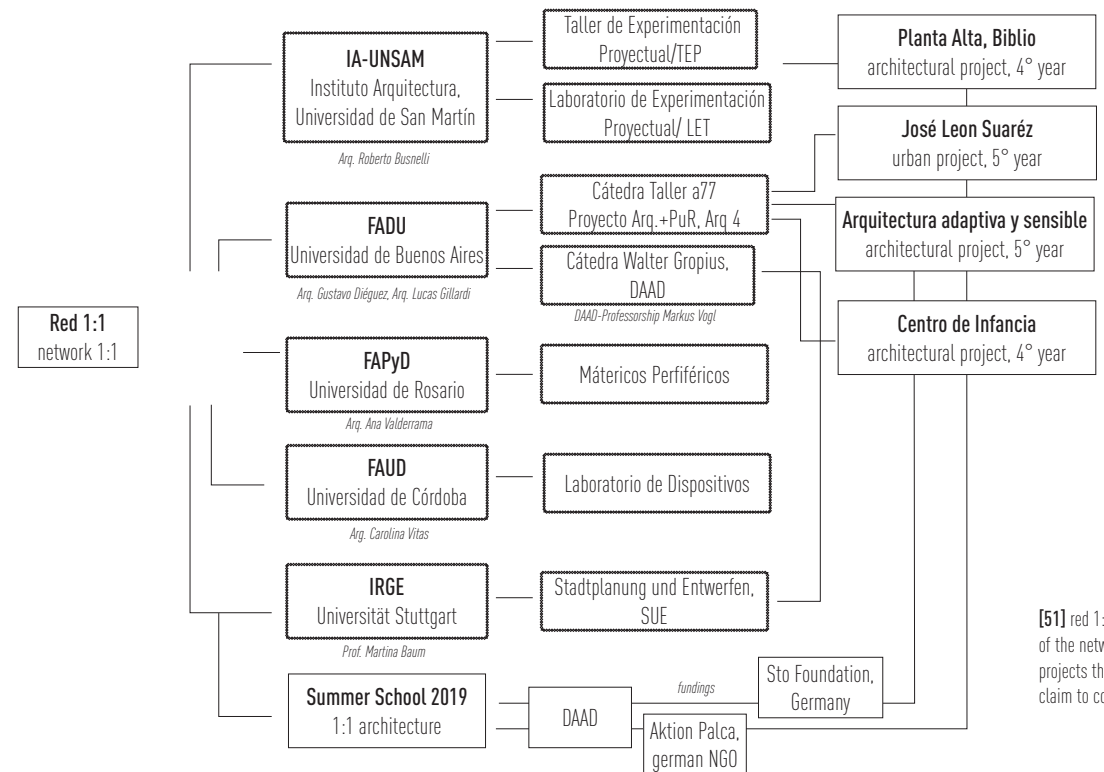
»La idea del Parque Educativo ya esta instalada, del recorte del terreno tambien, el arco par aca, medianera, la calle nueva, ya sabemos el espacio de trabajo en donde vamos a tener algun conflicto. ahi todo quedo mas claro, la empresa vi que la cosa va en serio y la municipalidad tambien.« (ibid.)

PROYECTO COLABORATIVO ENTRE VILLA Y UNIVERSIDAD

The collaborative project is embedded in a bigger network, the *»Red 1:1«* consisting of five universities: Taller de Experimentación Proyectual/TEP y

Laboratorio de Experimentación Proyectual/LET IA-UNSAM San Martín, Taller a77 FADU UBA, Cátedra Walter Gropius FADU UBA, Matéricos Periféricos de FAPyD-UN Rosario, Laboratorio de Dispositivos FAUD-UN Córdoba and SuE and IRGE Universität Stuttgart. The projects are defined as a process of joint production, experimenting and exchange in the field of collective and community construction in *»barrios populares«* with the notion of architecture as a social good and product of the community that generates it (Maiztegui 2020). The universities involved have different focal points in research and design studios and are in regular exchange with themselves and the Biblio team.

As a first stage of the process, in April 2019, an international workshop with the participation of students of FADU-UBA, UNSAM and Universität Stuttgart, with financial support provided by DAAD, Sto Foundation and the NGO Aktion Palca from Germany. It was destined to be a reflection and development of a program of needs for a future vision of the library. Different methodological formats in a participatory approach of listening of current activities, future actions, wishes and desires were carried out. Out of this, hypotheses were developed that were later presented again to the recipients. Based on this, a program of needs and uses was agreed which formed the starting point for specific architectural designs that were worked out at the various universities. At the end of this period, three works from each university were selected and discussed in further implementation.



[51] red 1:1: exemplary compilation of the network 1:1 and different projects that work in context (but no claim to completeness)



[52] La extensión de la Biblio
The Expansion of La Biblió



[53] Estructuras nuevas y existentes
Existing and new structures



[54] El techo sombrilla sin techo
The sunshade roof without roof

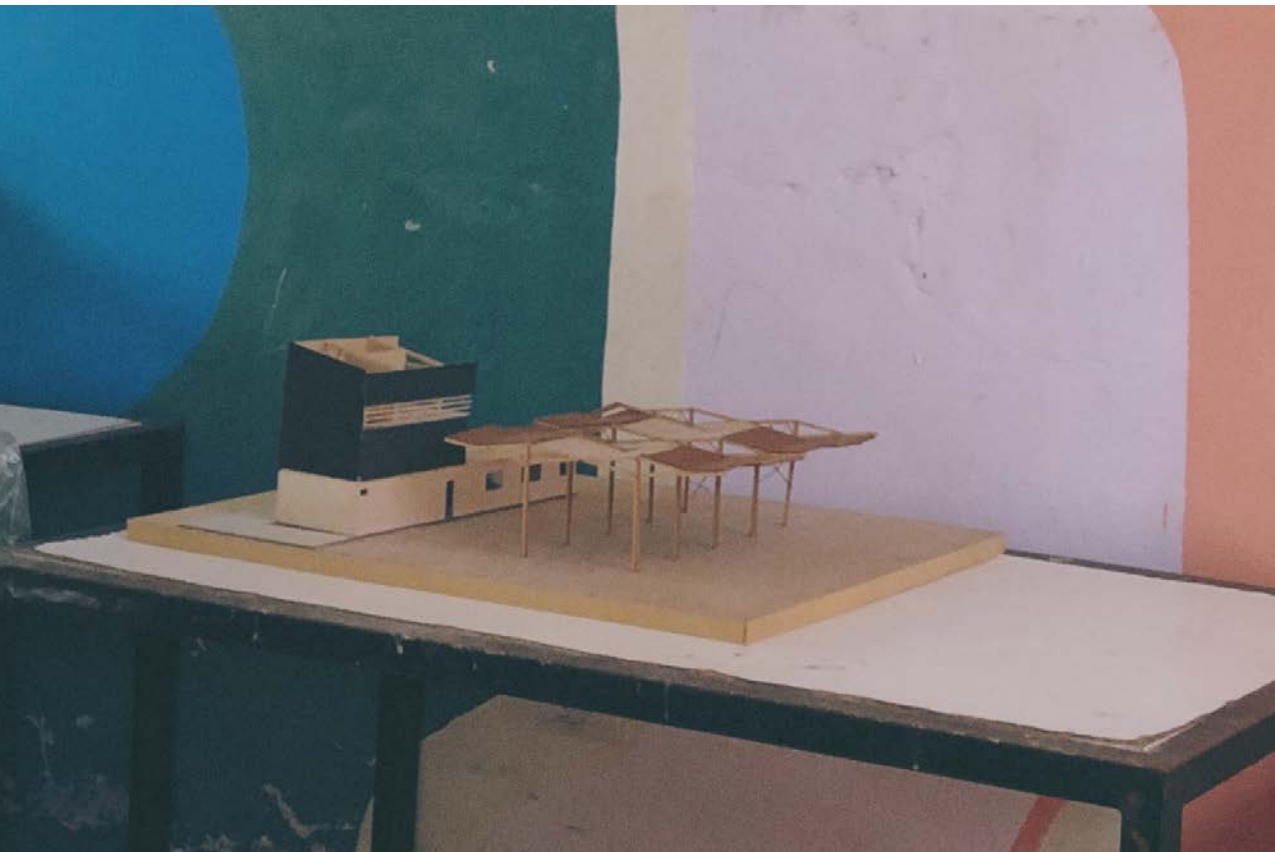
EL TECHO SOMBRILLA

In the end of 2019 an open wooden structure was realized that serves as sun and rain protection and collective meeting point for the community. The collaborative work includes residents, the team of the library and a collaboration of the two universities UBA FADU Buenos Aires (which I was part of) and UNSAM San Martín Buenos Aires. The university project is a process of joint production, experiences and exchange in the field of collective and community construction in *»barrios populares«* with the notion of architecture as a social good and product of the community that generates it (Maiztegui 2020). The design of the pavilion has emerged from several student works and represents the first stage in the realization of the idea of *El Parque Público y Educativo La Carcova* (-> public and educational park).

The participative work process allows a building of consensus and trust over time between institutional actors and the barrio. The role of the universities can be seen as a mediator sharing experiences and know-how for the manufacture and implementation. In September 2020 it was awarded a recognition for *»Argentina Arquitectura Solidaria«*.

The collaborative process is reflected and represented in the form of a comic in the following pages.

[55] Maqueta I
Model I



1º PISO Y CENTRO DE INFANCIA

There are already plans for the extension of the library building. The next step will be an upper floor with a large room for assemblies. The architectural ideas are developed in collaboration with the subject *Laboratoria Experimentación Tecnológica* (-> Technological Experimentation Laboratory) at UNSAM. It is thought as a wooden structure that is going to be incorporated on top of the existing building (Gustavo, 2020). This current cuatrimestre, nine students from UNSAM are developing different proposals and are in constant consultation with the team of La Biblio, as well as the professors that are involved in the process (Roberto Busnelli, Markus Vogl, Gustavon Diéguez, Lucas Gillardi). The project is also based on another project from FADU-UBA, which highlights the integrative and process-oriented modality of the university courses operating with La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova. The funding has already been found for the project, but due to the corona measures, it has to be seen when it is possible to work on site again (ibid.). Until then, the time is being used to create dialogues, such as with the owners of the land (*Cimet company*) in order to reach an agreement with everybody involved (ibid.).

Another project is the *Centro de Infancia* (-> children care centre), that also has the possibility of being built as long as all the actors will agree. This current cuatrimestre a design studio for architectural ideas is being held at FADU-UBA. The implementation would be *»another later stage«* (ibid.).

»tiene que ver con la posibilidad de que todo los actores sociales estén de acuerdo y entonces bueno, la unsam está trabajando en diálogo con los dueños del terreno, y con otros actores sociales también para que todos estén de acuerdo sobre todo que se va a desarrollar.« (Gustavo, 2020)

»así que bueno, el tema económico está resuelto, el tema es a ver cuando vamos a ir al territorio para poder construirlo, esperamos que el año que viene lo podamos hacer desde el principio del año o tal vez este verano, estamos viendo cómo se van dando las cosas.« (ibid.)

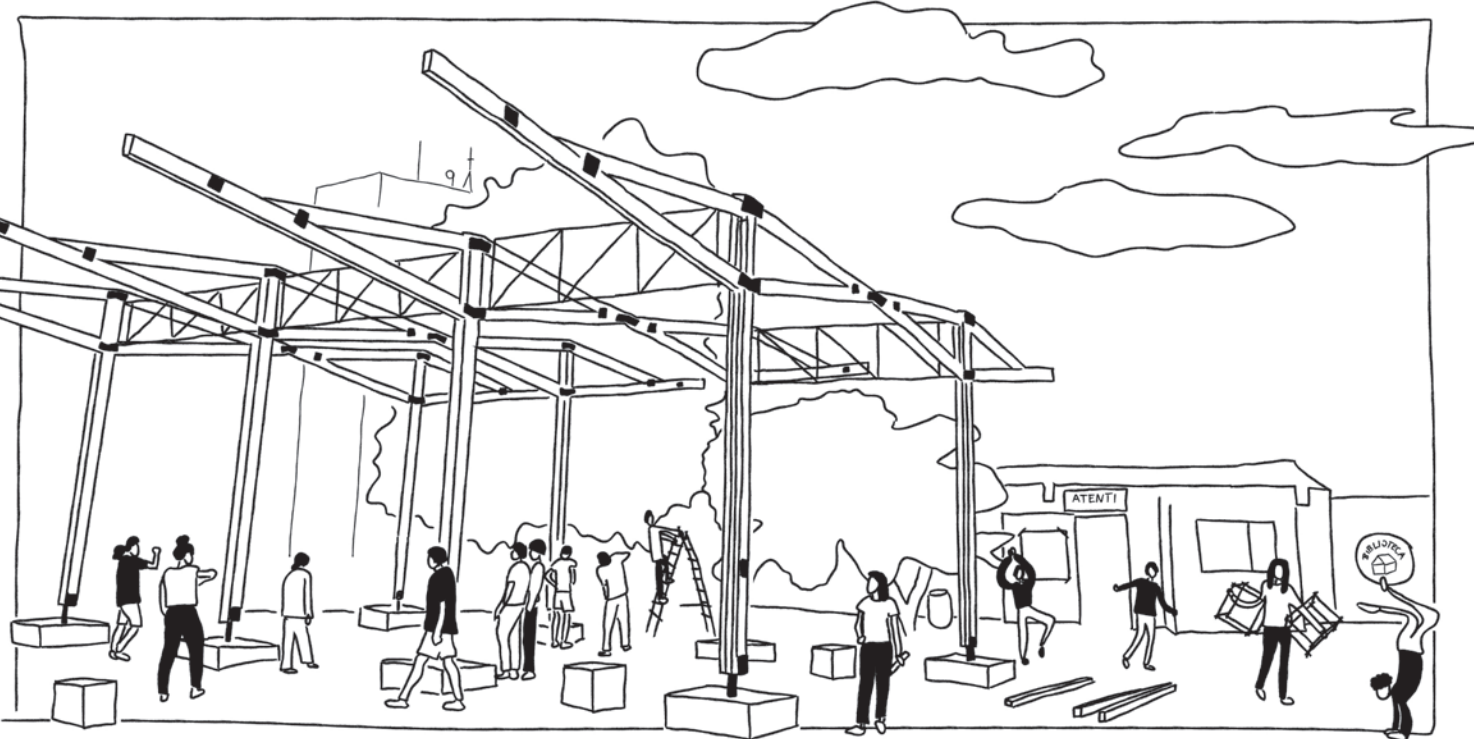
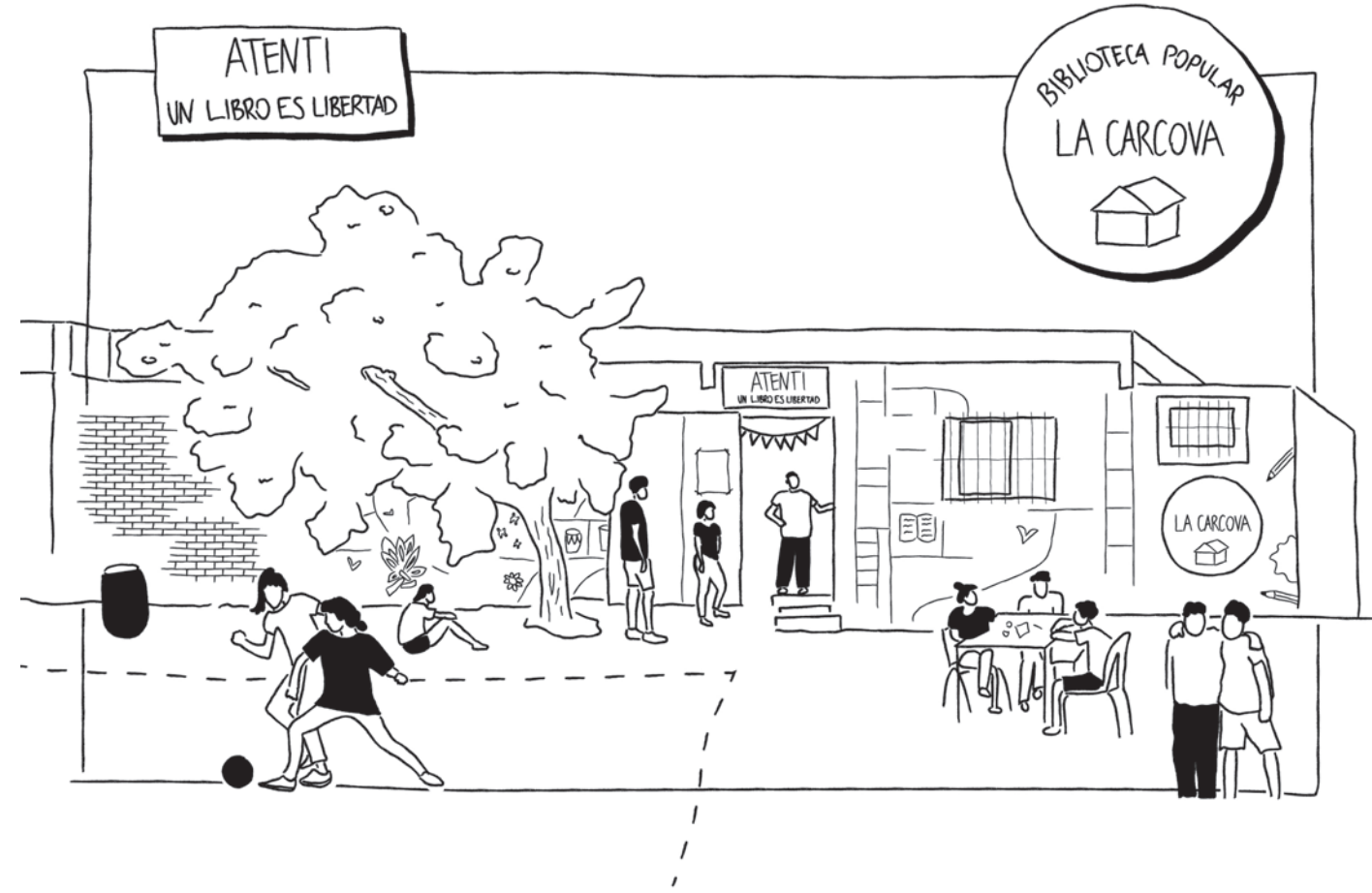
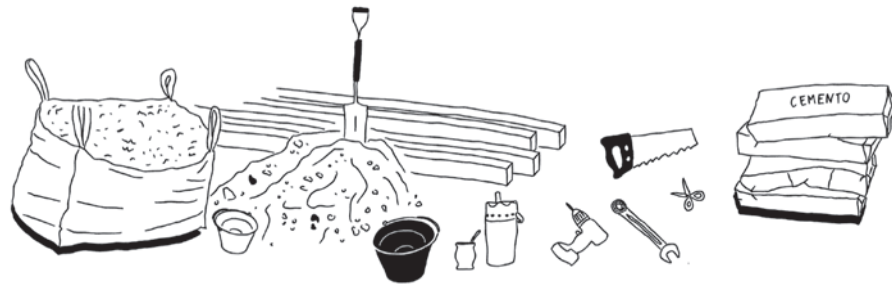
[56] Maqueta II
Model II



LA AMPLIACIÓN DE LA BIBLIO

The desire to expand the La Cárcova Popular Library in the José León Suárez neighborhood in the Province of Buenos Aires materialized in the summer of 2019. This cartoon shows and reflects some parts of the process. A design was selected among various proposals from different students, which was planned and built on a 1:1 scale in a collective process.

The project was carried out in cooperation with local residents and a network of different universities (among others the a77 FADU Workshop, UBA and UNSAM Project Experimentation Workshop) with a collaborative work modality. The first stage of the construction of the »Public and Educational Park« consisted of a pavilion for educational and cultural meetings. It is an open wooden structure with a cover that solves the lack of shade for users. In turn, this new element creates a meeting point for the people of the neighborhood.



El deseo de ampliación de la Biblioteca Popular La Cárcova en el barrio José León Suárez en la Provincia de Buenos Aires se materializó en el verano de 2019. Esta historieta muestra y refleja algunas partes del proceso. Se seleccionó un diseño entre diversas propuestas de distintos estudiantes, que se planificó y construyó en escala 1:1 en un proceso colectivo.

El proyecto se llevó a cabo en cooperación con residentes locales y una red de distintas universidades [entre otras el Taller a77 FADU, UBA y Taller de Experimentación Projectual UNSAM] con una modalidad de trabajo colaborativo. La primera etapa de la construcción del »Parque Público y Educativo« consistió en un pabellón para reuniones educativas y culturales. Se trata de una estructura abierta de madera con una cubierta que resuelve la falta de sombra a los usuarios. A su vez, este nuevo elemento genera un punto de encuentro para la gente del barrio.



[57] Historieta »Otro Techo para la Biblio« Comic: Another roof for the Biblio. p. 91-103

¡El equipo de la Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova con Waldemar, Gisela y Doña Nena dan la señal para arrancar!



¡PREPARADOS... LISTOS... YA!

»READY... SET ... GO!«

The team of the Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova con Waldemar, Gisela y Doña Nena give the signal to start! It's a hot summer day.

The experience turned out to be a learning process for everyone involved: from the first idea, the sketch to the manufacture of parts and components in the workshop, the final assembly on site and the participation of the people who will inhabit the place. During the construction days villerxs and students met, which was really pleasant and enriching.

The first day begins with a meeting and the division of tasks.

»... then let's start like this and get your head wet, it's going to be hot!«

La experiencia resultó ser un proceso de aprendizaje para todxs lxs involucradxs: desde la primera idea, el croquis hasta la fabricación de las piezas y componentes en el taller, el montaje final en el sitio y la participación de las personas que van a habitar el lugar. En los días de construcción conocimos a la gente del barrio y compartimos los saberes... La experiencia fue realmente agradable y enriquecedora.

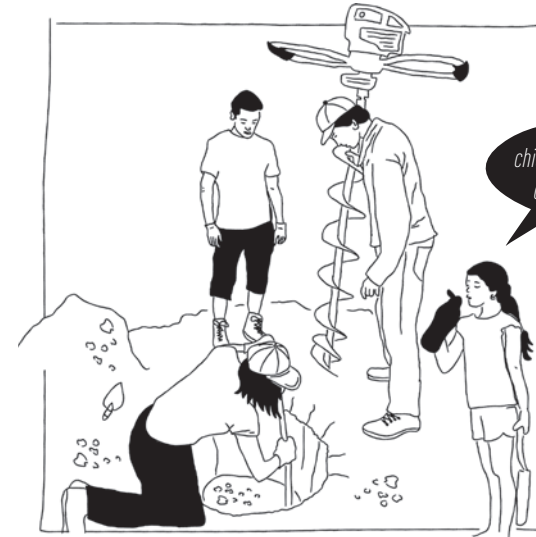
El primer día comienza con una reunión con todxs y la división de las tareas.



...entonces vamos a empezar así y mójense la cabeza que va a hacer mucho calor!

HORA DE EXCAVAR

TIME TO START DIGGING



chicxs, no se olviden de tomar agua!

»people, don't forget to drink!«

»[barking] and who plays with me?«

ehh y quién juega conmigo?



Como primer paso es necesario hacer los huecos en la tierra de las fundaciones. Nos sorprendió que la tierra estaba muy seca y dura ya que esperábamos que estuviera húmeda por las continuas inundaciones en el área y por haber sido durante mucho tiempo un basural.

As a first step it is necessary to make the holes in the earth of the foundations. We were surprised that the ground was very dry and hard and not wet even with garbage as perhaps expected.

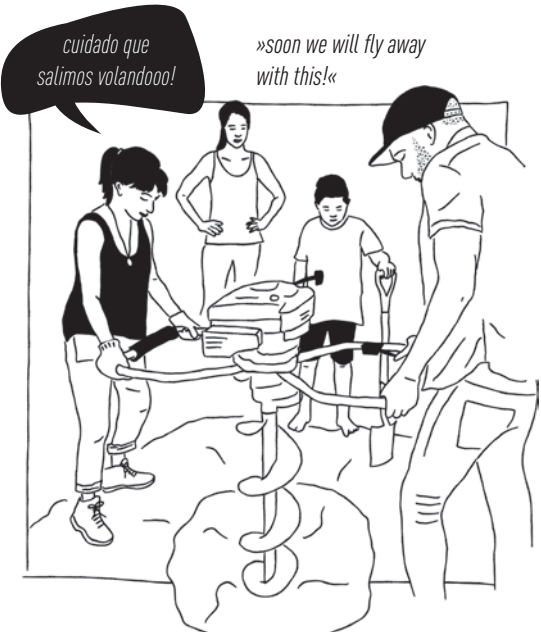


gooooo!!

si se portan bien se ganan una estrellita!!

Pasan muchas cosas al mismo tiempo: pelotas perdidas en el aire, perros que se acercan y llaman la atención, ninxs que van y vienen.

Many things happen at the same time: lost balls in the air, dogs that approach and attract your attention, children who come and go.



cuidado que salimos volandooo!

»soon we will fly away with this!«

Algunxs chicxs del barrio se sumaron a ayudar y cebar tereré al grupo.

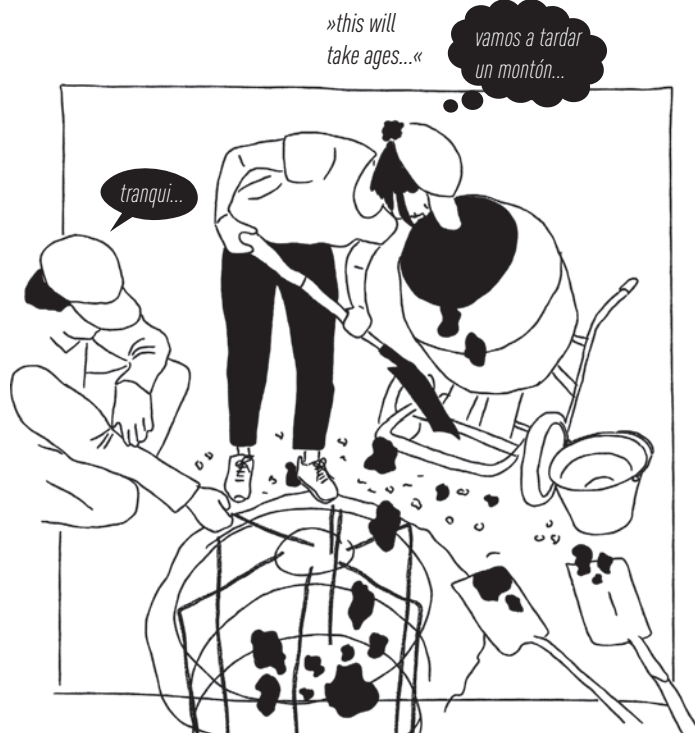
Kids from the barrio joined in to help and serve tereré (cold mate) to the group.



hay mate fresco y frío

El taladro nos ayudó a hacer huecos más profundos en la tierra y de alguna manera más rápida.

The drill helped us make the holes in the ground deeper and faster.



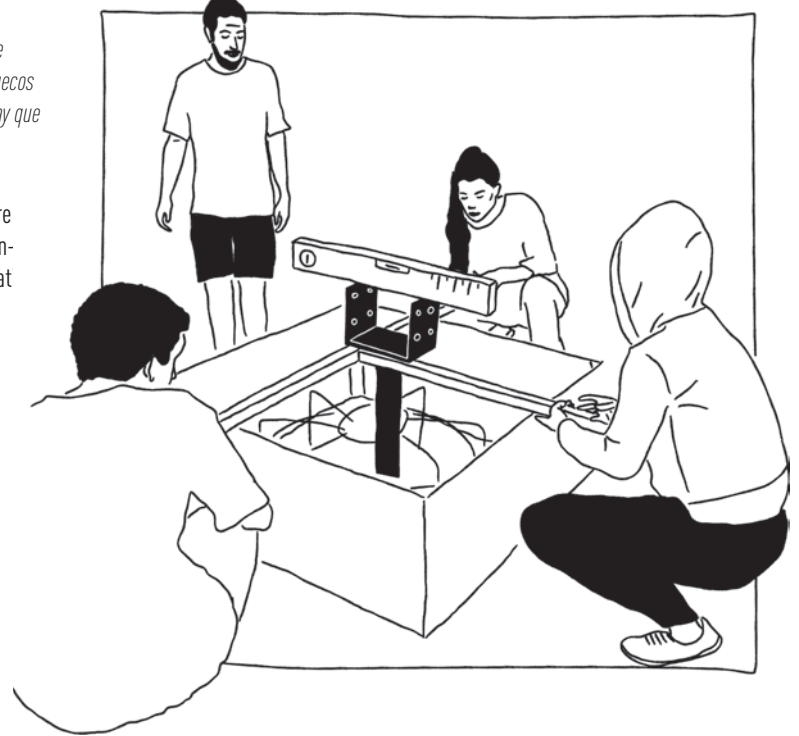
»this will take ages...«

vamos a tardar un montón...

tranqui...

Luego de colocar la estructura de hierro empezamos a llenar los huecos con hormigón. Antes que nada hay que nivelar cada cimienta.

After placing the iron structure began to fill the gaps with concrete. First of all, each fundat has to be leveled.



»fresh and cold Mate!«



ASADO DE OBRA:

UN BUEN CHORIPAN!

mmmmmm riquísimo...

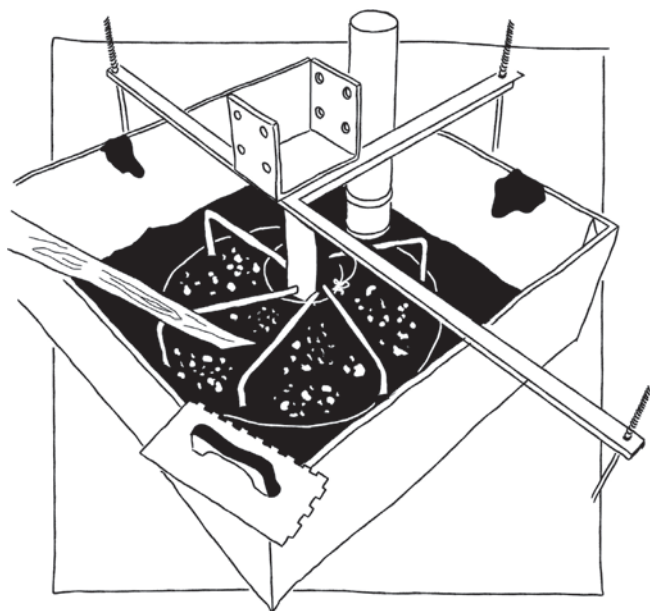
»mmmm it is delicious!«

que capo, che!!



Cuando menos lo esperábamos apareció una persona que nos dió una enorme ayuda con su camión de hormigón.

When we least expected it, a person appeared who gave us enormous help with his truck of concrete.



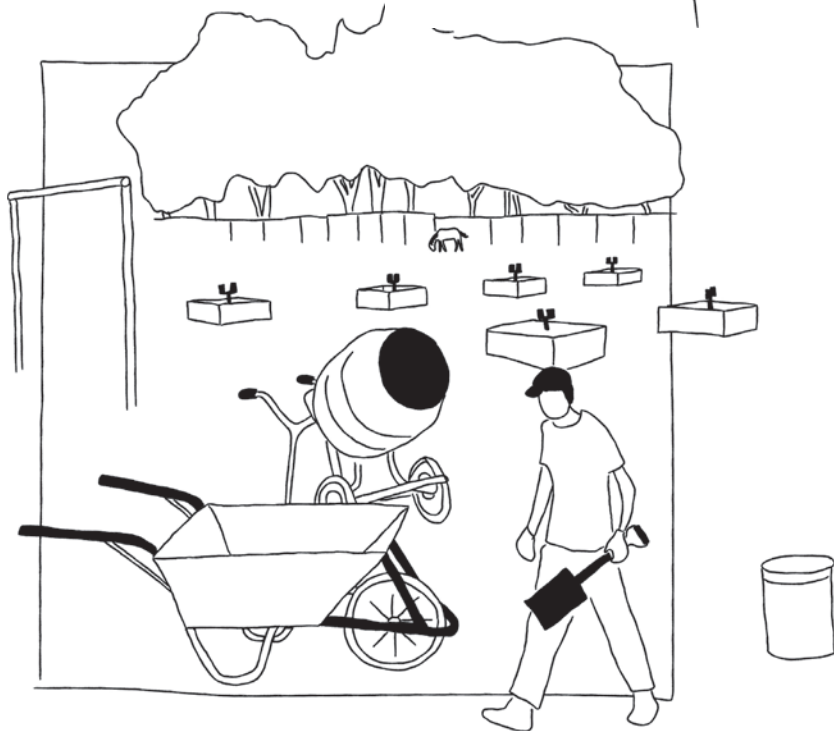
Once filled, it only remains to wait.

Una vez rellenas, solo queda esperar.

lo estoy mezclando bien, para lograr una buena masa...

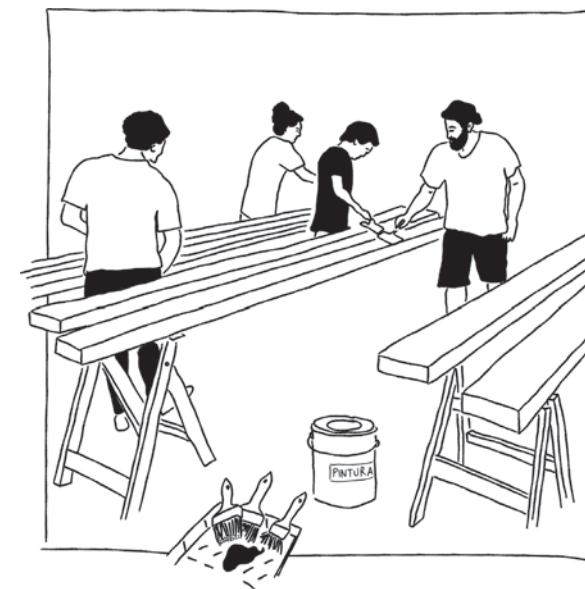


Los diversos pasos de trabajo se llevan a cabo en muchas estaciones: se pintan los postes de madera para protegerlos de la lluvia, se taladran agujeros y se preparan los uniones entre las piezas de madera.



MEANWHILE IN THE WORKS,

MIENTRAS TANTO EN EL TALLER



The various work steps are carried out in many stations: the wooden posts were painted to protect them from the rain, holes are drilled, the joints between the wooden pieces were prepared ...





Entre corte y corte nunca está de más compartir un mate para descansar.

There is always time and space to rest and share a Mate.



Once all the parts are prefabricated, we meet on site for final assembly.

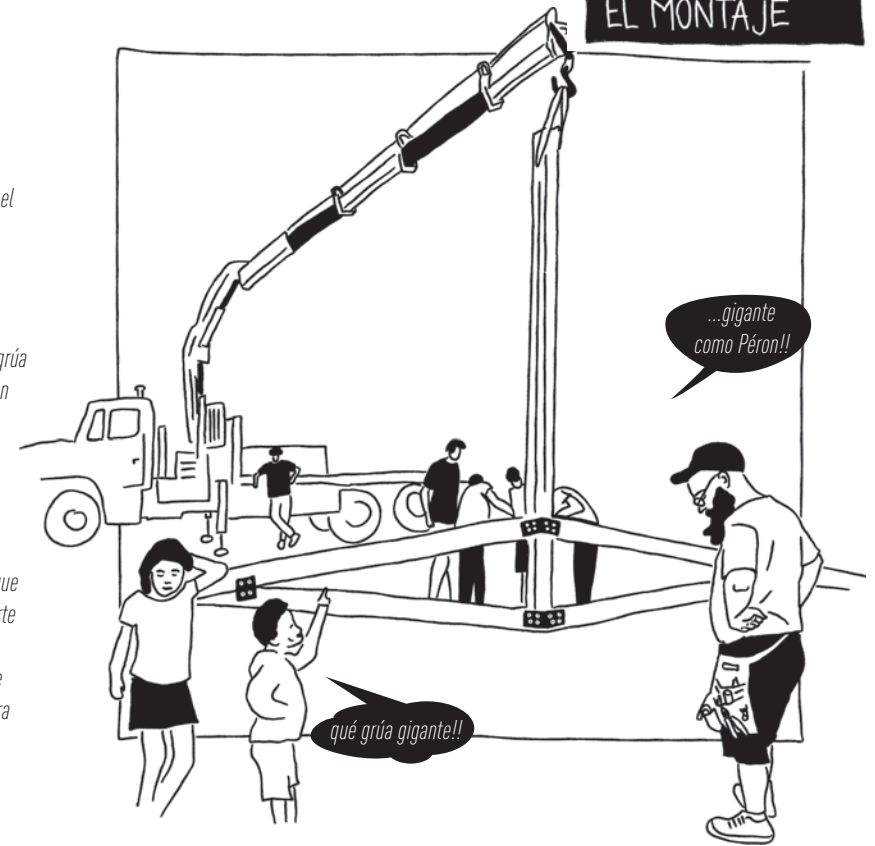
Precast parts are assembled step by step with the crane and the connections are screwed together.

During all the work you have to rest too. Luckily we are many people and we can take turns so that everyone can gather their energy.

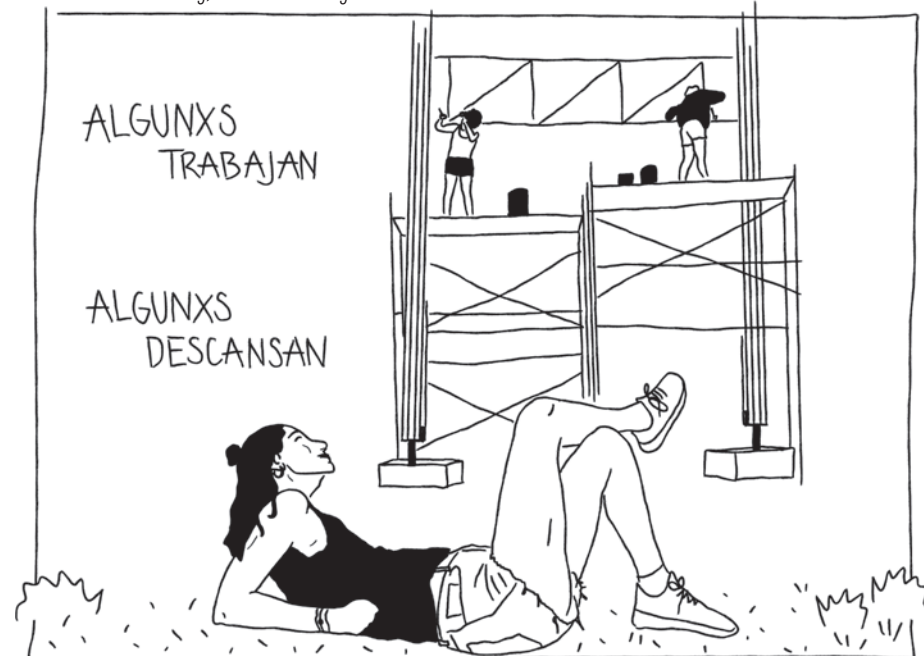
Una vez prefabricadas todas las piezas, nos reunimos en el lugar para el montaje final.

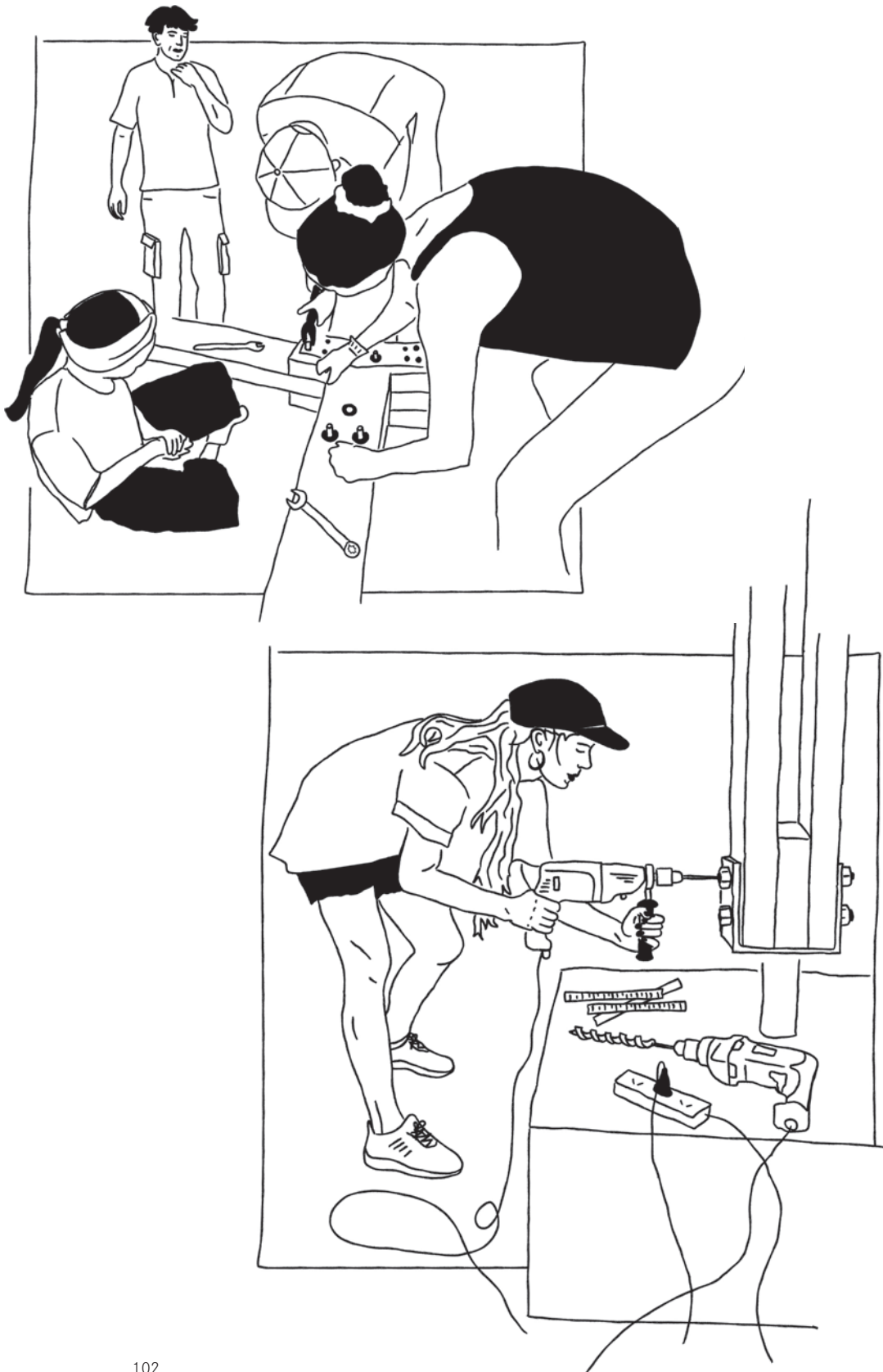
Las partes prefabricadas se montan paso a paso con la grúa y las conexiones se atornillan juntas.

Durante todo el laburo hay que descansar también. Por suerte somos muchas personas y podemos turnarnos para que todos podamos reunir nuestra energía.

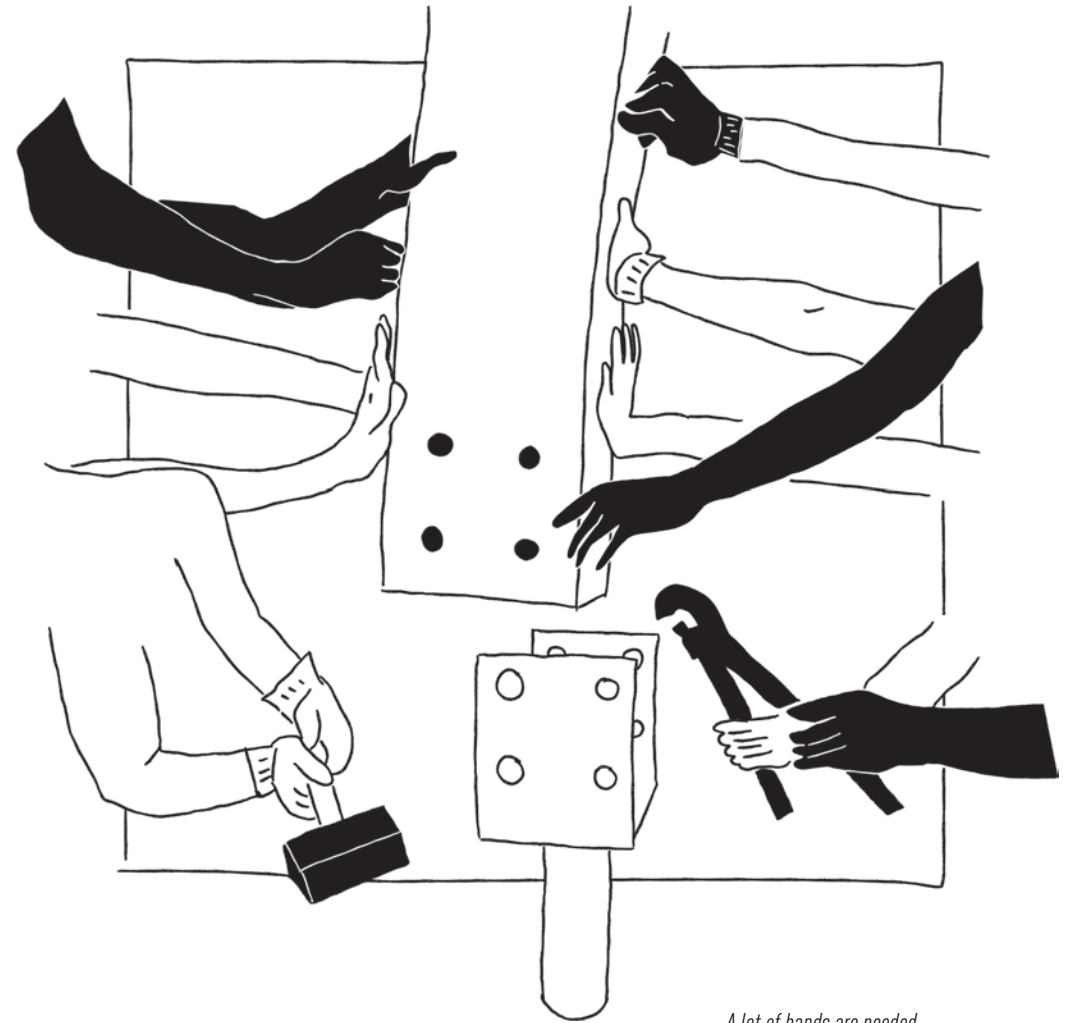


»some are working, some are relaxing «





SE NECESITAN MUCHAS MANOS



A lot of hands are needed.

Then a long day, until the sun goes down, at dusk, the last pieces are screwed together. It's done! Ready!

The first part of the idea of the »Educational Park« stands out in the Carcova Popular Library. At least the basic structure. The roof and the inauguration are stilmissing.



Después un día largo, hasta que se pone el sol, al anochecer, las últimas piezas se unen. ¡Está hecho! ¡Listo!

Se destaca la primera parte de la idea del »Parque Educativo« en la Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova. Al menos la estructura básica. Todavía falta el techo y la inauguración real, pero eso es un gran paso y una buena señal, y dan muchas ganas de seguir adelante!!

» it's not a project anymore, it's reality! «

YA NO ERA UN PROYECTO...
ERA UNA REALIDAD!



»making city in a cooperative way between villa and university «

3.4 UN CONTEXTO HUMILDE

LA CARCOVA

villerxs - inhabitants in a villa

The inhabitants call the barrio La Carcova, *«sin tilde, con artículo y con acentuación grave en lugar de esdrújula»* (-> without accented mark, with an article and a grave accent) in contrast to the pronunciation of the name of the artist Ernesto de La Carcova, after whom is named the street (Soledad 2019: 32). In her work on the relation of arts and politics in La Carcova, the author (ibid.) states, that it can be understood as re-appropriation of the name by pronouncing it in another way. Ernesto de la Carcova, was a renowned painter in 19th century Argentina, and a fundamental character for the promotion and development of

art, which he considered a tool for progress and social inclusion. He is the author of the emblematic work *«Sin pan y sin trabajo»* (1894) which, as Soledad (ibid.) points out, *«since its first appearance and, later, the innumerable re-appropriations of this work in times of crisis and conflict in our country, show its influence and validity to express political claims»*. A renowned work, though the villerxs (-> inhabitants of the villa) have no information about this, as Waldemar states.



[58] Sin pan y sin trabajo
Ernesto de la Carcova, 1894
Museo de Bellas Artes, Bs As

GBA - Gran Buenos Aires

The villa underlies a process of acquiring land for habitation without official permit and is continuously expanding. It is built on *basurales* (-> garbage dumps) and *terrenos inundables* (-> floodplains) on the side of the highway Camino del Buen Ayre. It is located on the southwest border of the district José León Suárez, within the primer cordón del *Conurbano Bonaerense* (-> first cordón of the GBA, in the AMBA). The villa is around 15 blocks from the train station J. L. Suárez, which forms an end of the line of the Línea Mitre Tren (50min until the main station Rétiro). The proximity to Río Reconquista is almost imperceptible, because access to the river can hardly be found, but it forms part of the so-called *Área Reconquista*. The landscape is marked by garbage, scrap, old cars, metals, polluted water and the scarce green spaces.

The only survey on dwellings and demographic data was carried out by the Secretary of Public Works and Services of the Municipality of San Martín, based on a census in 2005. Today this figure is certainly higher. To get an impression of the context, I still summarize and illustrate the numbers (p. 119).

The population was estimated at 7500 inhabitants with approx. 45% under the age of 24 and only 6% are older than 65 years. La villa de La Carcova covers an area of approx. 32 ha, which makes a density of 234 inhabitants/ha.



[59] Casa en La Carcova
House in La Carcova

The building structure consists of approx. 1800 *viviendas* (-> collective houses) and 1800 *hogares* (-> individual homes/shelters). The dwellings are precarious: made out of sheet, metal, wood and dirt floors, connected with corridors and lacking basic infrastructures. Many of the houses do not have a bathroom and not all houses have potable water and almost none have sewers. The electricity net is provided by informal connections, not ensuring the conditions of constant supply. There is no natural gas network there, so the inhabitants use gas carafes, firewood or charcoal to cook and heat their homes. Because of a lack of paved streets, there are difficulties accessing inside the barrio in case of emergencies, but also for regular services like waste collection.

There is one private initial education center, one public primary education center, one state center for secondary studies and three public adult education centers. 74,3% of the members of the households do not have covered health insurance. Precarious homes, air pollution from burning garbage and disposals generate respiratory and skin diseases. The employment rate is estimated at approx. 53,3% of the population over 14 years is active and 43,3% inactive. The majority of informal workers carry out activities related to the collection and separation of waste obtained in CEAMSE.



[61] Viviendas en la Carcova con un caballo
Dwellings in La Carcova and a horse

[60] Basural ›a veces está ahí, a veces no‹

Garbage dump. Actually there has been an open container for collection at that point – but ›sometimes it's there, sometimes not‹



BASURA Y ›LA QUEMA‹

Crossing the highway from La Carcova, Buenos Aires' largest open air garbage disposal facility (CEAMSE) is located, which receives approximately 17 tons of daily waste from all inhabitants of the metropolitan area of Bs As. For this reason, San Martín is the municipality with the highest concentration of garbage pickers, recyclers, sellers and *cooperativas* (-> working corporation). Locally they call the garbage hill ›*quema*‹, which means burn.

La Carcova is linked to the topic of garbage in two aspects. On the one hand, it provides work, resources, materials, food, clothing. On the other hand, problems around garbage are constantly part of the stories of the villerxs, when I was talking with them. Garbage for many might be considered something that is left over, that is not needed, that is in poor condition or lost his usefulness – and for others it is a resource and a subsistence, states the political scientist Alvarez (2011: 94) who studied the social dynamics and political impacts of the CEAMSE in the Área Reconquista. Discrimination, shame, being considered as ›*dirty*‹, disgust, against *Cirujas* is quite common in society: ›*The gaze of the other [...] who punishes [the ciruja] for having transgressed the hygienic border*‹. Further he states, that it is a segregation of the popular class: ›*In his another cleavage of the popular. The fight for garbage recovery is a popular fight, but not a working class one. It is a struggle of the marginalized to survive. To make garbage a resource, the reclaimers had to cross the border of the norm, overcome disgust, to the garbage*‹. (Alvarez 2011: 106)

Garbage is a present part of daily-life realities of many villerxs. Gise (2019) states ›*everything is thrown on the sportsfield, over the wall and the mountain of garbage is the CEAMSE, but here local as well. And well, on the garbage we began to build the Popular Library La Carcova*‹. The public space, *la cancha*, was all a garbage dump before and from there the Biblioteca Popular was built. With ›*tu barrio no es basura*‹ (-> your barrio is not garbage) La Biblioteca Popular started an action to raise awareness and clean up the space, but as long as there is no public waste system, it gets littered again and again.

PARTIDO GRAL. SAN MARTIN

The district San Martín has been heavily transformed by deindustrialization. It is the district with the greatest density of informal settlements in the greater Buenos Aires areas. It is located on the Reconquista, a heavily polluted river, and is the site of the largest garbage landfill of GBA. The poor living conditions of many thousands of people who informally live in the floodplain of the Reconquista, the contamination from polluted river water and landfills, the lack of social and technical infrastructures call for integral, spatial and sustainable strategies for urban development across the boundaries of disciplines and scales.

GARBAGE AND ›BURNING‹ HILL

La Quema - garbage hill, from quemar (burning)

Ciruja - person that goes to collect materials on the garbage hill

›La mirada del otro, que discrimina al ciruja por considerarlo 'sucio', que lo castiga por haber transgredido la frontera de lo higiénico/ normal respecto de los residuos. La discriminación, algunos la perciben por anticipado y entonces sienten vergüenza de la mirada del otro.‹ (Alvarez 2011: 94)

›Otro clivaje de Lo Popular. La lucha por la recuperación de basura es una lucha popular, pero no de clase obrera. Es una lucha de los marginales por sobrevivir. Para hacer de la basura un recurso, los recuperadores debieron traspasar la frontera de la norma, superar el asco, a la basura.‹ (Alvarez 2011: 106)

›se tira todo en la cancha sobre el paredón y la montaña de basura, es el CEAMSE pero ahí local, y bueno, de arriba de la basura empezamos a construir la Biblioteca Popular La Carcova‹ (Gise, 2019)

DISTRICT GRAL. SAN MARTÍN

The urban fabric of the district of Gral. San Martín follows two well differentiated patterns: one, which perhaps refers to the first occupations, disorderly, interwoven, fragmented, without any order or planning and the other assumes a planning that simulates the fabric of the formal city.

The *border line* between formal and informal city, dynamic and in permanent movement, which constitutes the neighborhoods that gain ground from the sanitary landfill. When I was studying the area through Google Maps I realized that the Street View is prohibited from accessing this area, the image crashes the local geography. Neighbors make their own streets like someone who makes a furrow. They build them, and name them. They build their houses and organize themselves through many *cooperativas* created in response to the urgent need to address the issue of collective construction of the territory. From the commitment that such a task entails for all actors, which is born from a consequent logic of the place in the one that everyone feels they belong to, since they play an active role in its *construction*. That is, on the contrary, based on socio-spatial imbalance, social injustice, long negotiation processes and environmental deterioration.

This process of informalization of the fabric acquires its maximum expression with the disappearance of the street as an urban planning strategy. All land is transformed into land, public and private, disappearing the footprint of public space and its infrastructure.

RIVER RECONQUISTA AREA

ÁREA RÍO RECONQUISTA

The Río Reconquista is one of the most contaminated urban waters in Buenos Aires and flows through Gral. San Martín and 17 other Bs As districts, which together form a population of almost three million inhabitants. There is a high average of people in extreme conditions of poverty that is located in the proximity of the river basin (Busnelli 2016: 1). Most of the dwellings are informally built and located in low-lying and flooded areas, illegal dumping of urban solid waste. A general sewage system is nonexistent and the supply of drinking water is limited and at risk, because of contamination of the water by heavy metals and chemicals that are illegally led away by neighboring industries (ibid.).

Socio-environmental strategies for deprived neighborhoods in the area have been investigated and developed by different disciplines over the last few decades, particularly by faculties from UNSAM.



[62] Rios Urbanos
The three urban river and riverbeds of Bs As: Río Luján, Río Reconquista (middle one), Riachuelo



[64] ›La policia es com...[palabra no terminada]‹
›The police is com.... (word not finished)‹

[63] ›Arroyos Asesinos‹
›Killing rivers, from asesinar - to murder for political reasons





[65] Ecosystem of Río Reconquista with freshwater and a lively animal and plant world

UN IMAGINARIO DEL RIO RECONQUISTA

A location where un-caring is particularly evident is the *Arroyo* (-> stream) and the Río Reconquista, one of the most polluted rivers in Argentina. In the logic of nature and the early settlements gradually taking part over time, we know that the river was there first. What if the river could speak in words to us, what would it tell us? I imagine what it could have co-experienced in and around its arms of water, who it could have hosted and been given a habitat and what has its existence made it something to fear and be in despair about it.

The river we know today under the name *Río Reconquista* is one of the three *rios urbanos* (-> major urban rivers) in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires. *Reconquista* means *reconquest*, but by whom and how was the land conquered and from what did it have to be recaptured? Let's dare a sensible thought experiment, un *Imaginario Urbano*, to imagine a journey back in time by following the river's paths and capturing stories.

Around the beginning of the 20th century and before the arrival of human civilization, the river was full of nature; well, one could say, a river *is* nature, but in this time, the river was definitely in its purest and most natural element. An ecosystem with its very own logic and right to exist. Flowing waters inhabited by a variety of species of aquatic animals, microorganisms and plants. A *leyenda urbana* (urban legend) that is told until today, says that hundreds of turtles sought their sunny spots on the river bank and went swimming in the freshwater.

There must have been a lot of beautiful shells and snails in the river, because of what other reason did the first humans, that settled their *pueblo* (-> village) next to the river, have given themselves the name *Las Conchas* also called the river *Río de Las Conchas*. *Concha* means *shell* and, as a side fact, the word is also used for the female genitalia in today's common language in spanish speaking countries. *Las Conchas* were among the *Querandíes*, un *pueblo originario de América* (communities of native people), who met the first colonizers when they were discovering Latin America. They partly lived in the area that is the centre of the current city of Buenos Aires.

Most of the families of the village next to the river were dedicated to harvesting and hunting, living as fishermen, farmers and traders. The first historical mention has been around 1580, when Juan de Garay, the Basque conquistador who later re-founded the town of Buenos Aires, gave the valley of the river to Gonzalo Martel de la Puente y Guzmán, another spanish colonialist. He installed a little coastal port and facilitated shallow-draft vessels operating through the islands of the Delta to supply firewood and tradable goods to the city.

In the beginning of 1800, *Las Conchas* began to appear in documents as a formalized parish during the mandate of the viceroy Sobremonte, the town of San Fernando was founded and it was ordered to depopulate *Las Conchas*, with which its 143 neighbors had to emigrate. However, the regulations were complied with in arrears and that same year the port was used by the then captain Santiago de Liniers to disembark with the forces that would evict the English invaders from Buenos Aires. As a result of this, the river was renamed *Reconquista*. But who has really conquered whom in this area?

[66] Naming of the river: Río de Los Conchas (river of the shells) and Río Reconquista (river reconquered)



Heavy storms caused several flooding of the meadows and the power of water has carved out new streams and flows of the river. Former towns were devastated and the river has swallowed up a couple of inhabitants. As a consequence, the civilized areas moved a little more inland and the riverbed got wider and also deeper. From then on it was capable of receiving ships. The neighboring land of the river was divided by the colonialists and occupied with agricultural ranches, farms and simple lodges.

With the arrival of the *Ferrocarril* (-> railroad) in the end of the 19th century, the city of Buenos Aires expanded a central core in the north-east and the land became more and more urbanized. The district of José León Suárez was founded in 1932 and large warehouses and factories, mostly car, railway and textile industry were built. The formation of these industrial areas spurred many people to leave their home and belongings in the rural region of the Pampas and head for the city with the conviction of a new labor force in the factories. In this context, the first *manzanas* (perimeter for orthogonal blocks and street layout in Argentinian planning) were carried out. The biggest factory was La Fabrica Spencer with almost 50.000ha area. At this time, just a few houses surrounded the factory. But it was not all prosperity.

The largest flood in the history of the Río Reconquista occurred in October 1967, leaving a total of 25 fatalities and a huge material loss of a large part of its population. 12,000 inhabitants were evacuated.

[67] Industrial zone in San Martín, internal migration to the capital in search of work and hope for a better life



[68] Inundación (-> flooding)

The adjoining spaces were stepwise informally occupied until in 1975 a wave of migration arrived of those, who did not have access to other housing. The settlement grew without a defined plot and an initial subdivision attempt failed. The land still belonged to the Solimno Family (owner of the textile fábrica Spencer).

Well into the nineties, the factory was not the exception of the time and of what was happening to the industry. Given the neoliberal policies that prevailed in the country, the plant had to close, it was 1994 when the last workers left their tools and they left. What happened next, we need to imagine

[69] Arroyo Zajón polluted stream of Río Reconquista





[71] Carro de caballos
Horse carriage



[73] Perros en el techo de una casa en construcción
Dogs on the roof of a house under construction

[70] Calle Combet
Street Combet, on the right wall of Cimex Company, on the left La Cancha



[72] Electricista del Automovil
Car electrician





[74] A lado de la Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova
[75] The Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova
[76] Parque Lineal at Arroyo
Lineal Park towards the Stream



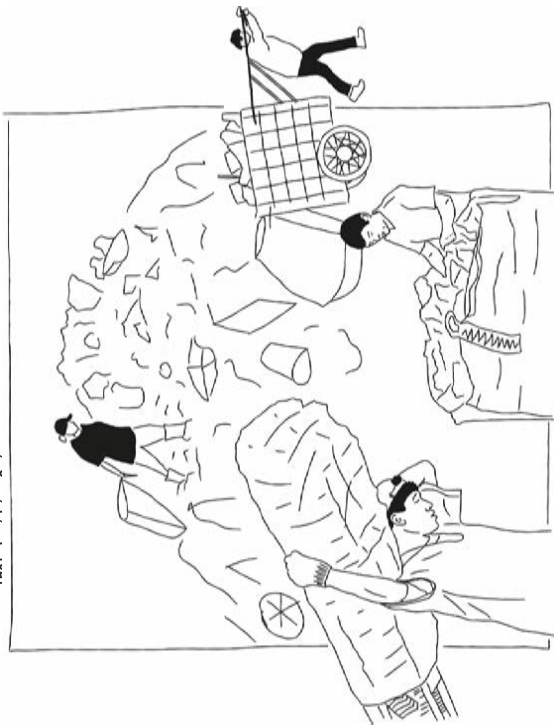


- ASISTENCIALISMOS** **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**
- hexagon icon: cultural autogestivo self-managed cultural
 - cross icon: religioso / fe religious / spiritual
 - square icon: salitas / merendones soup kitchen / comedores

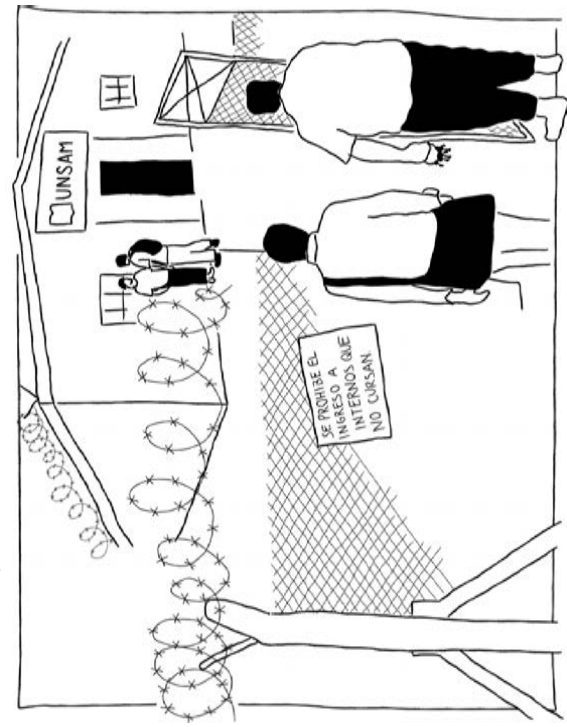
176 | La Carcova: Community Organizations



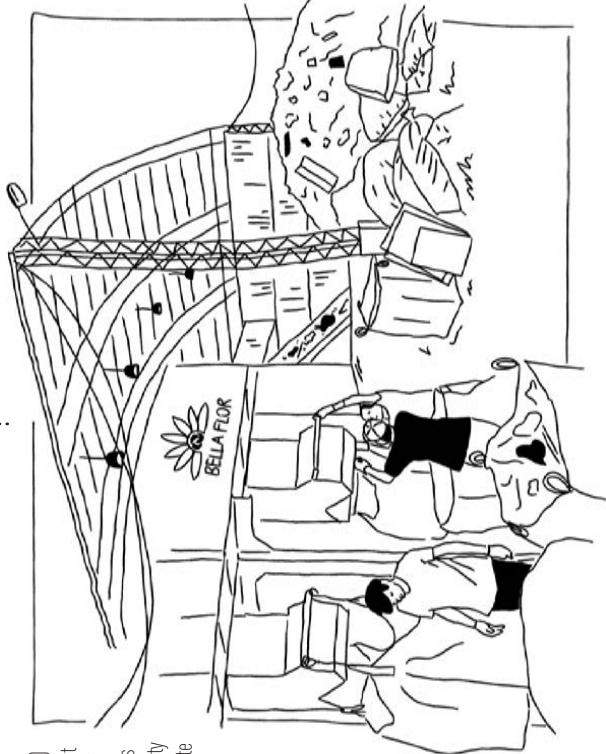
177 | La Carcova in numbers (based on census 2005)



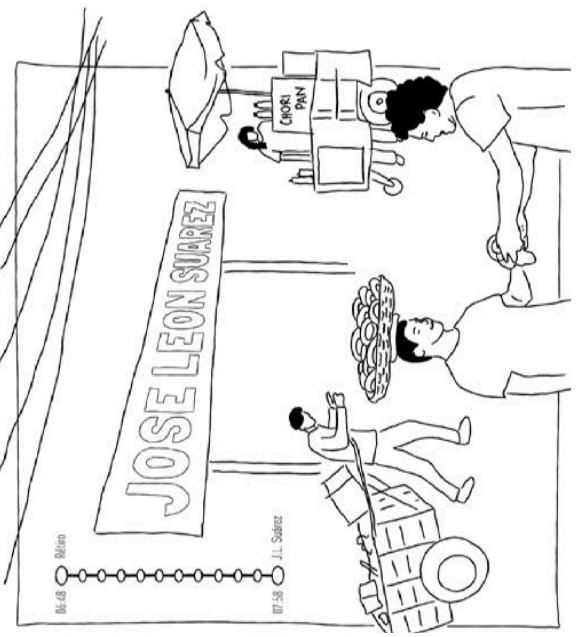
CEAMSE
 (La Coordinación Ecológica Área Metropolitana Sociedad del Estado) public company created to carry out the comprehensive management of urban solid waste in the AMBA. It is owned by the Government of the City of Bs As; about 17,000 tons of waste are carried there day-to-day



CUSAM
 Centro Universitario San Martín en el interior de la Unidad Penal N.º 48 (university centre inside a prison in José León Suárez)



BELLA FLOR
 cooperation to collect, process and recycle valuable materials, situated next to CEAMSE



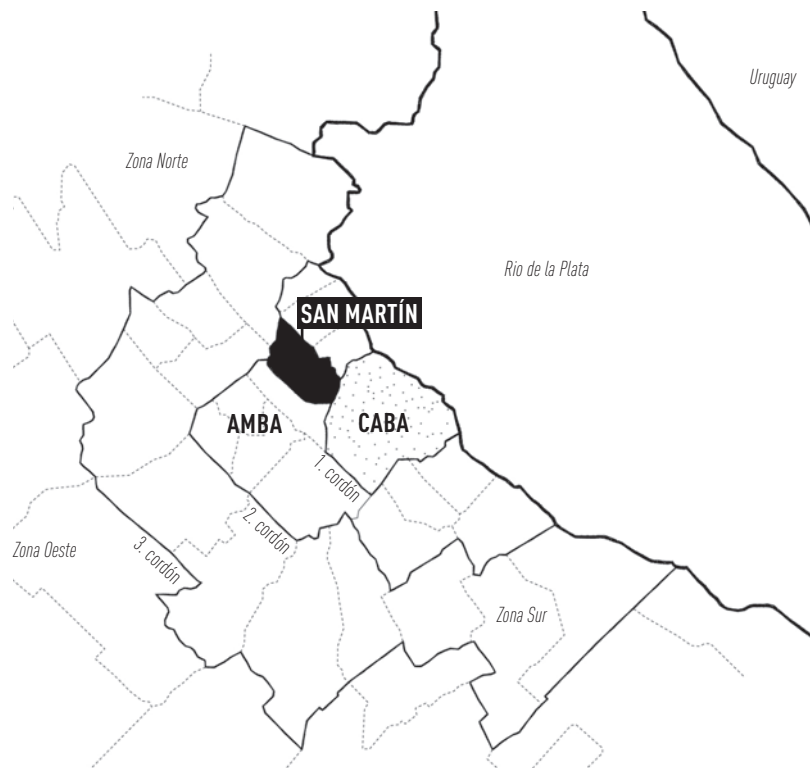
ESTACIÓN J.L. SUÁREZ
 Trainstation J. L. Suárez. Last trainstation from Mitre Train, approx. 50 min to main station in CABA-Rétro

There are different terms that all refer to the surrounding area of Buenos Aires: such as *Conurbano Bonaerense* -> Buenos Aires' conurbation; *Agglomerado Gran Buenos Aires (GBA)* -> Greater Buenos Aires Agglomeration; and *Área Metropolitana Buenos Aires (AMBA)* -> Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires.

It must be taken into account that CABA is an Autonomous City (area 203km²; Hamburg 755km²) and that there is also the Province of Buenos Aires with an area of 307,571km² (in comparison: Germany covers an area of 357,386 km²).

CABA = Capital Federal BsAs (Autonomous City of BsAs)
AMBA = Área Metropolitana BsAs (Metropolitan Area)

[80] Gran Buenos Aires (GBA) metropolitan area of Buenos Aires with three cordones (cordón) and zones in North, East and South

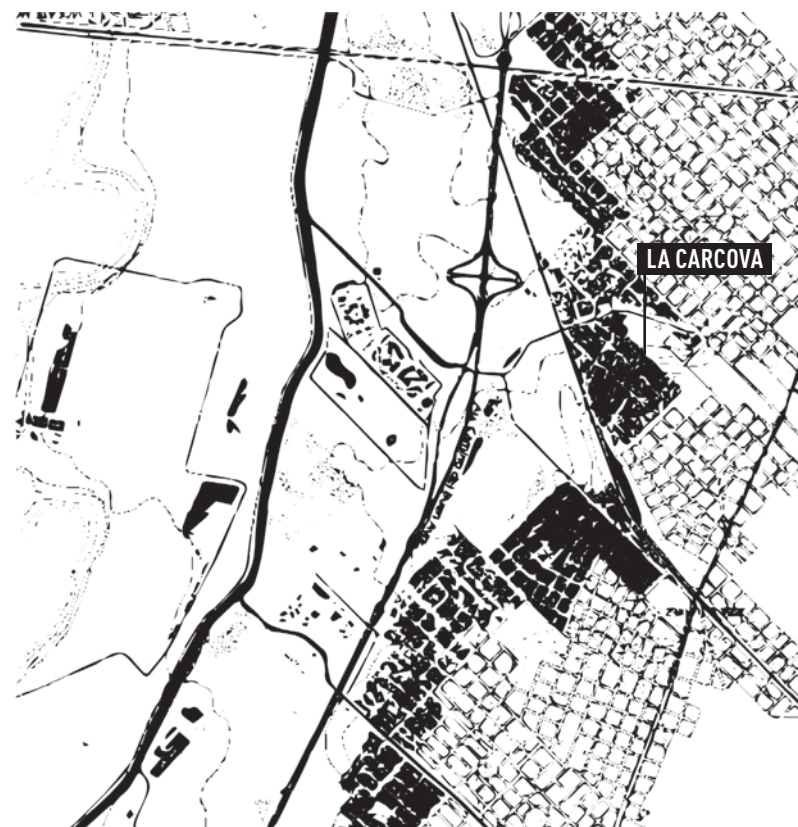
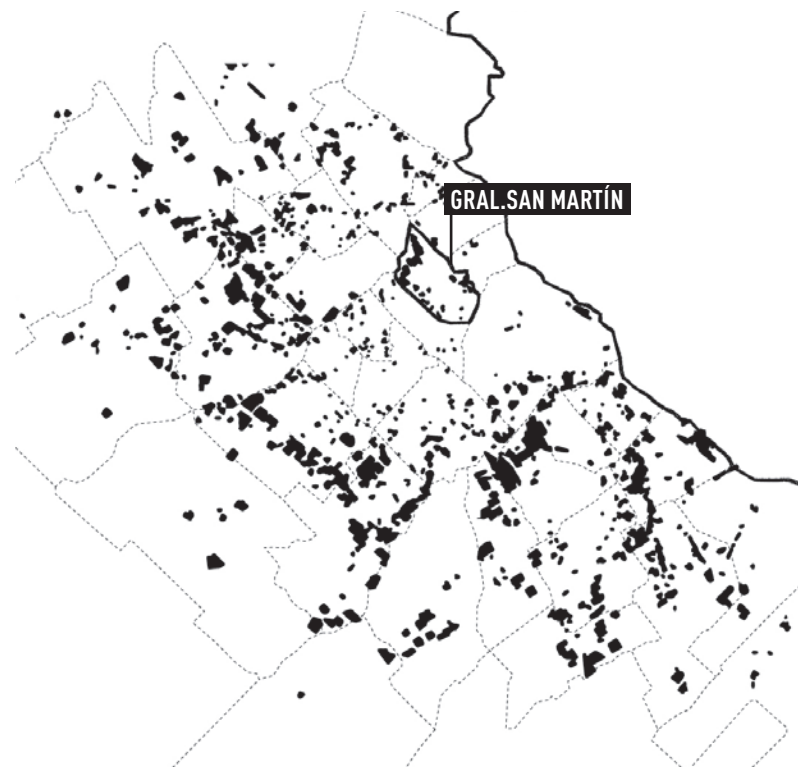
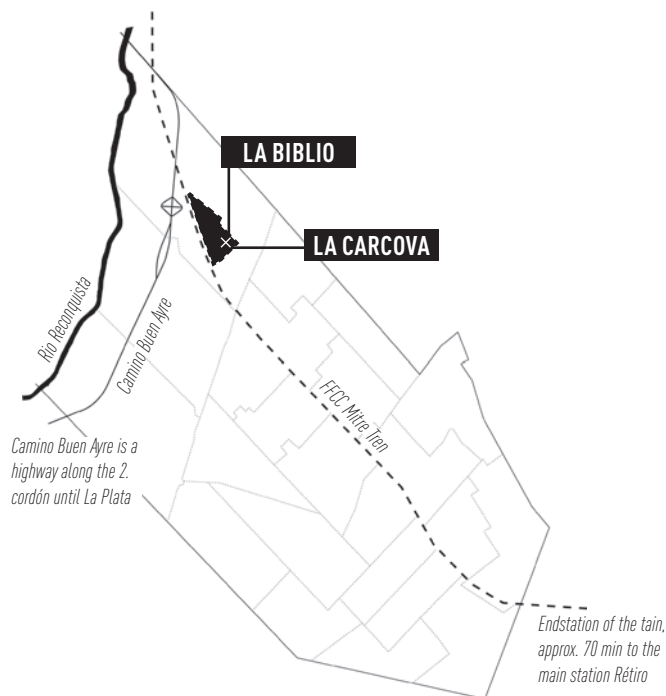


Río Reconquista the degree of contamination and its current condition as a waste dump makes it uninhabitable and harms the inhabitants of the river basin

Camino Buen Ayre (-> highway *good air*) the highway lacks of pedestrian crossings and is a very risky barrier that recyclers, cirujxs and people who go to the jail (families and prisoners with temporary exits) must cross daily

FFCC Mitre Tren The railway line of FFCC Mitre Train is a limitation imposed on the neighborhood of La Carcova and lacks pedestrian crossings

[81] Gral. San Martín Limitis



RENABAP = Registro Nacional de Barrios Populares en Proceso de Integración Urbana

It gathers information on the villas and barrios populares of Argentina. It is currently made up of 4,416 neighborhoods across the country. The Law 27453 (*Ley 27453 Integración socio urbana de barrios populares*) defines socio-urban integration to improve infrastructure and dwellings. Based on this law, the national state must expropriate the lands so that they become its patrimony. In this way, the national state can then hand them over the ownership of each house. A settlement is included in the register, if (1) it is made up of more than 8 families, (2) more than half the population does not have a land title and (3) more than half of the population does not have regular access to 2 or more basic services like networks for running water, electricity or sewage. (gob.ar 2020)

[82] Barrios Populares GBA popular neighborhoods in GBA (Data from Ministry of Territorial Development and Habitat)

The areas marked in black on the map are barrios populares, based on data from the extract from the RENABAP register. It can be clearly seen that it is the neighborhoods that are at the very edge of the urban fabric.

[83] Barrios Populares en el Área Reconquista Popular neighborhoods in the Reconquista area

4

CONSIDERING CARE

In this section, to begin I approach the term Care in its semantic and etymological meaning, in Linguistic Use of Care (p. 126). Firstly, I introduce 4.1 the Relational Understanding of Space (p. 128) as the underlying model of space.

Secondly, I outline contemporary 4.2 Academic and Artistic Positions on Care (p. 130) by Negotiating Domesticity (p. 130), Capitalizing Care Work (p. 131) and summarizing Ethics (p. 131), Phases (p. 133), Matters (p. 134) and Futures (p. 134) of Care. Then, I elaborate how care can be applied to architecture in 4.3 Caring Architecture (p. 135). In the end of this chapter, I discuss what the present coronavirus situation has to do with care 4.4 Corona: Crisis of Care (p. 137).

Ethics of Care as a fundamentally feminist concept have lately been engaged different disciplinary academic and artistic fields. It is understood as an alternative paradigm to the financialised capitalist order, by introducing in unparalleled ways contrasting values. It is discussed as an extended relational process of action: *caring about, caring for, caregiving, care receiving and caring with* (Tronto 2013; Bellacasa 2017) and calls for a recognition of local and global *interdependencies*.

Care in itself is a practice that we all (sub)consciously carry out every day: for ourselves, for our fellow human beings and living creatures and in the spaces in which we move. I am interested in the current debates on Care, as a theoretical concept by learning from Care work and Care practices, as well as how it can help us understand and reveal certain parameters translatable into practical approaches in the field of urban research and design. Putting Care front and centre of our understanding of the world enables us to think on different ethics and politics to act. It can serve us to find out the interdependencies of social, economic, political, historical, cultural and ecological issues.

LINGUISTIC USE OF ›CARE‹

The idea of care grows out of a word that in the English language covers a great deal of different meanings. Considered etymologically, the term care comes from the Old English *caru, cearu* and has many meanings such as concern, sorrow, anxiety, grief, burdens of mind, serious mental attention (cf. online etymology dictionary 2020). It is associated both to interpersonal relations and (im)material practices. Hence, the term can be used in different senses. It reflects a practice in which it can be both challenging and demanding to fully take care of the needs and weak points of a living being and thus counteract frailty. In the online Oxford Lexicon (2020) one definition reads: Care is »*the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something*«. From this, I conclude that it is something fundamental that underlies our co-existence.

In the English language, the term has multiple significances: it can be a feeling of affection to express love (*I care for you*), a consideration applied to avoid damage or risk (*to do something with care*), an occasion for anxiety (*to handle cares and worries*), a warning (*have a care*), as imperative or goodbye wishes (*take care!*), to keep something/-one safe and provided for physical and emotional needs (*I can take care of*), as an address (*care of, c/o*) or to express complete indifference (*one couldn't care less*).

Apart from this, the term has also entered the highly calculated commercial language. Large companies and advertisers lately occupy and make use of the term in banal ways for their selling strategies. For such forms, the members of the activist reading circle Care Collective (2020: 26) introduce the term ›*Carewashing*‹: multinational businesses promoting themselves as ›*caring corporations*‹, but in fact undermining any kind of care-taking outside the frame of their own profit-making. Just like the term *Greenwashing*, it entails a process of conveying a false impression about how a company's products are more environmentally sound, so that the consumer has less guilt when buying. Applying this to care could mean for instance to deceive and make consumers believe that a company's products are more reconcilable with the welfare state or that the company does a good job with its employees. These business actors aim to increase their legitimacy by presenting themselves as socially responsible, but actually continuing to contribute to social inequality, exploitation and ecological destruction. Going even so far as to capitalize on the very care crisis that these actors have been helping to create and continue exacerbating.

As examples, the authors (Care Collective 2020: 26) mention the European low-cost airline Wizz Air with the advertising slogan ›*Care More. Live More. Be More.*‹ and reassuring that ›*Wizz cares*‹, as well as the Irish poorly-made fast fashion product seller Primark with their ›*Primark cares*‹ campaign. In this way, the term is intentionally misused and actual care work, communal care resources and caring capacities are degraded.

›*Primark cares*‹ campaign, 09/2020
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAC4pW43N0&ab_channel=Primark

›*Wizz cares*‹ campaign, 09/2020
-> <https://wizzair.com/en-gb/information-and-services/about-us/sustainability#wizz-care>

The increased use of the term ›*cuidado*‹ (-> care) during the coronavirus crisis in Buenos Aire adds another feature in this train of thought. How the term is used in political campaigns regarding the state-mandated quarantine I have rolled out in the introductory chapter on 1.4 Topicality and Relevance (p. 22) and problematize it in the section 5.4 Corona: Crisis of Care (p. 137) in detail.

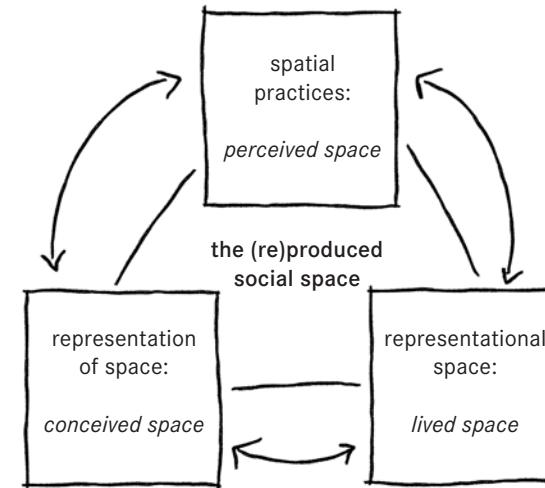
4.1 RELATIONAL UNDERSTANDING OF SPACE

Thinkers on care often stress that care is relational, like Bellacasa (2017: 69) states *»not only relations involve care, care is relational per se«*. Therefore, I would like to stretch the link to the relational model of space, which I perceive as a basic understanding of space in the formation during our interdisciplinary master programme Urban Design at Hafencity University Hamburg. The model marks an important point towards an inclusive and relational understanding when thinking about the politics of (re)production in the urban, which becomes important when we think about care. I outline relevant points of Henri Lefebvre's (1974) *»The Production of Space«* and Martina Löw's (2001) work of *»Relational Understanding of Space«*.

Urban space is a relational and social product continuously produced through the reciprocal relations of social, economic, political, historical and cultural practices (cf. Lefebvre 1974; Löw 2001). In the relational understanding of space according to Lefebvre and Löw, space is not understood as a statically given construct, but perceived as a relationship between bodies and social goods that are positioned in constant motion and (re)produced over and over again, in many modes and through different ways of practices. Thus, by changing permanently, practices in space and unequal distributions of power, resources and knowledge are not rigid and can be shifted.

As Lefebvre (1974: 334) recognized, the epistemological interest lies in shifting to the exploration of the spatial theory of social practices, the action of which to say: *»If space is a product, then knowledge must reproduce and represent this production. The interest in knowledge and the »object« are shifting from the things in space to the production of space itself«*. Lefebvre's approach underlines that space is on the one hand a constitutive part of the production of society and on the other hand is shaped and produced by human (re)productive forces.

Resulting in that space consists of a *»triad of what is perceived, what is conceived and what is lived«*, also known as a *»perceived-conceived-lived triad«* (ibid.). This triad unfolds in spatial practices, spatial representations and representational spaces. Thus, the perceived space describes the spatial practice that includes (re)productive actions. The designed, imagined and conceived space is based on spatial representations that reflect the reproductive relationships. The lived space refers to representational spaces that contain complex, localized symbolizations. Therefore, space and architecture are (re)productive and citizens of any society, he claimed, have a fundamental *»Right to the City«*: to shape society in and through its spaces (Lefebvre 1968). This notion does not only entail a right to engage in participation processes, but rather concerns real material rights, such as the right to housing and to public space, as well as immaterial rights like the right to imagination, the right to play and the right for appropriation (ibid.).



[84] The Triad of Space, according to Lefebvre *»Production of Space«*, 1974

Urban sociologist Martina Löw (2001: 24) uses this approach in her distinction between the *»relativistic«* and the *»absolutistic«* concept of space. She opposes the relativistic theory of space to the ancient idea of a *»container space«* that *»encloses things, lifeworlds and spheres like a box or container«* (ibid.). In the relativistic theory of space, space does not exist independently of actions and bodies, but can only be derived from them. *»While in absolutist thinking spaces are the unmoved and equally existent (therefore homogeneous) basis of action for everyone, in relativistic thinking the activity of action is directly associated with the production of spaces.«* (ibid.: 18). On this assumption that space is produced by action, Löw (ibid.: 34) also derives the temporal dimension inherent in space: *»If one starts from a rigid concept of space, one can assume that this rigidity persists over time; but if one assumes a moving space, then time becomes an immanent category.«*

Thus, this relational understanding of space strives for a multidimensional definition by reaching beyond the simple conceptual delimitation of geometric space and taking into account the *»relational order of living beings and social goods«* (Löw 2001: 159 f.). Löw emphasizes the understanding of the interactions between spatial and social structures by learning to read, understand and abstract every-day, repetitive routines as for example manifestations of social movements in urban situations, taking into account the complex interplay of social aspects such as class, gender or origin.

4.2 ACADEMIC AND ARTISTIC POSITIONS ON CARE

NEGOTIATING DOMESTICITY

The image of the traditional nuclear family with the caring mother at its centre still lays out the dominant model for care in many cultures. Historically, care has long been devalued as unproductive, and was excluded from the productive labor force. It goes hand in hand with the dichotomy of the public/private sphere that infiltrates the perception of separated spaces and the sexual division of labor. Care was associated with the private sphere, gendered as feminine, and contrasted to the public sphere, gendered as masculine. Care was something that happened in private, while politics was something that happened in public, as Aristotle already distinguished between *polis* (administrative city) and *oikos* (household) (cf. Tronto 2013: 1).

Since the 1970s, care has earned a prominent position in feminist theory through the studies of reproductive labour (Federici 1975), ethics of care to counter the one-sided perspective in ethics of justice (Gilligan 1982; Held 1993) and the concept of maternalism (Ruddick 1989). Care has been associated with a practice of familial affection, nurturing relationships, represented primarily by the idea of the caring woman in her maternal bond, and thus related with the feminine domestic sphere and the central role of women in reproduction. This conception of *Domesticity* as a sphere of reproduction rather than production, has made it all the easier for caregivers to remain unseen in the private home. The assumptions connected to the maternal image that care practices are undertaken out of affection, intrinsically motivated and with a sense of responsibility for other people or things, were inquired by Marxist analysis of care work in the fields of feminist economics. Care work was considered the obligation of women and the labor of associated others, thus, politics of gender and race have defined the history of care work.

In *Wages against Housework* Silvia Federici (1975: 1) notably claims *»They say it is love. We say it is unwaged work. They call it frigidity. We call it absenteeism.«* demanding payment for all caring work. According to Federici (ibid.), this demand is not just about economic compensation, she rather claims a revolutionary strategy to disrupt the structural reliance of the capitalist order. This claim has impacted women's organization around the world. The slogan is replicated on a stencil series in the streets of Buenos Aires as a symbol of resistance and to break with the patriarchal notion of the housewife that is predestined and not paid for housework: *»Eso que llaman amor es trabajo no pago«*. This collective memory of domesticity and politics of health care are important stories in order to understand the feminist framework in which the political arguments of the care discourse are rooted.

CAPITALIZING CARE WORK

Neoliberal capitalism's underfunding and undermining of care have led to a rhetoric of individual care, the self-responsibility looking after your own, a compulsion to privatize. The dominant model of social organization is rather one of competitiveness than of cooperation. In the logic of market economies there is neither an effective practice of care nor a vocabulary for care included.

In the meantime, multinational companies had made huge profits with financialized and over-leveraged institutions within the health care sector. Care became a matter of neoliberal governance and has been subsumed into the corporate gig economy. Thus, it has put care workers into the prevailing free market logic, making them *»hugely overstretched, vulnerable and thus less able to care«* (Care Collective 2020: 12). This undermining of care and care work has led to the dismantling of welfare states and democratic processes and can be directly linked to rising inequality and the conditions of exploitative labor of *»precarious bodies and precarious land in need of care«* (cf. Fritz/Krasny 2019: 13). This also means that there is a fundamental interconnectedness between social and environmental justice. And still, even if care practices are meanwhile acknowledged as productive labor and have *»moved out of the household«* (Tronto 2013: 6) and domestic workers are employed in global care chains, the major part of care-workers still find themselves in precarious situations and informal work. Care work remains invisible, undervalued and exploited.

ETHICS OF CARE

The concept of Ethics of Care is an approach to personal, social, moral and political life that begins with the reality that all human beings need and receive care and give care to others. It is understood as ethical action in the local as well as globally, from the standpoint of the most vulnerable to the most privileged. Ethics are somewhere between choice and obligation. The concept traces back to Sara Ruddick's (1989) recognition of caring as an ethically relevant issue. In her work on maternal thinking, in which she stated that children require care and even if one could choose not to give, one would feel compelled to do so. People, often women, as Bellacasa (2017: 204) explains: *»become obliged to care in actual practice and relational arrangements, in messy material constraints rather than through moral dispositions.«*



[85] *Eso que llaman amor es trabajo no pago.* What they call love is unpaid work (Federici 1975). Stencil by Ailéen Possamay in Buenos Aires, July 2020

Dombroski (2018: 262) argues that no matter how embodied, reflexive, or how strong a demand or obligation feels, care is a doing, not just an affective response. Indeed, care is an ethical doing, because it takes responsibility and appreciates how we might care with, for and be cared – by humans and more-than-human.

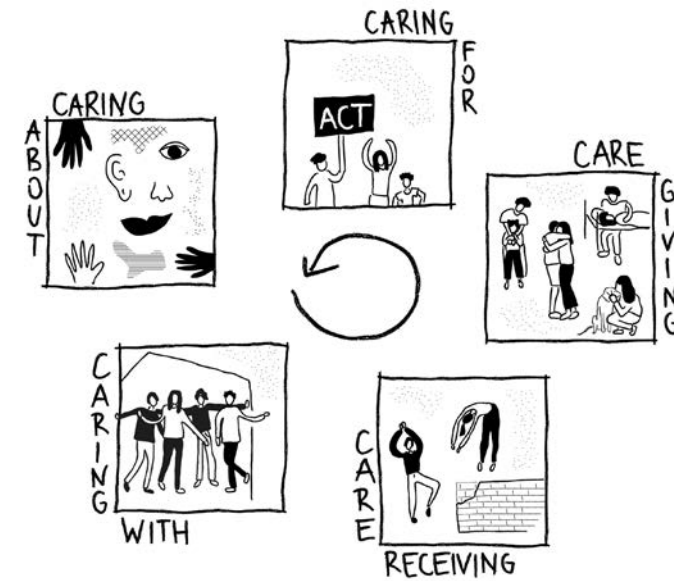
To understand the care concept in relation to architecture and urbanism, I mainly outline the care thought as put forward by political scientist Joan C. Tronto, science and technology theorist María Puig de la Bellacasa, cultural thinker and urbanist Elke Krasny and the position of activist and reading group Care Collective.

In 1990, Tronto together with Berenice Fisher (Tronto/Fisher 1990: 40 in Tronto 2013: 19) offered a broad definition of care:

»In the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed 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, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.«

This definition is so broad that it is conceivable to think about various dimensions and apply it to various aspects in our lives. In arguing that care is an activity, it becomes clear that it contains many practices that are always nested and woven together in a *»complex life-sustaining web«*. These practices are later defined as: *caring about, caring for, caregiving, care receiving and caring with*. Time is inherent in the interplay of the practices of care, because over the course of time all persons, animals, plants and other things are thus receivers as well as givers of care. The definition's part *»so that we can live in [the world] as well as possible«* sets a sort of qualitative standard and spots on the highly political aspect, as Tronto (2019: 30) states: *»what we care about determines what kind of society we are.«*

Another dimension that Bellacasa (2017: 70) adds is that care is interdependent and connected to many affairs: *»Interdependency is not a contract, nor a moral ideal – it is a condition. Care is therefore concomitant to the continuation of life for many living beings in more than human entanglements.«* Care receiving and caregiving among humans are part of what marks us as human beings, always in mutual interdependence and interconnected.



[86] Phases of Care: caring about, caring for, care giving, care receiving, caring with, according to Tronto 2013

PHASES OF CARE

In her book *»Caring Democracies«* Joan C. Tronto (2013: 22) distinguishes between five processes of practices of care:

- (1) *»Caring about«* describes the emotional investment in others and to find out the needs of care to be addressed and identified before any caring process can begin. This includes to notice unmet caring needs and to encounter demands that are difficult to decipher, unseen, conflicting or purposely ignored.
- (2) *»Caring for«* encompasses the duties to take action, where somebody steps up and claims the responsibility for the matter or in finding out who else might be accountable. Once the caring needs are identified, it follows the decision to act and take on these unmet needs.
- (3) *»Care giving«* implies the physical aspects of practical hands-on care, this can be in manifold forms and ways. The caregiver carries out actual work to the care receiver.
- (4) *»Care receiving«* is what happens after this care work has been given. The receiving subject (person, thing, group, animal, plant or environment) responds. These processes between care giving and receiving go on and are an interplay, in which it is noted if the care work is complete, sufficient or successful. Everything/one involved in the care process is affected and transformed, but not everything/one can respond. When previous caring needs are met, new needs arise at the same time. It signifies that these processes are repeated. It reveals as well, when previous caring needs remain unmet or were given out wrong.

(5) *›Caring with‹* describes how we mobilise in order to become reliable over time, meaning how to be a citizen in a democracy is to care for citizens. It implies how to care for democracy and everything that includes its democratic commitments to justice, equality and freedom for all. Providing such ongoing care is a way to foster solidarity and trust among people. This has a beneficial effect because it makes it more probable that others will respond in a reciprocal manner. Although care stems from asymmetrical and very subjective needs, people can see how participating in ongoing care circles makes them *›somewhat more equal‹* (Tronto 2013: 32) in democratic societies.

MATTERS OF CARE

The notion of matter comes out of a social constructivist perspective that deals with the intellectual project of deconstructing *›facts‹* and is also familiar with the recent demand that social scientists also build new realities around common *›concerns‹* (cf. Latour 2004). The concept of *›concern‹* indicates a more general term for a politics of things in which anything can possibly be considered a concern. A neutrality that Bellacasa's term *›concern‹* deliberately resigns, but rather a connection between matter, global concerns and a care-taking practice creates. Here Bellacasa's *›Matters of Care‹* become speculative, because it is up to us to speculate which role the other, be it human or non-human, could play in this ethical doing of care. These matters are not only political, there are also messy and dirty. With this in mind, Bellacasa (2017: 204) asks us to take into account: *›while a critical stance can bring attention to such matters as who cares for whom, to what forms of care are prioritized at the expense of others, a politics of speculative thinking also is a commitment to seek what other worlds could be in the making through caring while staying with the trouble of our own complicities and implications.‹*

FUTURES OF CARE

To imagine a world that is cared for, we should first recognize the *›myriad ways in which our survival always depends‹* and are interconnected to a complex and existing web (Care Collective 2020: 2). Caring policies must first and foremost recognize these relations, alongside the ambivalences and fears these connections routinely generate. Recognizing the needs to give and receive care would not only give a sense of a common humanity, but also enable one to face common fears of human frailty rather than projecting them onto others. Furthermore, recognizing the complexities of the common human dependencies would improve the ability to redefine and participate more fully in democratic processes at all levels of society, as working with and through conflicting emotions is the key to building democratic communities. While one could never eliminate

care's difficulties, one could certainly alleviate them by building more *›caring relationships and kinships, communities, economies, states, and worlds‹* (cf. *ibid.*). Krasny (2020: 13) claims to re-imagine the reality of *›our infected planet in need of repairing, restoring, recuperating and healing‹*. A care-taking future of a new global international care order would be rooted in the solidarity of social, health and climate justice.

4.3 ARCHITECTURE AND CARE

›Architecture and urbanism are not only interwoven into the life-sustaining web, they are very much part of weaving this web‹ (Fritz/Krasny 2019: 13).

Architectural production needs time, money and resources, and is therefore always entangled with power relations and its economic system. To make a shift towards a *›Caring Architecture‹*, Tronto (2019: 26 in Fritz/Krasny 2019) states we need to start with seeing *›architecture as a reflection of power‹*. Architecture is not only a way of artistic expression and aesthetics, a practical science for creating built structures and environments but rather also an ultimate form of human power. Hence, architecture is a practice and service for those who have power and the financial means to provide it. This mechanism creates market-oriented architecture practitioners that design in favor of capital, rather than necessarily caring for the future impact of the creation or for the work in its making. It's not that contemporary architects and planners are all uncaring as Tronto (*ibid.* 27) states, but *›the point is that they are caring wrongly, they are caring about things and, often, about the wrong things.‹*

Caring Architecture is neither about re-thinking so-called care institutions like daycares for children, hospitals or homes for the elderly, nor should it be thought of as synonymous with sustainability. Tronto argues in favor of an integrated and caring approach for architecture. When sustainability got institutionalized as a building standard, the norms were a great deal focused on materialistic matters. Over the course of time when it got institutionalized, the attempt to (re)act more environmentally sensitive and to question chains of production, as perhaps was intended in the beginning, got lost. The common building standards for sustainability focus on things and technologies as objects, for instance local building material, resource efficient infrastructures or solar panels. The focus was put more on what kind of things go into a building, than monitoring ongoing effects or sustaining a building (*ibid.* 28).

In the broadest sense, an obvious form of care of architecture is that it offers a shelter that is essential for survival and we care for it, as it protects us. Krasny (2019: 38) draws attention to the fact that an architectural object is in constant need of care, it is reliant on maintenance, it needs cleaning, organizing and daily

upkeep to sustain its existence. Following this line of argument, it is possible to connect these practices in need of care in buildings to the concept of social reproduction and its everyday work. Thus, care and caring labor in architecture is very much concerned with the ›politics of reproduction‹ (ibid.). By locating buildings and infrastructure within the web of entanglements of humans and non-humans, it is recognized that support for human life goes beyond the discourse of legal rights and moral arguments.

Rather, it reveals architecture as a condition of maintenance that goes hand in hand with the ›continuation of life for many living beings in more than human entanglements‹ (Bellacasa 2017: 70). This shifts the perspective from architecture understood as a self-contained object or thing to a broader relational understanding of all matters which are in contact with it: ›thinking of [buildings] in relationships – with ongoing environments, people, flora and fauna – that exist through time as well in space‹ (Tronto 2019: 28). Connectedness and interdependency form the basis for feminist care ethics. That means that subjects are thought through connectedness, always inter-dependent on and with others. Regarding architectural practice, it demands collective action in contrast to the individualized genius culture (Krasny 2019: 37).

So, buildings give shelter and in this way protect people from the natural forces like rain or heat in their environment. But a building itself does not provide care. The caring of a building is what happens within it, how it fits within its local context, how it was built, who it will house or displace, who it will integrate or exclude (Tronto 2019: 27). These are all aspects that substantially affect the people that use a building and can be understood as caring that a building does. Doing so requires participating in the ongoing relations of those who are cared for. This brings us to the inherent temporal dimension in architecture, and care theory as well: ›care emphasizes processes and relationships that extend back and forward through time‹ (ibid. 28). When we think in Tronto's processes of care (2013) it can be maintenance and ongoing repairs in a building, taking responsibility for the entire process of construction, acknowledging the users' needs and taking stock of what additional needs might be generated. We need to ask what will happen to the people, goods or communities when they get displaced in order to make way for a new project? How were the building materials collected, supplied and applied? Do the workers on the construction site have adequate wages? Who and how will the building be cleaned and maintained?

To conclude on this, Tronto (2019: 28) gives a simple and clear hands-on advice to future architects and planners: ›we need an architecture that fulfills the basic tasks of sharing responsibilities for caring for our world, an architecture that is sensitive to the values of repair, of preservation, of maintaining all forms of life and the planet itself‹.

4.4 CORONA: CRISIS OF CARE?

Since the coronavirus outbreak, *talk about care* is currently omnipresent. The *lack of care* has deadly effects on a vast amount of tangible bodies around the world. To actively raise consciousness on the *need for care*, gets materialized on billboards in public space in a campaign by the Ministry of Health in Bs As. In this section, I discuss current positions on the *corona crisis of care*. The photographs that accompany this section were taken and collected over the months of quarantine. Different slogans, as well as two street art pieces relate the topic in public space in Buenos Aires.

Since early 2020 we are living in a lockdown, having been told to wash our hands and stay inside for lengthy periods of time in the name of care. People fear contracting the virus, fearing being denied the access to food and the risk of impoverishment. Living under the specter of a constant threat has been a form of psychological stress, which is reinforced by political measures taken by the governments with their new pandemic regimes. These politics have declared ›individual and collective survival it's priority‹ (Krasny 2020: 1).

Writer and philosopher Paul B. Preciado (2020: 4) stresses that the virus ›reproduces, materializes, widens, and intensifies (from the individual body to the population as a whole) the dominant forms of biopolitical and necropolitical management that were already operating over sexual, racial, or migrant minorities before the state of exception.‹

I notice various patterns that reflect the all-pervading topic of care, since the beginning of the mandatory quarantine in Bs As in March 2020. For instance, greeting messages of ›take care or ›stay safe and healthy‹ are sent in an increased number among friends and families, but also in formal emails. Perhaps there is no other time than during a crisis when one makes a significant effort to communicate one's caring. At the same time, self-improvement and self-care advertising industries even further try to pose care as something one can buy and embrace on a personal level. Online shopping is booming in quarantine. In these different situations of national lockdowns, an emphasis is put on not only to take care of one's own health out of a selfish motive, but to protect the others. Taking care (of yourself) for a (common) survival. This makes mutual aid, social distancing and self-isolation new modes of care.



On this billboard the Ministry of Health of Bs As suggests: maintain hand hygiene by washing your hands regularly with soap and water or using alcohol; sneeze into the crook of the elbow; do not put your hands to your eyes, nose or mouth; ventilate all the environments of your house and work spaces; clean the surfaces and objects you use every day

[87] Billboard in public space ›New Coronavirus – Saber para Prevenir‹ [-> new coronavirus know-how to prevent]. Buenos Aires in August 2020



[88] Sign in public space saying »cuidarte es cuidarnos« (-> taking care of yourself is taking care of us), Buenos Aires in June, 2020

One should pay particular attention to mental health by communicating with sensitivity, kindness and caring. Individual care for oneself is seen as all the more important for the well-being of society as a whole, for collective care. Advertising posters of the Argentinian government in public space tell me to take care of myself, because *to take care of myself is to take care of others* (-> »cuidarte es cuidarnos«). As I take a walk in my neighborhood, I read the advice painted on the street pavement that *keeping distance means taking care* (-> »mantener distancia es cuidarnos«).

The pandemic rules have transformed every-day life into behaviors for individual and collective care. Taking care as a governmental campaign. Taking care is political. Beyond this, the politicization of care as reproductive labor has been shifted to another critical level. The coronavirus pandemic is not just a sanitary crisis, but a »Crisis of Care« (Butler 2020; Care Collective 2020; Dowling 2020; Preciado 2020).

From an activist perspective, the collective authors (Care Collective 2020: 11) of the recently published »Care Manifesto« (September 2020) claim in the very beginning that »our world is one in which carelessness reigns. The coronavirus pandemic merely highlights this ongoing carelessness«. Agreeing with Tronto (2013), they declare that the consequences of the coronavirus crisis are the result of years of neoliberal capitalist politics of almost ubiquitous prioritizing *profit over people* (cf. ibid.: 14). Yet long before the pandemic, decades of austerity policies, measures of deregulation and privatisation in the health care sector and nearly priced out care services have made nation states unable to cope with the spread of the virus. Hospitals are overburdened and their capacities in intensive care units and provision of respirator apparatus are reaching their limits. Never



[89] A painted sentence on the street pavement saying »Mantener distancia es cuidarnos« (-> to keep distance means taking care of us), Buenos Aires in August, 2020

before have quantitative figures of the exact capacity of technological equipment in healthcare facilities been talked about publicly in mass media or beyond state borders. Health and social workers, most of them women, are forced into precarious situations of being overworked, physically and emotionally overloaded and exposed to contracting the virus as they work in underserved facilities and caring infrastructures. Therefore they are more vulnerable and »less able to care« (ibid.: 12).

In this state of emergence major economic packages have been rolled out in the name of care for the nation. However, the authors (ibid.: 13) clearly state that the aid packages are not enough to counteract the decades of organized neglect of our caring infrastructures and economies in general. With their »manifesto for politics of interdependence« the authors enter the highly topical debate and re-address the lack of care in politics, kinships, communities, states, economies and for the world. It highlights, once again, that for a long time the political powers have built structures that made us fail to care for each other, and in particular for the vulnerable, the poor and the weak.

In the article »Capitalism Has its Limits« (March 2020) Judith Butler elaborates on operations of the virus on a global level, speaking from a US-American perspective. The virus spares nobody and spreads beyond national state borders. She argues »by the way it moves and strikes, the virus demonstrates that the global human community is equally precarious« (Butler 2020). It manifests itself with virulence in the diverse urban fabric. The Argentinian architect and professor Emerita Ana Falú argues in a similar way and puts her concern on the compulsory lockdown, which among other effects has led to aggravated domestic violence (cf. Falú 2020). Especially women and children are exposed to different risks in closed environments during the confinement. She further states that the disparity in fragmented and unequal cities in Argentina are characterized by obscene inequalities in which large poor territories appear as parallel worlds (cf. ibid.). This parallelity increases now in and with the coronavirus crisis: degraded habitat, lack of services, equipment and poor accessibility that expose their inhabitants to higher levels of vulnerability encountering the virus.

According to Butler (2020) »the virus alone does not discriminate«, it treats people equally, because it puts people equally at risk of getting infected. But social and economic inequality and uneven levels of vulnerability surely make the virus a discriminating factor. Besides the interlocking powers of nationalism, racism, xenophobia and capitalist exploitation, Falú (2020) declares that the



[90] Billboard saying »quedate en casa« (-> stay at home). Woman taking her dog for a walk. Buenos Aires in June, 2020



The English translation for »casa« is »home«, but it actually means »in your house«. What does this mean when one does not have a house to stay at home?

[91] Billboard saying »quedate en casa« (-> stay at home). Three people sitting on a mattress in a street. Buenos Aires in July, 2020

patriarchal system is another additional threat that reproduces and aggravates this current state of emergency. She points out that it is crucial to understand that this pandemic has different impacts on women and men. An article in German weekly ›Die Zeit‹ has named the coronavirus crisis as »the crisis of women« (Raether 2020). Describing the detrimental effects on women with examples in different cities around the world where women are losing their jobs and their income, because of the fact that they have to take care of children otherwise in kindergarten or school, or the double burden of home-office hours and caring



[92] Xilografía print: El Patriarcado mata más que el Virus« (-> Patriarchy kills more than the Virus), from Gráfica Comunitaria La Boca, Buenos Aires in July, 2020

Falú (2020) asserts that *taking care begins in taking care of our bodies as our first territories* (-> »cuidarnos es comenzar por cuidar nuestros primeros territorios: nuestros cuerpos«). In order to take care of our bodies, the condemnation and collective alert of violence and violation of civic rights is fundamental. Fierce violence that leads to femicide is the worst expression of patriarchy, she states. Like I already discussed in the Introduction in the section about topicality (1.4), the number of femicides and cases of domestic violence has reached another new peak in Argentina during the time of quarantine. Journalist Sandá (2020) calls it a fundamental social problem of *machismo* and reports on current feminist Argentinian organizations that raise awareness to address this



[93] Xilografía print ›La Solidaridad es nuestra Medicina« (-> Solidarity is our Medicine), from Gráfica Comunitaria La Boca, Buenos Aires in August, 2020

critical issue of violence and not silence it more. Falú insists to include shared domestic responsibilities and a gender perspective at the centre of national agendas, public policies and campaigns that are rolled out during this pandemic. In this sense, she underlines the importance of the *Ministerio de las Mujeres, Géneros y Diversidad* (Ministry for women, gender and diversity) which was newly introduced by the cabinet

of current president Alberto Fernandez in December 2019 (cf. Falú 2020). The Minister of Women, Gender and Diversity, Elisabeth Gómez Alcorta, takes note of the claims and highlights that the way to address gender-based violence is contradicting the high tolerance of sexist assaults and the impunity of the offender and deal ›seriously with care‹ (Sandá 2020). This statement must not remain an empty phrase and must of course also be implemented, states the journalist (ibid.).

Another point of view when thinking about the notion of crisis of care, is the belief that from every crisis, lessons can be learned, an intrinsic hope that new paths are paved or to see it even as opportunity. Rebecca Solnit (2009) explains along this line of thought how in disaster situations meaningful work of collaborative and local help, altruism and generosity can arise. Crises reveal that suddenly everything can be profoundly different. In a radio feature in pandemic times Solnit (2020) states »Disasters shake things loose. And the things that we regarded as fixed and unchangeable can suddenly be changed. It's been fascinating seeing people in power suddenly say, well, actually, we can put all these homeless people up in hotels. Actually, we can change unemployment insurance and sick leave. Actually, we can find [variable amount] to throw at a problem.« In this quote I intentionally left the amount of the sum open. Countries around the world have approved economic emergency measures, but these public social spendings of the welfare state differ a lot and are more or less generous than precarious.

At the moment it is far too early to make assumptions on what we can learn from this crisis. Scholars around the world are already trying to set up presumptions – discourses on care are highly topical. The Care Collective calls this unprecedented lockdown as ›moments of rupture‹ to shed light on a critical opportunity to imagine and create different futures and, above all, the need to highlight that we are in »urgent need of a politics that puts care front and centre of life« (Care Collective, 2020: 148.). Especially now in this crisis, when (some) workers are categorized as (non-)essential, (some) activities and services considered as (non-)essential, a radical change in behavioral ethics is essential and Krasny (2020: 11) points out that »care is essential.«



[94] Billboard on a crossroad ›Seguí cuidándote« (-> keep on taking care of yourself), Buenos Aires in September, 2020



[95] Billboard in front of a construction site ›Seguí cuidándote« (-> keep on taking care of yourself), Buenos Aires in September, 2020

5

**(DE)CONSTRUCTING
PRACTICES OF CARE**

In this chapter, I take stock on the [5.1 Needs, Duties, Agents and Lack of Care](#) in practices of my case study of La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova.

The collected and produced empirical material is re-assembled and listed in [5.2 Catalogue Practices of Care en La Biblio \(p. 145\)](#) through four lenses: [5.2.1 Aguante la Autogestión y Procesos Colaborativos \(p. 146\)](#) (-> *Endure auto-agency practices and collaborative processes*), [5.2.2 Acompaña la Educación y los Saberes Populares \(p. 147\)](#) (-> *Carry out popular education and knowledges*) and [5.2.3 Valora la Potencialidad de la Basura \(p. 150\)](#) (-> *Assess the potential of garbage*).

At the end of the chapter, I withdraw my findings from the cataloging and draw an [5.3 In-Between Findings: La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova as a nested system and social infrastructure \(p. 156\)](#) in an interwoven web.

5.1 NEEDS, DUTIES, AGENTS AND LACK OF CARE

Different practices, projects and imaginaries of La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova were taken up and examined according to the motive of care they address. To decipher the care-taking in practices of La Biblio the caring needs, caring duties, involved agents of care and the lack of care were figured out. For this step I defined the following aspects: *Cares About*, *Cares For*, *Agents of Care* and *Lack of Care*.

The first three categories are inspired by Tronto's (2013) *Phases of Care*, as well as the work on *Critical Care: Architecture and Urbanism for a broken planet* (Fritz/Krasny 2019) at Architekturzentrum Vienna in 2019, although in the exhibition they were presenting entire architectural and urbanistic projects all over the world as case studies. In contrast, I focus on one single case and examine different practices and actions they carry out. So I took up their categorization, but changed and continued it, for example by adding the category *›Lack of Care‹*.

The analytical step is compiled in a kind of catalogue, in which the practices are classified in different categories and grouped under four respective lenses. Due to the fact that the material was very heterogeneous and distinctive, it is also represented in different formats: some practices are supported by storytelling, others stand on their own. Nevertheless, in the evaluation and in search of findings, I tried to weigh the practices equally, even if some practices are represented more densely than the others seem. It was the difficulty of not being able to be in the field of research and really observe practices in daily work of La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, but the retro perspective also brought me valuable insights.

5.2 CATALOGUE PRACTICES OF CARE EN LA BIBLIO

The catalogue of practices of care en La Biblio is structured according to the following points. Each practice is introduced in a short descriptive text. The caring needs, caring duties, agents of care and lack of care are briefly formulated in order to make the practices comparable. The categories have resulted from passing the material through various loops and open, axial and selective coding in the sense of Grounded Theory.

Categories:

Cares About:	needs of care to be addresses and identified
Cares For:	duties to take action, claiming responsibility
Agents of Care:	participating actors and included actants
Lack of Care:	what is missing

Lenses:

5.2.1 Aguante la autogestión y procesos colaborativos
-> Endure auto-agency practices and collaborative processes

5.2.2 Acompaña la educación y saberes populares
-> Carry out popular education and popular knowledges

5.2.3 Valora la potencialidad de la basura
-> Assess the Potential of Garbage

Practices:

- Construcción Techo Sombrilla
-> Pavilion
- FinEs Estudios Secundarios
-> secondary studies for adults
- Ronda de Mujeres y Saberes
-> women's knowledge circle
- Escuela Popular de Artes y Oficios
-> popular school for arts and crafts
- Mi Barrio no es Basura
-> my barrio not is garbage
- Pibes Liberadxs
-> project with released teenagers

5.1 AGUANTE LA AUTOGESTIÓN Y PROCESOS COLABORATIVOS

-> ENDURE SELF-AGENCY AND COLLABORATIVE PROCESSES

From october 2019 - january 2020 a wooden pavilion was built in the plaza in front of the Biblioteca Popular de la Carova. The project is named ›Techo Sombrilla‹ (-> sunshade roof). It is a result of a collaborative process, in which the design was selected among various proposals from different students and then planned and built in 1: 1 scale. It forms the first stage of the construction of the ›Educational Park‹. It is an open wooden structure with a cover that solves the lack of shade for users. In turn, this new element creates a meeting point for the people of the barrio and can be used for educational and cultural means. It was carried out in cooperation with local residents and a network of different universities.

CARES ABOUT: *vulnerabilized communities; expansion of library's space; shade provider; water roof; local identity; place to encounter; civil society; resilience; integrating architecture*

CARES FOR: *meetingplace; public space; workshops; horizontal learning process, saberes populares; knowledge exchange; participation; public space making; playfulness; low cost; civic learning; university and villa; social engagement*

AGENTS OF CARE: *children; adolescents; villerxs; students (UNSAM, FADU-UBA, FAPyD-UN, FAUD-UN, Uni Stuttgart); craftspeople; architects; foundations (fundings)*

LACK OF CARE: *missing equipment in public space as meetingspoint, water or sunshade roof; missing infrastructures*

5.2 ACOMPAÑA LA EDUCACIÓN Y LOS SABERES POPULARES

-> CARRY OUT POPULAR EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGES

›Finalizar tus estudios primarios y/o secundarios (FinEs)‹ is an educational plan for completion of the primary or secondary school for adults. The program addresses persons that have for various reasons interrupted their studies and do not have a high school degree. In the barrio La Carcova are two locations that offer the FinEs Program. Among the participants are always more women than men. Olga took part in the first program and graduated with 61 years.

education; community; civil society; horizontal learning; local identity; place to encounter; civil society; empowerment

learning process; reading; self-building; professionalizing; knowledge exchange; civic learning; saberes populares, popular knowledge, school, educative territory

children; adolescents; villerxs; women; students; teachers; coordinates; schools

education, missing resources

SECONDARY STUDIES
FOR ADULTS

FINES (ESTUDIOS
SECUNDARIOS)

CARES ABOUT:

CARES FOR:

AGENTS OF CARE:

LACK OF CARE:

CONSTRUCTION PROCESS
TECHO SOMBRILLA

SUNSHADE ROOF

5.2 ACOMPAÑA LA EDUCACIÓN Y LOS SABERES POPULARES

-> CARRY OUT POPULAR EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGES

»La Escuela Popular de Artes y Oficios» is the program of the popular school of arts and crafts that includes the artistic workshops in La Biblio. More than 150 participants took part in workshops: theatre and artistic makeup, ceramic, drawing and design, painting, metal workshop, basic construction, management of gastronomic ventures, audiovisual media, poetry and writing, vocational guidance, tutoring and job search and training for referents in legal advice. The workshops were carried out in La Biblioteca Popular, CUSAM and inside the women's prison.

CARES ABOUT: *vulnerabilized communities; horizontal learning; local identity; place to encounter; civil society, resilience; arts and crafts, education*

CARES FOR: *meetingplace; public space; workshops; horizontal learning process, saberes populares; knowledge exchange; participation; playfulness; civic learning; artistic and hands-on skills*

AGENTS OF CARE: *children; adolescents; villerxs; artists; talleristxs, Ministerio de Salud y Desarrollo Social*

LACK OF CARE: *missing infrastructures; education; cultural program*

5.2 ACOMPAÑA LA EDUCACIÓN Y LOS SABERES POPULARES

-> CARRY OUT POPULAR EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGES

»La Ronda de Mujeres y Saberes» is an open circle for women. They meet twice a month and exchange, talk, listen, and have a Mate. The role of the women in the villa is often limited to reproductive work and there is frequent domestic violence. An integral sexual education and information about abortion is missing. This round is an open place where women can exchange ideas and support each other. There are only two centro de mujeres in the whole district of San Martín, that are municipal and many feel inhibited to go there.

vulnerabilized communities; gender; soft skills; horizontal learning; safety; feminism; different life perspective, knowledge exchange; saberes populares

community building; workshops; mutual help; community spaces; inclusive spaces; comfort zones; community agency; self building; neighborly alliances

villeras; women; community organizations; social workers; children

no spaces for women; education sexual integral; aborto; gender based violence

CARES ABOUT:

CARES FOR:

AGENTS OF CARE:

LACK OF CARE:

POPULAR SCHOOL OF
ARTS AND CRAFTS

ESCUELA POPULAR DE
ARTES Y OFICIOS

CIRCLE FOR WOMEN
AND KNOWLEDGES

RONDA DE MUJERES
Y SABERES

5.3 VALORA LA POTENCIALIDAD DE LA BASURA

-> ASSESS THE POTENTIAL OF GARBAGE

»Mi Barrio no es Basura« means my neighborhood is not garbage, and is an initiative to raise awareness for the topics around garbage and the pollution in the barrio. Common rubbish collection activities are organized, workshops with recycled materials and a graffiti with the slogan were realized on the wall of the CIMET company. In response, the municipality has put a container at the cancha as an open waste collection point in the villa.

CARES ABOUT: *waste problem; pollution; health risks; land rights; resources;*

CARES FOR: *labor; reuse urban waste; ecological cycles; public space; economia popular; cooperativism; community agency; neighborly alliances; nature; social awareness;*

AGENTS OF CARE: *villerox; CEAMSE; municipality, cooperativa bella flor, garbage-picker, cartonerox, carrerx, cirujas*

LACK OF CARE: *missing public infrastructures garbage system; urban poverty; absent state; police, Río Reconquista y Arroyos; ecology*

5.3 VALORA LA POTENCIALIDAD DE LA BASURA

-> ASSESS THE POTENTIAL OF GARBAGE

»Lxs pibxs liberadx« consists of a group of teenagers that are released from jail and want to incorporate work in the space around La Biblio with maintaining, garbage collection and recycling. The idea is to create a group to accompany them in this phase, because there are no other integration measures after release for young offenders. This project is still in the starting phase, I have been listening in one of the first meetings (images on p. 72-73, September 2020). It was guided by Waldemar and Maria, but they kept emphasizing that the group should take the initiative. The group was discussing the meaning of cooperativism, autogestión and about taking responsibility for the public space.

vulnerabilized communities horizontal learning; local identity; place to encounter; public spaces; civil society, resilience,

public space; creating work; horizontal learning process, civic learning; public space,

adolescents; pibxs; municipality; jail

juvenile offenses, social justice, criminality; garbage, municipal infrastructures

CARES ABOUT:

CARES FOR:

AGENTS OF CARE:

LACK OF CARE:

MY BARRIO IS NOT GARBAGE

MI BARRIO NO ES BASURA

RELEASED TEENAGERS COOPERATIVE

PIBXS LIBERADXS COOPERATIVA

5.3 IN-BETWEEN FINDINGS

In between the analytical and projective sections of the thesis, here in this part, I briefly summarize some findings to give an intermediate conclusion in order to assess the case and draw back to my research question.

The Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova as case study offers a perspective in the intersecting of scarcity, marginalization and (not) care-taking. In chapter 3, I explored the socio-spatial context, actor constellations and took a closer look on how the library works. Practices were selected and reviewed based on the extensive representation on different scales – starting from the library as a unit in the smaller local context to wider areas of the neighborhood La Carcova and the partido San Martín. The in-depth study of the place and practices allowed me to detect local and regional connections and effects and puts me in a mental dilemma: even if there are care-taking motivated practices carried out in the library, the motive urges out a lack of care on the municipal and national state level: The every-day realities in a highly vulnerable neighborhood as La Carcova that was built and emerged informally bring manifold challenges and problematics that are *not taken care of*.

SHARING (IM)MATERIAL RESOURCES

In an article on how local libraries and repair center can be spaces of care, the authors (Graziano/ Trogal 2019: 100) state: *»Libraries are known for their commitment to providing universal free access to knowledge, vital in a democracy, as well as being one of the last vestiges of public space that are warm and freely, universally accessible.«* In this sense local libraries are a form of *»social infrastructure«* that take up an important social role in localities and the communities.

La Biblioteca Popular hosts activities and practices that previously did not exist in the neighborhood, such as the women's knowledge circle (-> *Ronda de Mujeres y Saberes*) or the popular school of arts and crafts (-> *Escuela Popular de Artes y Oficios*). These programs share valuable popular knowledge and foster community building. With the program to finish secondary studies for adults (-> *FinEs Estudios Secundarios*) La Biblio offers a place for the participants to professionalize and get a formal school leaving certificate without having to go to a real school, which perhaps is an inhibition threshold. La Biblio is specifically tied to its territory and has the intention to share (im)material resources, above all, education and an exchange of knowledges in the barrio – knowledge that comes *out of* the barrio and *is for* the barrio. La Biblio engages in citizen-led pedagogy, in the sense of Educación Popular which means valuing the

popular knowledges and collectivizing the popular knowledges. The variety in the different actions of the arts and crafts workshops corresponds to diverse wishes and demands of a diverse participant group. It goes beyond offers from municipal centers or private institutions. A participant states *»the variety of the offer responds to the needs that any of us who lives here in the villa have and it goes beyond the basic ones imposed by the market«* (Mundovilla 2019). Further she adds that it invites to *»dream a little«* of the possibility of at some point being able to choose a job *»that is not so common for our social class«* and seems to be determined for certain classes. It highlights that education is closely linked to access(ibility) in the social construct of society, the class system, how it mentioned the participant, and therefore with social (re)productivity. By hosting these functions that are linked to social reproduction, La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova provides aspects of welfare and care to their local populations. The actions they currently undertake to face the coronavirus crisis serve as practical examples here.

Furthermore, the ability to freely choose a direction within the program of the always cost-free activities, without having an obligation as it is in schools or state mandated programs, can be seen as a liberating and emancipatory process. The cost-free access is crucial, because it is a place where there is no need to buy. La Biblio is a local space for people to just be there, learn and connect. The Care Collective (2020: 83) acknowledge local libraries as experimental community spaces of resource sharing: *»they enable us to read widely [...] because books can be shared. Sharing material and immaterial resources is a path to both environmental sustainability and community collaboration.«* These exemplary practices of [5.2.2 Carry out Popular Education and Popular Knowledges](#) highlight the aspect that libraries composite cultural and social offer that have been evolved to the specific communities who use them (ibid. 101). The Biblio's mission and motive to act clearly urges in local unmet caring needs.

MICRO VS. MACRO

The library can be understood as a *»social infrastructure«* within the wide web of social-spatial relations in the context. Libraries are infrastructural in the way that they *»provide the core access that encourages and sustains other forms of civic activities«* (ibid. 101). The initiative *»Mi barrio no es basura«* (-> my barrio is not trash) fosters participation-based community-building and self-help in facing the littering of public space. The project with helping to create work for released teenagers (-> *Pibes Liberadxs*) transforms the presence of garbage in the place into something that can be worked with. These exemplary practices of [5.2.3 Assess the Potential of Garbage](#) brings up alternative values and local practices responding to prevailing problems that are rooted in a much larger scale. Thereby, the team of La Biblio also operates on different levels and be-

»Esta variedad en la oferta, responde netamente a las necesidades que tenemos cualquiera de los que vivamos en las villas, y tiene la particularidad que se sale de lo "básico", impuesto por el mercado, sino que también nos invita a soñar un poco más, con la posibilidad de en algún momento poder elegir un trabajo no tan "común", para nuestra clase social, que a veces pareciera estar determinada solo para un rubro en especial.« (Mundovilla, 2019)

yond the locality of the building in La Carcova. They also carry out workshops inside the prison (-> *cárcel 46 de mujeres*), in collaboration with a municipal program, and provide legal assistance to detained neighbors and their families (-> *asistencia jurídica*) and support them in the legal causes.

Therefore, I conclude that La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova carries out work engaging with the barrio in relations of the proximity of social problems, such as garbage and youth criminality. By doing this, they contribute to creating a sustaining specifically convivial value and taking responsibility for gaps of *an absent, or uncaring state*. This uncaring of the macro level becomes visible in the micro level in La Carcova.

A BRIDGING ELEMENT

The mission of *Un Territorio Educativo* of La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, together with actors from UNSAM, is an attempt to change the image of the villa La Carcova. Waldemar said in an interview (2020) that the intention is to *»build a bridge between the villa and the university. Understanding that the university can be passable territory for us [the villerxs]«*. In addition the mission statement reads that La Biblio tries to bridge between different institutions: educational, artistic, cultural, both public and private and to contribute in a concrete way in the projection of life of the people, girls and boys in the barrio (La Biblioteca Popular 2020).

The collaborative design and construction process of the pavilion (-> *Construcción Techo Sombrilla*) has brought together the local communities with a group of students and professors of different universities. Many of the students, including me, had never been to the barrio before and might not be boarding without a reason. The area is not considered as *safe* and there were agreements made that it is better for the students to go there collectively and not walk around alone. Through the work, we students have built a bond and trust and found that it is not dangerous per se. These are mental barriers and a stigmatization of villas that circulate in the minds of the Porteños (term commonly used to refer to the inhabitants of CABA slightly derogatory tone, the arrogance that urban people may have not leaving their urban bubble). I got a lot of such comments when I was talking with people from CABA that I was writing my thesis about this project, especially for being a foreign student. The divide between CABA and AMBA is quite distinct and is being emphasized a lot. The collective building process was a collective learning process and an embodied practice in the locality. It has shifted the academic learning outside of the university framework and acknowledged participations of non-experts in situated realities. It also broadens students' participation towards social engagement, since the building days were not obligatory, but voluntarily.

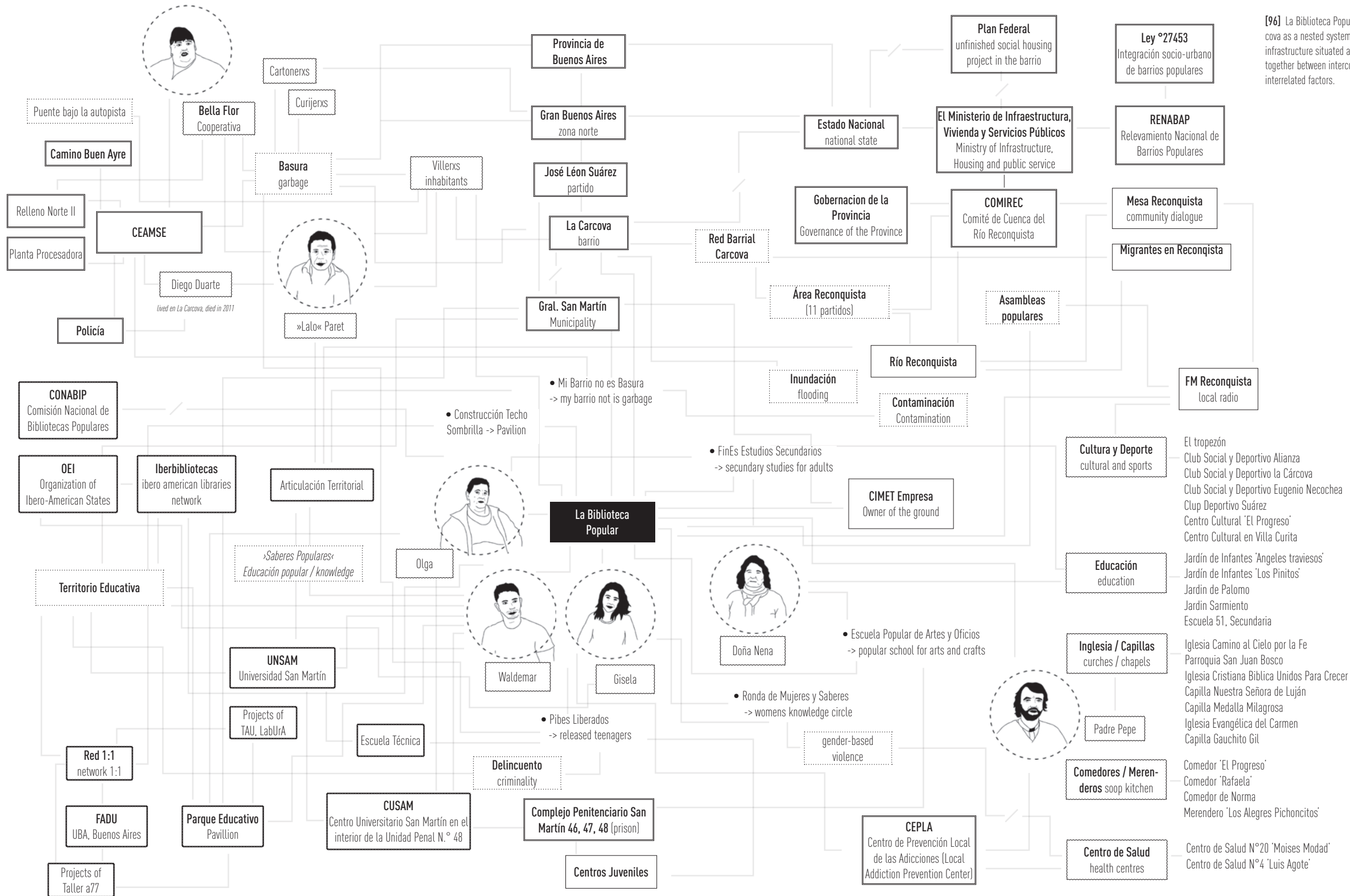
The exemplary practice of 5.2.1 Endure auto-agency practices and collaborative processes highlights that the Biblio serving as the site of construction was not just a place to look at with an outside view of an expert but rather experiment and engage situated, including the marginalised knowledges in the co-design process. In the critical minded design and addressing real-life problems to confront social inequalities, responsibilities of our field of architecture as students and professors were questioned and *»El Estado Ausente«* (-> the absent state) in the notion of the un-social and uncaring state got problematized. However, it is true, that social design approaches have an affirmative attitude towards small-scale solutions, like the pavillon and often elude larger-scale considerations that would illuminate the effects across a specific project (Richter / Göbel / Grub-bauer 2017: 772). In addition to that, it is certain that these projects should not simply act as a temporary commitment for social learning for students. That means that caregiving in this case is shared between both, the universities and the library.

A NESTED SYSTEM

As an interim conclusion of my findings on how care manifests itself in and around the Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova, I have kept to the three points: providing education in the sense of Educación Popular and sharing (im)material resources; creating possibilities for participation-based community building and facing local problems that move between micro vs. macro levels; as well as foster preservation and horizontal learning as being a bridging element between villa and universities. The communal work of the La Biblio is an enormous amount of care-taking, especially when we take note that all of this is carried out without government assistance, without recognition in the national popular libraries registry and in self-managed, auto-agency practices (-> *prácticas auto-gestionarias*).

The many and diverse entanglements and relations of actors, actants, power structures, hierarchies and (in)visibilities were tried to put together in a network graphic – but it is by no means a complete representation and shows my subjective perception and interpretation of the the Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova as a nested system and social infrastructure situated and woven together between interconnected and interrelated factors.

*»Creo que la acción de la Biblio y todo el equipo de trabajo que compone esta tarea de alguna manera construye un puente, podríamos decir, entre la villa y la universidad. Hacemos saber que la universidad puede ser un territorio transitable para nosotros [los villerxs]«
(Waldemar, 2020)*



[96] La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova as a nested system and social infrastructure situated and woven together between interconnected and interrelated factors.

6

ENVISIONING PRACTICES OF CARE

This chapter encourages us to look into possible futures how practices of care can be envisioned in local situations. [6.1 Un Entendimiento de lo Posible](#) (p. 161) are situated proposals that build on existing infrastructures and networks of communal life. Planning principles, objectives and certain interventions are introduced in [6.2 Principios, Objetivos y Acciones](#) (p. 164). The [6.3 Imaginarios Urbanos](#) (p. 166) include ideas for open and collective articulating in the barrio [6.3.1 Articulación Abierta y Colectiva](#) (p. 166), rethinking urban barriers [6.3.2 Repensar las Barreras Urbanas](#) (p. 169), creating environmental awareness [6.3.3 Crear Conciencia Ambiental](#) (p. 172) and potentiating the popular economy [6.3.4 Potenciar la Economía Popular](#) (p. 176).

The content was created together with my amigos Juan Pe, Macarena and Tatiana in a group work in «Proyecto Urbano» of Taller a77, FADU-UBA, Buenos Aires in ciclo 2020. It was translated and reassembled for this chapter in my thesis.

Contexto pandémico. Trabajar desde lo virtual, lo visual. En 2D, sin olores, sin sonidos, sin sentir los cambios de temperatura al ubicarnos en el street view debajo de la sombra de un árbol. Compartiendo ideas a través de una pantalla. Desde esta realidad fue que pudimos llevar adelante un **«Entendimiento de lo Posible»**. Uno, no el único. El que surge de estas circunstancias.

Nos parece importante hacer alusión a que este es un trabajo desarrollado por cuatro personas que viven y vivieron en condiciones muy distintas a las que encontramos en barrios que han sido vulnerados históricamente por un Estado ausente. Que La Carcova, así como otras villas del territorio latinoamericano, **«se hizo a sí misma»**, y que encontramos grandes y valiosísimos saberes en su geografía y habitantes, **«sujetos transformadores»** de una sociedad que lxs niega como hacedores, no reconocidos institucional y académicamente.

Creemos imprescindible que toda propuesta que intervenga en el territorio **«ponga en valor dichos saberes, resguarde su memoria colectiva e identidad»**. Que la intervención exista porque la existencia no es lo individual, sino las muchas relaciones, la creación de redes. El trabajo es un intento por entender a la basura como una posibilidad. **«La potencialidad de la basura»**. Que transgreda el prejuicio higienista. Que potencie las relaciones de solidaridad entre lxs habitantes, las organizaciones y el hábitat natural en el que se encuentran. Que **«cree oportunidades»**, que le **«haga un poco de justicia»** al sistema neoliberal que **«insiste en negarnos ternura»**.

6.1 UN ENTENDIMIENTO DE LO POSIBLE

AN UNDERSTANDING
OF THE POSSIBLE

APROXIMACIÓN

APPROXIMATION

Pandemic context. Working from the virtual, the visual. In 2D, without smells, without sounds, without feeling the changes in temperature when we stop on street view in the shade under a tree. Sharing ideas through and on a screen. From this reality we carried out an *«Understanding of the Possible»*. One, not the only one. The one that arises out of these circumstances.

It seems important to us to make allusion and refer to the fact that this is a work developed by four people who live and lived in conditions very different from those found in neighborhoods that have historically been violated by an absent state. Like *«La Carcova»*, as well as other *«villas»* in Latin American territory, constructed and produced by and through themselves. Barrios, where we find great and valuable knowledges in its formation and its inhabitants, transforming subjects of a society that denies them as makers, not institutionally and academically recognized.

We believe it is essential that any proposal that intervenes in the territory values these knowledges and protects its collective memory and identity. That intervention exists because existing reality is not the individual, but the many relationships creating networks. The work is an attempt to understand garbage as a possibility. The potentiality of garbage, that transgresses the hygienist prejudice. That it enhances the relations of solidarity between the inhabitants, the organizations and the natural habitat in which they are found. That it may create opportunities and do a little justice to the neoliberal system that insists on denying us tenderness.

Deriva Virtuo-real

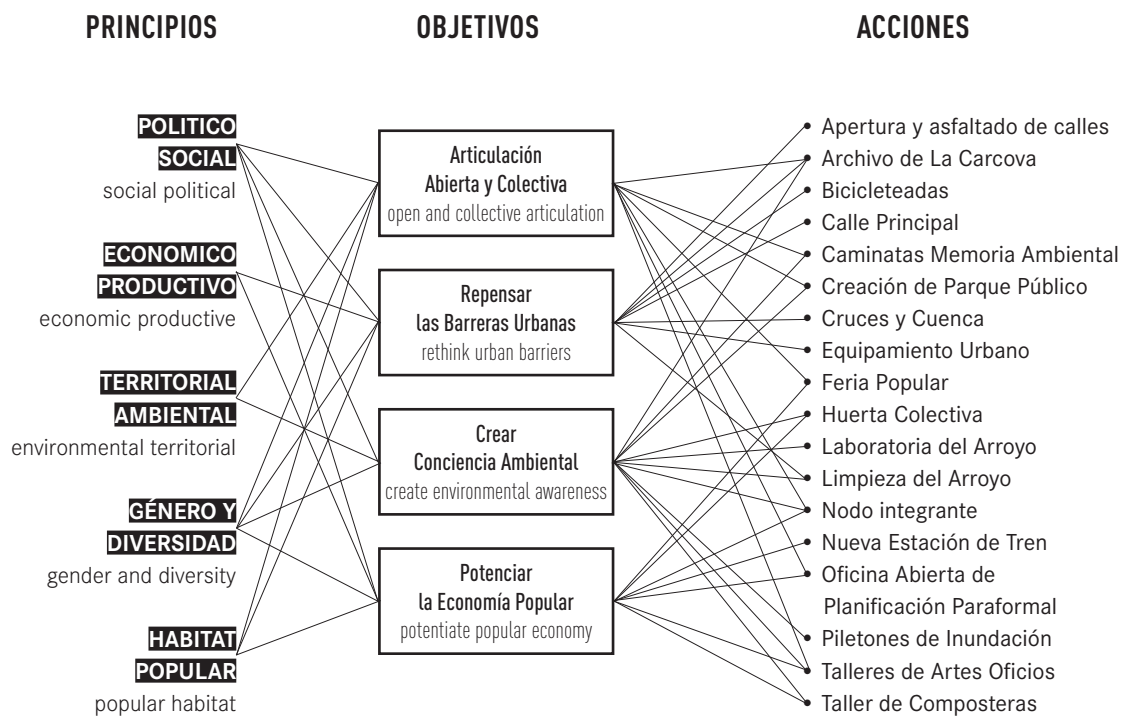
Los mapas son, como el espacio en sí mismo, construcciones sociales. A la vez, representan realidades sociales, contradicciones espaciales y memorias colectivas. El método de la deriva nos da un acceso subjetivo y emocional al territorio: pasos ininterrumpidos y lúdicos a través de ambientes diversos. Sin saber realmente a dónde nos dirigimos, nos perdimos y (re)colectamos artefactos con una mirada interrogadora, crítica y atenta detalles, recuerdos y testimonios. Lo reconstruimos y pusimos en una compilación de un espacio relacional, que plantea preguntas, crea redes y tiene muchos fines abiertos.



[97] Dérive virtuo-real in José León Suárez (from PUr group work)

6.2 PRINCIPIOS, OBJETIVOS Y ACCIONES

To imagine possible scenarios, principles are defined that address social political, economic productive, environmental territorial, gender and diversity and habitat popular issues. The principles (-> *principios*) have been translated into objectives (-> *objetivos*) that can manifest themselves in concrete proposals for actions (-> *acciones*). With every proposed action, not just one objective, but several ones are considered. The graphic shows how they are interconnected with each other. The principles are briefly explained, followed by representations of the various actions under the respective objectives.



POLITICO SOCIAL

Toda política, plan o acción urbana en pos de la mejora de las condiciones de vida y el habitar de la comunidad será concebido, ideado y ejecutado en forma conjunta con lxs actorxs del barrio, reconociendo sus experiencias y saberes previos, poniendo en el centro el trabajo de las organizaciones y habitantes.

-> *Any urban policy, plan or action in pursuit to improve the living conditions and the inhabitation of the community will be conceived, devised and performed jointly with the actors of the barrio, recognizing their previous experiences and knowledge, putting at the center the work of organizations and inhabitants.*

ECONOMICO PRODUCTIVO

Todas las acciones serán encaradas reconociendo las dinámicas productivas y económicas propias del barrio, buscando potenciar e incrementar la autogestión y la autonomía bajo el paradigma de la economía popular.

-> *All the actions will be addressed recognizing the productive and economic dynamics of the barrio, seeking to promote and increase self-management and autonomy under the paradigm of the popular economy.*

TERRITORIAL AMBIENTAL

Construir una visión compleja y completa del territorio, que considere al río y sus márgenes, arroyos, flora y fauna en su condición ecosistémica y considerando su potencial valor paisajístico, promoviendo la defensa de los bienes naturales y poniendo en cuestión lógicas neoliberales que vulneren al territorio.

-> *Build a complex and complete vision of the territory, which considers the river and its banks, streams, flora and fauna in their ecosystem condition and considering their potential landscape value, promoting the defense of natural assets and questioning neoliberal logic that violates the territory*

GÉNERO Y DIVERSIDAD

Todo plan será gestionado reconociendo la existencia de la diversidad de géneros y cuerpxs (niñxs, personas con discapacidades motrices, gordxs, adultxs mayores, etc), buscando no reproducir la opresiones que genera la arquitectura y el urbanismo hegemónicxs.

-> *All plans will be managed recognizing the existence of the diversity of genders and bodies (children, people with disabilities, thin/thick, the elderly, and others.), seeking not to reproduce the oppressions generated by hegemonic architecture and urbanism.*

HABITAT POPULAR

Desarrollar programas orientados a la construcción de espacios habitables, domésticos y públicos, gestionados y producido por lxs propixs habitantes, a través de procesos participativos en los que la comunidad tome decisiones, tanto en el diagnóstico, en la determinación de prioridades, en los procesos de diseño, en la gestión, y en la construcción del mismo.

-> *Develop programs oriented to the construction of habitable, domestic and public spaces, managed and produced by the inhabitants themselves, through participatory processes in which the community makes decisions, both in the diagnosis, in the determination of priorities, in the processes of design, management, and construction.*

6.3 IMAGINARIOS URBANOS

OPEN AND COLLECTIVE
ARTICULATION

6.2.1 ARTICULACIÓN ABIERTA Y COLECTIVA

INTEGRAL NODE

NODO INTEGRANTE

The *nodo integrante* are mobile devices that can be easily deployed at different points in the barrio, creating an approach and dialogue with a greater number of actors. Within the dome, activities such as neighborhood assemblies, talks, events like cinema, debates, puppet shows, or the open office of paraformal planning can be carried out. The device is a rotating element and can be used from all organizations that want to use it for an activity.

The popular assemblies will be organized to make horizontal decisions. It is important to reinforce the value of diverse participation in these assemblies, with children, the elderly, women, transvestite and trans lesbians, people with disabilities, and more. The *nodo integrantes* is of easy execution, cheap, and of simple transport and. The segments can be recycled plastic that is joined together with tape or glue and it is inflated with an air inlet.

«Hace poco el nodo estuvo en la plaza de la biblio y hubo un taller de carpintería. Ahí aprendimos a construir una compostera y debatimos como organizamos en la asamblea»



[98]

«Recently the nodo was in the Plaza de la Biblio and there was a carpentry workshop. We learned to build a compost bin and we discussed how we organize us in the assembly»

OFICINA ABIERTA DE PLANIFICACIÓN PARAFORMAL

OPEN OFFICE FOR
PARAFORMAL PLANNING

The open office for paraformal planning is a direct articulation and complementary network for popular assemblies and barrial organizations. It gives space for neighborhood dialogues and reflection rounds. Through mappings and participative methods an understanding of the paraformal territory will be formulated. Direct and needed involvement in planning processes for housing and popular uses, integrating diverse actors of a variable scale, from neighbors, cooperativas, existing industries and the municipality.

paraformal - crossroad of formal or formed and the informal or in formation. The paraformal is the intersection of the predictable and the unpredictable

«El otro día en el domo hubo un taller de títeres. Las costureras del barrio nos enseñaron como usar las maquinas para coser la ropa de los muñecos, y después hicimos una presentación para todo el barrio. Estuvo muy divertido!»



[99]

«The other day there was a puppet theatre workshop in the nodo. The seamstresses from the barrio taught us how to use the sewing machines to sew the puppets' clothes. In the end, we did a presentation for the whole neighborhood. It was a lot of fun!»

ARCHIVO TERRITORIAL AUTOGESTIONADO

A pre existing vacant building is being converted into a open accessible barrial archive, el ›Archivo de La Carcova‹. There is a lot of valuable knowledge, such as the popular knowledge (-> ›saberes populares‹), collective memories, dreams, imaginations from the villerxs as well as the knowledges produced by the various university cooperations over the course of time. In this Archivo, these knowledges come together, are represented and ›re-stored‹. It tells about the past, present and future. It's a place, where voices of the barrio can be articulated, put into discussion and form a fruitful base for care-taking planning processes.

»En el archivo de la Carcova, recogemos memorias colectivas y las hacemos accesibles al público. Se piensa en un archivo en crecimiento, compuesto de testimonios, trabajos territoriales en el barrio, del pasado, presente y futuro.«



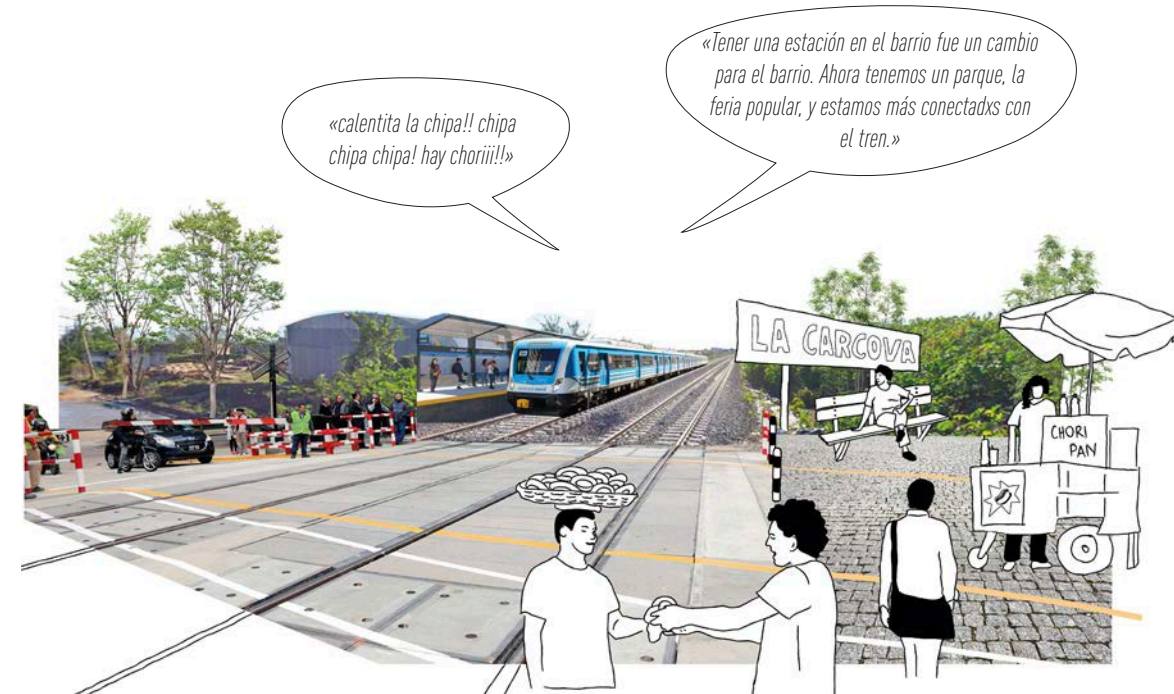
[100]

»In the archivo de la Carcova, we collect collective memories and make them accessible to the public. We think of a growing archive, made up of testimonies, territorial works in the neighborhood of past, present and future.«

6.2.2 REPENSAR LAS BARRERAS URBANAS

NUEVA ESTACIÓN DE TREN

The new train station for La Carcova is in extension of the existing Mitre Train Line. It is located 2 km from the José León Suarez station, on land that now belongs to the Judicial Deposit. The project for the new station will be planned and named in popular assemblies for citizen participation, understanding that this new space will provide more direct access to public transport for the residents of the neighborhood. This can form a new economic and product exchange center next to the Feria Popular and the Community Garden, and will integrate new public green spaces to improve the quality of life.



»warm and freh the chipa!! chipa chipa! cheesy bread!«

»Having a station in the neighborhood was a change for the neighborhood. Now we have a park, the popular fair, and we are more connected to the train.«

[101]

CRUCES Y CUENCA DEL ARROYO

Arroyo - stream, creek

Crosses and cleaning of the stream basin (-> Arroyo). In order to create a more dynamic link and dialogue between the neighborhood and its habitat, it is essential to blur some urban barriers such as the stream, the highway, or the railroads. Several locations of said crosses are proposed, but the definitive election will be decided in popular assemblies, where neighbors show what points they need to connect, together with professionals who can provide technical advice. Each crossing should serve all bodies.



«Con el puente es mucho mas fácil ahora cruzar el arroyo y aprovechamos este espacio para tomar mates, juntarnos con amigxs o andar en bicicleta.»

«sí, ree!!! y los domingos hay una banda de chicxs que tocan los tambores y bailan todo la tarde.»

[102]

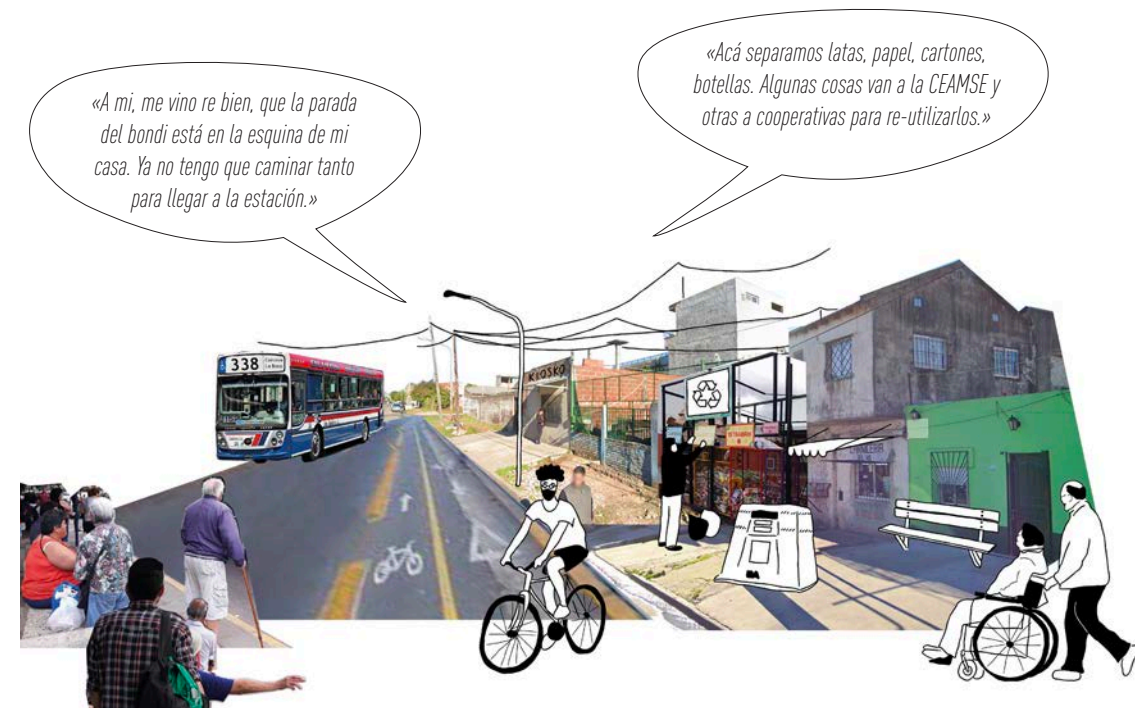
»With the pedestrian bridge it is now much easier to cross the stream and we take advantage of this space to have Mates, get together with friends or go and ride with the bicycle.«

»Yes, totally! on sundays there is a band of children who play the drums and dance all afternoon.«

CALLE PRINCIPAL

In the main streets of La Carcova Av. Central and Máquez new bus stops are proposed, to integrate the barrio, from the inside and outside. The route will have all asphalted and well-lit streets, bus stops with shelters and indicators for bus lines, containing name, denomination and lines that stop at the place. In addition, a bike lane is integrated that will allow it to circulate through the neighborhood safely in other means of transport.

Waste Separation Points are installed on several points in the barrio for easy access by the entire community. The barrial network and recycling cooperatives within the neighborhood are integrated. The separated solid materials (cardboard, plastics, tetrapak, glasses, caps, etc.) may be used for further processing.



«A mi, me vino re bien, que la parada del bondi está en la esquina de mi casa. Ya no tengo que caminar tanto para llegar a la estación.»

«Acá separamos latas, papel, cartones, botellas. Algunas cosas van a la CEAMSE y otras a cooperativas para re-utilizarlos.»

[103]

»It's much better for me now, because the bus stop is on the corner of my house. I no longer have to walk so much to get to the station.«

»Here we separate cans, paper, cardboard, bottles. Some things go to the CEAMSE and others to cooperatives to reuse them«

6.2.3 CREAR CONCIENCIA AMBIENTAL

COLLECTIVE GARDEN

HUERTA COLECTIVA Y TALLER DE COMPOSTERAS

Both the Community Garden and the popular economy market will be carried out in the current Judicial Deposit, a property destined to store large-scale waste, mostly cars. The community garden «La Huerta Colectiva» takes as a model the urban agriculture carried out in Cuba. It proposes a popular participatory organization where producers use various techniques in growing organic vegetables and fruits, diverse, fresh and healthy foods in available areas, initially unproductive. These productive spaces propose, in addition to a food sovereignty strategy, urban environmental sustainability projects, such as the recycling of nutrients from organic urban waste transformed into compost or natural fertilizers.



[104]

»There are many tasks to do in the collective garden. Some make the seedlings, others water the plants, others make natural compost that comes from our compost corporation with the local schools. Everything is concatenated.«

COMPOST WORKSHOPS



[105]

Teacher: »The compost workshops at school are important because the children bring this knowledge to their homes. Seeds and seedlings are also handed out to the children. It is a way of bringing nature closer to the community.«

Girl: »At home we learned how to separate banana peel and egg shells, the potato peel and mate yerba. We put all this in the compost bin and with the worms, they help us make food for the plants.«

LABORATORIO DE AGUA EXPERIMENTAL

The water laboratory is located at the shore of el Arroyo, a stream of Rio Reconquista. Rainwater is collected and filtered in several processes in order to make use of it for watering the gardens. Processes to filter the polluted floodwater and convert it into usable water are also being tried out. It is an experimental approach and includes universities and schools promoting a self-managed agro-ecological model with tenderness and care between people and the natural habitat.

Junto con la UNSAM y el INTA creamos el Laboratorio Experimental en donde desarrollamos dispositivos alternativos de procesos de purificación del agua. El agua de lluvia y de las crecidas del arroyo se recolecta en piletones, se limpia con estos instrumentos y después se utiliza para regar las huertas colectivas.



[106]

»Together with UNSAM and INTA we created the Experimental Laboratory of the Río where we develop alternative devices for water purification processes. Rainwater and floodwaters from the stream are collected in pools, cleaned with these instruments, and then used to water the plants in our collective gardens.«

CAMINATAS MEMORIA AMBIENTAL

The environmental memory walking tours arise from the need to reinforce the link between the anthropized territorial ecosystem. Approaching the complex territory through walking and recognizing the value of the river and its banks, streams, flora and fauna in its ecosystem condition and its scenic power. Through that, appropriation and care of natural assets would be promoted, as well as a questioning of the neoliberal logics that continue to violate them. The tours would be organized in coordination with barrial institutions, which can bring together situated knowledge on environmental questions. At the end of the tour, a moment of closure and reflection could be held, where thoughts, sensations, smells, colors, sounds are exposed, in dialogues, drawings, poems, etc. The walking tours address people of all ages and bodies.



[107] Flyer for the »Memoria Ambiental« Walks Xilografía (woodcut) by Tatiana Roberti.

«Me encantaría que este arroyo vuelva a su forma natural. Mi abuela me contó que cuando era chica, habían tortugas y que pescaban Surubí.»

«El objetivo de estas caminatas es volver a reencontrarnos con el arroyo, con un paisaje natural que muchxs no conocen o no recuerdan. Es importante que tengamos memoria ambiental para preservar el territorio.»



[108]

»I would love that this river returns to its natural form. My grandmother told me that when I she was younger, there were turtles Surubí fishes in the water what they could fish and eat...«

»The objective of these walks is to reconnect with the stream, with a natural landscape that many do not know or do not remember. It is important that we have environmental memory to preserve the territory.«

6.2.4 POTENCIAR LA ECONOMÍA POPULAR

FERIA POPULAR

The popular market fair can be located adjacent to the new train station. The agroecological fruit and vegetables grown in the Community Garden, among other things, can be commercialized. It's a direct way of exchanging from producers to consumers (-> de lx productorx a lx consumidorx). The feria accompanies neighborhood self-management, contributing to local development and promoting association and cooperation between productive units. It also guarantees popular sectors access to quality products at fair and accessible prices.

«En la feria de lx productorx a lx consumidorx compro siempre, porque venden las cosas más baratas y de calidad organico.»

«En la feria puedo vender las cosas que hacemos en los talleres de reciclaje. Se volvió un ingreso económico importante para mi y mi familia. Acá también me encuentro con mis amiguxs y vecinxs.»



[109]

»At the feria ›from the producer to the consumer‹ I always buy, because they sell the cheapest things and of organic quality.«

»At the Feria we can sell the things we make in the recycle workshops. It became an important economic income for me and my family. Here I also meet my friends and neighbors.«



[110] Hacia un urbanismo de la reconquista. PUr 2020

Poesía de Kai Banni, Sofía Salevsky y Micaela Perreira

Manifiesto de aproximación a una **reconquista** de la **identidad**.

Aproximarse, obtener un resultado tan cercano al exacto como sea necesario para un propósito determinado, dicese para entes reguladores del lenguaje.

Etimológicamente a+ **proximo** +ar deviene del sufijo a, hacia + proximus, lx que está más cerca.

Aproximarse desde la **lejanía**, cómo pensar un territorio desde los confines de un cuarto, desde la tecnología como herramienta a-cercatoria?

Cómo corromper los imaginarios contruidos sin acercamiento alguno?

Cómo pensar una re-conquista de la identidad?

Cómo pensar el cuerpo-territorio?

*»Para descubrir que un cuerpo no está hecho de carne y huesos,
sino de flores y frutos, de mapas y de leyes de la colonia,
de cifras contadas con dientes y letras que entraron con sangre.«
(Paul B. Preciado en »Ficciones Patógenas« de Duen Sacchi, 2019)*

Construir desde la **empatía** teniendo como condicionante la aproximación prohibida y la distancia como nuevo diálogo acorde a respetar.

El distanciamiento social en estas tierras, existe desde antes de lo que conocemos hoy como contexto y acción a obedecer.

Este **virus de la distancia**, del desplazamiento de algunxs, del aislamiento de otrxs, solo evidencia más las tácticas de un sistema excluyente, de un sistema funcional para pocxs sostenido con el sometimiento de otrxs. Embebido con el monopolio de la violencia, violencia sistemática, institucional, corpórea, ejercida una y otra vez hacia estos sectores, hacia estos cuerpos.

*Cómo construir una aproximación de la identidad fluctuante,
desde las construcciones dadas inamovibles y las re-apropiadas?*

Identidad como **re-apropiación** del desplazamiento, como desplazamientos obligados, hacia un territorio a apropiar, **territorio de re-conquista** de calles hechas en comunidad, de una narración geográfica propia. Identidad como basura, como paradoja, la basura como territorio con límites, cercado por un camino llamado Buen Ayre, pero que no nos invita a respirar.

Re-conquista territorial, desde la construcción de la economía popular, desde las prácticas de recuperación de desechos, **recuperación** de derechos.

Reciclaje de las violencias, semilla de organizaciones sociales que apuntan a la reconquista.

Río de la Reconquista, reconquista de la tierra, la vivienda, la salud, el trabajo.

Reconquista como cuerpo atravesado de historia, conformado por vivencia.

Recuperación de la **soberanía corpórea**.

Recuperar los modos de vinculación, las redes formadas para las protección de pares, conocer las estrategias para el fortalecimiento de la resiliencia y el rol activo. **Re-apropiación de lenguaje que les nombra**, República Ciruja, esa que abre y sabe que extraer. Creación de espacios de resistencia, caminos recorridos, caminos de desplazamiento.

Volver a tomar lo perdido. Recuperar lo arrebatado.

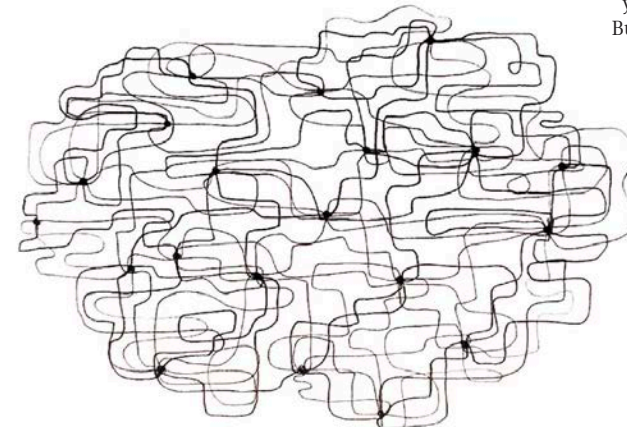
En los territorios, en los cuerpos, hablamos todxs, hablan lxs muertxs, hablan las instituciones, hablan las privadas, habla la academia.

Traer al lugar las voces que habitan el espacio, para que la palabra circule, se introduzca, sea puesta, contada y se le dé lugar al reclamo de necesidades y experiencias para ser escuchadas.

recuperar. reciclar. reconquistar.

las formas, los modos, las dinámicas.

por Kai Banni,
Sofía Salevsky
y Micaela Perreira
Buenos Aires, 2020



7

REFLECTION

I find it difficult to come to a conclusion after this long and bumpy intellectual thought process. In our Urban Design studies, the focus does not lie necessarily in a solution in the end itself, but rather on the way to get there. My journey of the thesis did not follow a stringent line, it included repetitive processes and loops, sometimes misleading, enlightening or alarming. The thesis is a diverse compilation of many stories and synthesis of what I found, what I was told and what I imagined. Hence, the findings that I reflect on in this chapter are more methodological and conceptual.

Firstly, I draw on my [7.1 Personal Impulses \(p. 183\)](#) on [\(Re\)searching in a Pandemic \(p. 183\)](#), about constantly [\(Un\)learning \(p. 184\)](#) of the position from where I am speaking and [\(Re\)approaching \(186\)](#) methodology. Secondly, in the [7.2 Theoretical Considerations \(p. 188\)](#) I remind on [\(Re\)shifting \(p. 188\)](#) in fields of knowledge production and address the lack of care in [\(Un\)caring \(p. 189\)](#). Finally, I dare some [7.3 Afterthoughts \(p. 191\)](#).

7.1 PERSONAL IMPULSES

(RE)SEARCHING IN A PANDEMIC

This global covid-19 pandemic has an unprecedented scope, scale and impact on the work-life-balances of researchers around the world and affects our personal and professional lives alike. The taken political measures enforced a sudden switch to home office work, online teaching and learning modalities and travel restrictions. These limitations are not only of spatial or social character, but also deeply affect our emotional makeup as well as changing our intellectual thinking processes. Knowledge is, like the subject of an investigation itself, always processual. Knowledge depends on varying and interrelating access, availability and conditions. In addition, academic knowledge production requires (a lot of) time to process the examined material, to translate empirical analysis into findings or even uncover instructions to apply in further actions.

A group of scholars (Corbera et al. 2020: 191) argue that in these unsettling covid-19 times, academic practice must foster a culture of care, it should help us re-focus on what is most important and re-define paradigms. In the article *»Spoken from the Virtual Collective«*, the art historian Sabeth Buchman (2020) reflects on our *»infected thinking«* which governs our bodies in an impertinent and uncomprehended way for reasons that we are currently barely able to contradict. She wonders whether the crisis lets us fall back into (gendered) role models that we thought we already left behind us, or whether they only reflect what (latently) is still constitutive of society. Our thinking has long been infected in a (good or bad) controlled way and it is challenging to keep *»contagion under control«* in your thinking. The pandemic situation brings the supposedly having *control-over-my-life* out of balance. I live in constant mental uncertainty and the mandatory quarantine has put me in a completely different situation of being, thinking and (re)searching.

(UN)LEARNING

Once more, somehow in a blatant way, I became aware of my privileged circumstances. I am in good health, I live in a house with a roof terrace that allows social (un)distancing and to breathe fresh air. I am in good company with my amigas en casa, who keep me in movement and I have friends and family that support me. My financial situation, not to forget in this enumeration did not suddenly change. I did not experience any reduction or diminishing of income as my scholarship for studying is still regularly being paid out. Due to the immense fall of the Argentine Peso, this monthly stipend is now worth considerably more than it was a few months ago. These are realities foreign to most Germans and therefore myself and leaves me with a bitter aftertaste, as without wishing for it, I actually benefit from the exchange rate between the Euro and the Peso that has occurred due to sudden inflation. I cannot disregard the burning question: who is beneficiary here? This reflection leads me to the fact: the global capitalist system, unjustly and without scruples exploit poor countries in order for the rich ones to reap the benefits and profits in the process – even more so in crises. Political life and private life are always entangled. Every day anew, my flatmates remind me of *»lo personal es político y todo es una cuestión de privilegios, boluda!«* (-> *the private is political and everything is a question of privilege*).

Being aware of these privileges is definitely the first step. Still, I'm asking myself, what is my position, what are the narratives that are inscribed in my body and my origin, being a white woman, researching on these marginalized topics, reading academic journal articles behind paywalls in a foreign language? For whom am I creating knowledge? How can we make knowledge stocks more accessible? Which discourse am I following? Which (hegemonic, colonial, gender based) hierarchies are predicated upon these discourses?

I'm in a conflict of which I cannot break free: because I am who I am, because I come from where I come from – and I have learned what I have learned from where I come from and because of who I am.

My experiences in Buenos Aires, now even more in the coronavirus crisis, have definitely strengthened my understanding of class consciousness. The in-depth reading and discussion on care has also questioned my own ethical behaviour. The theoretical concept of care can be used as a lense to the inquiries on social, spatial and relational complexities but it also speaks to oneself personally.

How do I care? When everything is interwoven with obligation, care, affect and labour – what really is my ethical doing in researching/planning? Although I tried to be careful to explore my questions and show the complexity of practices and ethical-doings that I researched, I was inevitably faced with issues of social justice and deep class inequalities that shape the city and its inhabitants in terms of who has rights, ownership and access. Being situated in these parallel worlds have challenged me emotionally. I suffered sometimes. But the suffering also empowered me. It reminds me of Wacquants (2019: 242) call for embodiment of the inquirer by *»put[ting] the investigator back onto the stage as a carnal and suffering being – leidenschaftliches Wesen«*. It provoked me to not lose courage. Chatterton (2010: 316) has taught me to inject a *»radical appetite for change«* to unfold the right to the city, seeing that the key role for the *»urban imagineer«* is to make today's impossibility into tomorrow's possibility. Therefore, he suggests to *»expose, propose, politicise«* as a collective process of learning. In this way, he leans as well on Freire's *»Educación Popular«*: *»popular education is key here that starts from daily realities but also takes people on a journey of self-realisation and critical awakening«* (ibid.: 320).

[111] **Observando:** observing,
listening, understanding



(RE)APPROACHING

In the beginning I laid out my motives and methodological approaches as searching for situated knowledge, in an action-research manner and embodied practice, allowing me thought experiments of Imaginarios Urbanos. A strong impulse of mine is being outside, on site and doing hands-on (field)work, as urban designer and as researcher. I'm always looking for the possibility to participate in these kinds of works, where I can tackle-, feel and perceive realities in specific places in order to get involved in emerging (planning or researching) processes. To actively engage in the field was my initial motivation for this thesis, based on the made experiences of the previous year – but due to the pandemic situation everything was different now. I was (in)actively researching from my *inside* private home, observing what is happening *outside*. Having a working internet connection and the necessary technical equipment is another materialistic privilege that I have. So, how to deal with investigating a project in which you yourself participated? This project has now taken a (compulsory) break – or is it, maybe a beauty sleep or at least a nap to rest and recuperate? Gustavo D., professor (Taller a77 FADU-UBA) and architect that leads the collaborative project, points out *»at this time of a pandemic, we are taking the opportunity to strengthen ties and to establish certain dialogues and relations between the university, the owners of the land and the municipality; so that when we will build there is no longer any problem«*.

»Si bien la pandemia nos trajo el problema de tener que parar, nos presenta la oportunidad de producir mejor integración comunitaria para este proyecto. Tenemos la oportunidad en estos meses que nos están quedando hasta el final del año de establecer ciertos diálogos y relaciones entre la universidad, el rectorado de la universidad con los dueños del suelo, que son los dueños de la fábrica. Porque se abrieron otras oportunidades también.« (Gustavo, 2020)

[112] **Compartiendo:** exchanging. My Comic of the collaborative construction project as a participative Planning and Imaginario Tool.



If I could have gone and worked on site of La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova, I would have collected further empirical material, such as participating observations, interviews and mappings. Doing so, I could have included other voices and learned more about daily-life realities. However, the abundance of material was not necessarily the problem, but the material is surely very filtered. It consists mostly of my own subjective experiences, shared memories with fellow students and further material accessed through the FADU-UBA project.

Academic knowledge production itself excludes and filters knowledge. Moreover, there are hurdles and challenges that make the academic field seem to be quite an ambivalent territory. One's positioning can evoke conflict, can be misunderstood and gives space for criticism of stated positions. During the seminar Transformations II, I reflected with my group on this incidence in the frame of feminist knowledge production. Within these discourses criticizing and deconstructing is a powerful tool to fight against patriarchy, but it is also used to point out *»weak spots«* of other perspectives. The fear of failure and making mistakes is an elementary part of female socialization processes. Especially in an academic frame, it is rather practiced to not say anything, than saying something *»wrong«*. Acknowledging that there is no *»wrong position«*, but subjective modes of positioning yourself and ourselves, should be part of practicing feminist resilience in academic knowledge production.



[113] **Recordando:** remembering. My storytelling of Río Reconquista as Imaginario Tool can be used in environmental participative memory walking tours.

7.2 THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

(RE)SHIFTING

My thesis is aimed to tell more international and diverse stories. I want to recognize how stories and thus knowledge circulate globally in order to contribute to developing comparative perspectives for urban research. Re-thinking concepts beyond dichotomies between formal/informal, South/North, inside/outside and reality/irreality. De-constructing the informal, not simply as something wild and unregulated, but rather acknowledging it as the reality of other non-normative regulations beyond the materialistic (re)production of urban cities. Re-negotiating existing structural power positions, interest conflicts and understanding of dominance.

By generally thinking about the urban (space), Massey (2000: 11) reminds me that it is a product of multiple social relations: *»what emerges is that what is distinctively urban is that there are so many stories«*. Hence, the analysis of stories that can tell spatial relations is key to an understanding of (global and local) politics and powers. We, as urban researchers, need to study the overlapping and interrelated processes to understand how these elements are produced, how they interact (or not) with one another and what are the consequences of these interactions.

In their book *»Urban Research from Latin America«*, Hufschmid/Wilder (2013: 13) claim to decentralize the perspectives towards new knowledge geographies, as postcolonial studies have been demanding for a long time. The production of knowledge in urban research is based on a *»well-established international division of labor«* (ibid.) where North American and Western European academics function as a central production for theories and conceptions and the so-called global South serves primarily as an empirical field.

According to Roy (2009: 820), by focusing on southern metropolies as the terrain of *»interesting, abnormal, different and exotic case studies«*, which are clearly conceptualized within the understanding and experiences of cities in the global North, neo-colonial imaginations are being reproduced. She calls it *»heart of darkness«*, a kind of extra-ordinary monstrous or exotic mutation of the perceived *»normal urbanity«* (ibid.). At the same time, she advocates that theory making must move to the global South and that there *»has to be a recalibration of the geographies of authoritative knowledge. As the parochial experience of EuroAmerican cities has been found to be a useful theoretical model for all cities, so perhaps the distinctive experiences of the cities of the global South can generate productive and provocative theoretical frameworks for all cities.«*

Grubbauer (2019: 480) argues that, rather than sticking to the dichotomy of theory versus practice, it would be useful to understand theorising and practicing as *»interwoven and inherently reciprocal activities«* and not as separate areas of knowledge of certain groups. However, in (re)searching for firsthand experiences in the so-called global South, much of academic papers about alternative bottom-up projects in architecture and urban design are produced by scholars from Europe or North America – just as my thesis. In my opinion, knowledge stocks should not be hierarchical and overcome this divide by learning from in-depth narratives and tell diverse stories.

I have taken a transnational path in my thesis project, being between or beyond national boundaries. Trying to re-shuffle my knowledge access and reverse the direction of the view to enable a real internationalization of the field beyond the usual European/North American distortions. However, this has caused a lot of ambivalence and the link between localization and dislocated urban theory is a big challenge which goes far beyond the scope of a master thesis.

In relation to this ambiguity, Roy (2009: 820) speaks of a *»paradoxical combination of specificity and generalizability«*. This presupposes that there is initially a consciousness of this being-located, which I have embodied through my action-researching and situated knowledge methodological approach. As well it requires that the specifics of one's own (background, understanding, position, body...) are not automatically set as universal.

(UN)CARING

The experiences made during the coronavirus crisis and parallel to my research project have shifted and amplified my understanding of (in)accessibility, unequal distribution of power and the lack of care in our fragmented cities. How this un-caring is intensified in the coronavirus crisis I elaborated in [4.4 Corona: Crisis of Care](#). In this unprecedented time, the devastating effects of the coronavirus crisis have over the course of time progressively shaped this framework of my work. When I started with the thesis, I had not planned to research about a crisis. But it definitely is a (re)search in crisis: rather about the lack of care, than on care. My journey was quite, to say it with the words of Bellacasa (2017: 204) about care, *»messy, dirty and highly political«*.

Asking how to care is an open reflection about the socio ethical significance of one's doings. Insofar a critical stance can draw attention to such matters as to who cares for whom, to what forms of care are prioritized at the expense of others. I was moving between the critical and speculative stance. Staying within this unstable stance, this thesis has proposed, however, that paying attention to the worlds of care, holding together a plurality of ontological meanings is a disrupting and hopeful way to be involved with the lively and consequential ethicalities that are being drastically reconfigured in the more than human worlds. Bellacasa reminds me that my non-innocent thinking must reside in the *»inevitable entanglement between the critical and the speculative stance«* and that *»there is not such an outside position that our involvements have no effects«* (ibid.).

La Biblioteca Popular de La Carcova is an institution with the capacity to care, as I have outlined in [5.3 La Biblioteca as a Nested System](#). Taking up topics concerning garbage and claiming responsibilities for people in custody and their families is a doing of *caring for*. They pursue different *care-giving* practices and fill uncared needs for residents in the villa and beyond. The on-going project to construct *»El Parque Público y Educativo«* and mobilization in the democratic (in) formal process can be understood as *caring with*. Though, by searching for care, I often have found a lack of care. I critically reflect on why my intended shift did not work out. Maybe care was the wrong concept in a context in which so much is not taken care of? If we assume that general public services are basic caring and in la villa de La Carcova there is not even running water for everyone, arguing with the conceptualization of care in the marginalized urban area is rather risky. In this case, the question of dimensions and levels of care seems crucial to me. Even if I was able to apply the theory on the small scale of the practices of La Biblioteca Popular it leads me to bigger questions and problems, indeed, lacks of care, that need to be negotiated on a larger scale – and are missing on the macro level. Therefore, I conclude that the concept of care is ambivalent and (accesses are) contested.

Access to care is unequal.
 Access to knowledge is unequal.
 Access to resources is unequal.
 Access to power is unequal.

7.3 AFTERTHOUGHTS

The wish to (re)think caring futures returns my thoughts to Tronto/Fisher's definition of care where I began. From acting upon the understanding that as living creatures we exist alongside and in connection with all other human and non-human beings, and also remain dependent upon the systems and networks, animate and inanimate, that sustain life across the planet. I am aware that this evokes ambivalences, needs negotiations and a lot of patience in time.

Yet, as Judith Butler (2020) argues, this is precisely why it is only once we recognise the shared entanglement in conflict, existing ambivalences and marginalizations that we can begin to develop new caring imaginaries on all scales, levels and dimensions. Creating such caring futures would mean to first and foremost avow our independencies and cultivate far-reaching ethics of care and solidarity in all our relations. To re-think the neoliberal dynamics that evoke precarity and shape social vulnerability. Filling gaps, that the absent state does not, cannot and will not fill. Even more now in crisis it is central that citizens are engaged, vigilant about social inequality and hold public institutions to account for responsive action of social protection. But it's not enough. It's a wake-up call to strengthen our (inter)connectivity and care for each other through our every-day practices. We cannot return back to business or normal as usual, defined by the structures that drive and worsen inequalities. With the intention of fulfillingly transiting to more caring, humane and just societies we need a radical paradigm shift.

»In the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed 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, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.« (Tronto/Fisher 1990: 40)

[114] retrato. portrait.

Until then, I keep on imagining
post-pandemic, anti-capitalist,
anti-imperialist, anti-fascist,
anti-racist, decolonial, degrowth,
eco-just and care-taking futures.



APPENDIX

ABBREVIATIONS

AMBA	Àrea Metropolitana Buenos Aires (metropolitan area of BsAs)	La Biblio	La Biblioteca Popular de la Carcova
CABA	Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires	MJyDH	Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos
Bs As	Buenos Aires	OEI	Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura (Organization of Ibero-American States)
CEAMSE	Coordinación Ecológica Área Metropolitana Sociedad del Estado (waste collection)	Pcia.	Provincia
CPAU	Consejo Profesional de Arquitectura y Urbanismo (chamber of architecture and urbanism, Bs As)	RENABAP	Relevamiento Nacional de Barrios Populares (National Registry of Popular Neighborhoods in the process of urban integration)
GCBA	Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Bs As (government of Bs As)	SCA	Sociedad Central de Arquitectos (central society of architects Bs As)
COMIREC	Comité de la Cuenca del Río Reconquista (Reconquista river basin committee)	UNSAM	Universidad de San Martín, Pcia. de Bs As
CUSAM	Centro Universitario San Martín en el interior de la Unidad Penal N.º 48 (universit branch of UNSAM inside the prison)	UBA	Universidad de Buenos Aires
CONABIB	Comisión Nacional de Bibliotecas Populares (National Commission of Popular Libraries)		
FADU	Facultad de Arquitectura, Diseño y Urbanismo		
GBA	Gran Buenos Aires		
IFE	Ingreso Familiar de Emergencia (Emergency Family Income)		

GLOSSARY: ARGENTENTO - ENGLISH

<i>atenti</i>	voice of alert, watch out, used to call attention, comes from italian	<i>feria</i>	market
<i>asado</i>	argentinian barbecue, meat on a grill	<i>Gauchito Gil</i>	shrine of <i>¡Gauchor</i> , a folk religious figure of Argentina's popular culture
<i>avenida</i>	avenue	<i>laburo</i>	work
<i>barrio</i>	neighborhood	<i>lunfardo</i>	argentinian slang, especially in Bsas
<i>barrio popular</i>	working class neighborhood	<i>manzana</i>	block
<i>basura</i>	garbage	<i>mate</i>	traditional tea of mate herbs
<i>biblio</i>	shortform of biblioteca	<i>tereré</i>	iced mate, served in summertime
<i>cana</i>	prison	<i>obra</i>	artistic or architectural work
<i>cancha</i>	sports field	<i>olla popular</i>	common cooking pot
<i>capo/capa</i>	a crack, somebody who is really good in something, comes from italian	<i>parilla</i>	grill
<i>cazerolazo</i>	a form of popular protest which consists of a group of people making noise by banging pots, pans etc. in order to call for attention.	<i>pasillo</i>	small passway
<i>chapa</i>	metal sheets	<i>pelota</i>	football
<i>chipa</i>	cheesy bread	<i>pibes, pibas</i>	boys, girls
<i>choripan</i>	sausage on bread	<i>piquetero/a</i>	movement of street blockades with the purpose of demonstrating and calling attention over a particular issue or demand, comes from <i>¡piqueter</i> (picket)
<i>chorro</i>	thief	<i>popular</i>	popular movement
<i>cervecita</i>	small beer	<i>pozo ciego</i>	cesspit
<i>ciruja</i>	garbage picker	<i>quema</i>	from burning, refered to the CEAMSE, the mountain of garbage
<i>colectivo</i>	public transport	<i>taladro</i>	power drill (tool)
<i>comedor</i>	social dining room, soop kitchen	<i>taller</i>	workshop
<i>comuna</i>	comune	<i>villa</i>	informal district, from <i>¡villa miseriar</i> (misery village)
<i>cooperativa</i>	cooperative organisation	<i>ya esta</i>	<i>its done</i>
<i>cumbia</i>	popular music genre in Latin America, originally from Colombia, sub genre <i>¡cumbia villera!</i> deals about everyday life in villas, marginal/lower classes		
<i>croquis</i>	sketch		
<i>equipo</i>	team		

[115] Buenos Aires sobre la calle
Tacuarí / Venezuela



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