

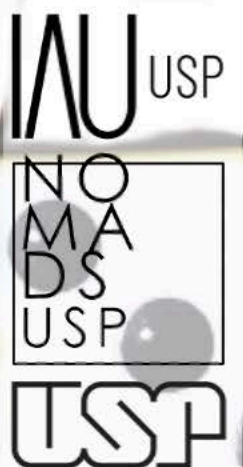
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MULTILATERAL
DIALOGUES
PRAXIS
INTERLOCUTIONS
CONFRONTATIONS

ENGLISH | PORTUGUÊS-ESPAÑOL
REVISTA . JOURNAL
ISSN 2175-974X
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UNIVERSITY OF SAO PAULO
INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM
NOMADS.USP INTERACTIVE LIVING
[HTTPS://REVISTAS.USP.BR/VIRUS](https://revistas.usp.br/virus)
DECEMBER 2025



MULTILATERAL DIALOGUES: PRAXIS, INTERLOCUTIONS, AND CONFRONTATIONS
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DIÁLOGOS MULTILATERALES: PRAXIS, INTERLOCUCIONES Y CONFRONTACIONES

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CASE-EXPERIENCE: METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEMPORARY METROPOLIS **CASO-EXPERIÊNCIA: DESAFIOS METODOLÓGICOS NA METRÓPOLE CONTEMPORÂNEA** **YURI COSTA, EDUARDO LIMA, CARLOS HENRIQUE DE LIMA**

Yuri Nascimento Paes da Costa é Advogado, Arquiteto e Doutorando em Arquitetura e Urbanismo pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de Brasília. Pesquisa políticas habitacionais sob perspectiva de gênero e sexualidade, com ênfase na população LGBTQIA+. yurinpdacosta@gmail.com

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/4846808962720194>

Eduardo Rocha Lima é Arquiteto e Doutor em Arquitetura e Urbanismo. Professor da Faculdade de Arquitetura e do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Cultura e Sociedade da Universidade Federal da Bahia. Possui interesse nas temáticas de apropriação do espaço, experiência urbana, corpos, gêneros e sexualidades. eduardolima@ufba.br

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/8364590024938492>

Carlos Henrique Magalhães de Lima é Arquiteto e Doutor em Urbanismo. Professor da Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de Brasília. Coordena pesquisas nas temáticas de urbanização contemporânea, ativismos urbanos, relações étnico-raciais na cidade, expressões populares e acervos, arquivos, fontes e narrativas urbanas. carloshenrique@unb.br

<http://lattes.cnpq.br/7899321988947015>

ARTICLE SUBMITTED ON AUGUST 10, 2025

Costa, Y. N. P.; Lima, E. R.; Lima, C. H. M. (2025). Case-Experience: Methodological Challenges in the Contemporary Metropolis. *V!RUS*, (30). Multilateral Dialogues: Praxis, Interlocutions, and Confrontations. Translated from Portuguese by Ana Carolina Sousa. 81-94 <https://doi.org/10.11606/2175-974x.virus.v30.239659>

Abstract

This paper aims to establish the case-experience method as a situated and critical alternative to the prevailing analytical approaches in Architecture and Urbanism. Drawing from empirical research on the *Habitar en Igualdad* program, which developed housing blocks for women and the LGBTQIA+ community in La Rioja (Argentina), we argue that urban knowledge is rooted in ethical engagement, attentive listening, and the researcher's embodied presence. The case-experience method is implicated, adaptive, and responsive, positioning itself to challenge normative categories, incorporate corporeality into knowledge production, and address specific subjects and territories. Additionally, this approach supports critical dialogue within research in Architecture and Urbanism, particularly in connection with social movements, vulnerable groups, and diverse contests over housing. We found that this method is pivotal for capturing the nuanced content of research involving multiple and complex urban social strata, especially in cities of the Global South. Furthermore, informed by feminist, decolonial, and queer perspectives, we contend that re-examining urban epistemologies is essential to addressing the inequalities that shape Latin American cities.

Keywords: Critical Methodologies, Situated Epistemologies, Dissidence, Housing Policies.

1 Introduction

Studies on contemporary metropolises have undergone significant transformations. The sources are diversified, with emphasis on the role of archives. Infrastructures began to be thought of in conjunction with other (non-human) species, resizing political approaches and perspectives (Tsing, 2021). At the same time, readings that place the body at the center of the debate gained momentum, repositioning gender and race as structuring elements of the urban scene. In this context, Judith Butler's (2018) formulation of the alliance of bodies stands out, as the collective presence in public space constitutes a political paradigm that, through appearance, redirects the agenda of struggles, expands the topics under debate, and stimulates mobilization. In this paper, we analyze how urban approaches have been affected by this context. We argue that the presence of the body in research concerns not only methodological choices, but also the means of investigation. We propose the term case-experience as an analytical key to understanding the horizontal, decentralized, and multiscale tensions in processes of spatial production, even when marked by asymmetries.

The case-experience concept emerged from an empirical study—a master's research—on the implementation of two housing blocks in La Rioja (Argentina) for the LGBTQIA+ population. We understood, in that research, that the La Rioja case was not a referential case, as Rosângela Cavallazzi (1993) proposed, a paradigmatic example of a pre-existing theory, but a study that requires the researcher to approach the agents of this spatial transformation directly. The case experience leads us to other ways of knowing the city, based on the researcher's situated experience in dialogue with the research subjects, not as objects but as producers of knowledge (Ribeiro, 2010). This perspective values the diversity of bodies and subjects that build the city on a daily basis and recognizes, in urban conflicts, a key to thinking about its transformations. This requires rethinking the analytical instruments of Architecture and Urbanism, overcoming the limitations of theoretical orthodoxies in the face of the complexity of social struggles. The approach proposed here is situated and critical, aligned with investigations of urban space that have sought new methodological paths, primarily through insurgent methodologies and epistemological disciplines (Tavares & Ramos, 2021). The paper is structured in three parts: the first presents the theoretical-methodological framework; the second, the empirical case of La Rioja; and the third, a discussion about the limits and powers of the case-experience as an investigative tool in Architecture and Urbanism.

This study contributes to ongoing critical and multilateral discourse in Architecture and Urbanism, characterized by engagement, debate, and dialogue regarding the metropolis as a contested space. By foregrounding the housing struggles of women experiencing violence and LGBTQIA+ populations, our objective is to challenge established research practices and highlight the non-linear, conflictual nature of habitat production in the Global South. Rather than emerging from consensus, urban development is shaped by the interplay of institutional housing models, insurgent collective practices, marginalized voices, and alternative modes of inhabitation. Within this frame, case experience is defined as a situated praxis that mediates these dialectics, aligning this paper with multiscale approaches to urban inquiry.

2 The crisis of classical methods and the emergence of new urban sensibilities

Traditional knowledge production in Architecture and Urbanism, especially in Latin America, is marked by colonial legacies and struggles to reflect critically on present urban conflicts. The methodological crisis begins with confusion between epistemology, methodology, and method. Epistemology critically reflects on the foundations, limits, and validity of scientific knowledge, asking who can know, from where, with what criteria, and with what interests (Japiassu, 1991; Baumgarten, 2016). Methodology is the theory of scientific investigation—a system of principles that guides the application of methods and connects research objectives to techniques (Marconi & Lakatos, 2003). Method refers to specific techniques used in research, such as interviews, observations, or cartographies (Cardoso, 1971). Rossana Tavares and Diana Ramos (2021) note that confusion between these concepts affects how knowledge is produced, taught, and validated in applied social sciences. Antonio Chizzotti (2003) argues that methodology ensures justification and coherence between theory and empirical procedures. Although essential, the method alone does not ensure critical knowledge. The lack of distinction among epistemology, methodology, and method perpetuates a technocratic model that often devalues undisciplined approaches, such as decolonial, feminist, and insurgent knowledge. We clarify these concepts to establish the basis of the debate.

For Miriam Cardoso (1971), using a method that views the object of research universally, without accounting for the historical and political conditions that shape it, will lead to assumptions incapable of addressing social problems that require greater engagement and critical thinking from the researcher. In Architecture and Urbanism, this implies that using methods as neutral tools, not considering the voices of the subjects participating in the research, “often marked by their surrounding social reality” (Chizzotti, 2003, pp. 230-230, our translation), can also lead to the disregard of the singularities of the research objects, in addition to contributing to reinforcing hegemonic structures of knowledge instead of questioning them. Once the conceptual confusion has been overcome, the field of Architecture and Urbanism must confront the fetishization of the technical method. It is necessary to reflect on the uncritical and systematic reproduction of methods within the teaching, investigation, and praxis of Architecture and Urbanism as a symptom that warrants deeper understanding. Part of this problem lies in treating scientific categories as universal, fixed, and immutable, while disregarding their historical, ideological, and social contexts of formulation. As Sandra Harding (1986) argues, mainstream epistemology itself ignores that its analytical instruments are also historically situated and politically implicated. For the author, the categories used in the social sciences are not static, and their instability must be recognized as a critical force. Instead of compromising science, epistemological instability enables analyses that are more sensitive to the power relations that permeate research.

Recognizing the situated character of knowledge does not entail relativism. As Donna Haraway (1995) warns, there are real risks in denying the materiality of the body and its pains, of territory and its conflicts. What is proposed is an embodied objectivity, a partial science, yes, but committed to life and to the collective construction of localized truths. It is not a matter of deconstructing everything, but of opening the way for practices that are more attentive to the concrete reality of urban subjects, including insurgent peripheries, collective occupations, and dissident bodies. The way in which science is told, therefore, as well as its narratives, strategies of visibility, vocabularies, and procedures, determines what can be recognized as truth (Harding, 1986; Haraway, 1995). Thus, every production of knowledge has political and symbolic implications, which make it necessary to pay attention to who tells it, how it is told, and what effects it has. In the field of Architecture and Urbanism, this means understanding that the chosen research method can operate as a mechanism of erasure, rendering subalternized bodies and popular knowledge invisible and treating spatial norms as technical and immutable truths, detached from their historical and political contexts. Therefore, rethinking methods is not a theoretical luxury, but an ethical and political urgency in the face of contemporary urban complexity and the structural inequalities that shape our cities.

Faced with the limited capacity that traditional methods of Architecture and Urbanism often offer for recording and analyzing the complexity of contemporary phenomena in Latin American cities, new investigative sensibilities have emerged from insurgent, gendered, racialized, and embodied perspectives. It is a set of practices and reflections that places at the center of the production of knowledge elements often ignored by the canons of urbanism and architecture, such as differences, the body, affection, conflict, and the contradictions of subjects and spaces. For Butler (2018), for example, bodies, when present in the public space and in alliance, produce not only a political presence but also an embodied, materialized knowledge, a form of collective intelligence that manifests itself in the streets and in material disputes for the city. Haraway (1995), on the other hand, when proposing localized knowledge, emphasizes that all knowledge is partial, situated, and relational; that is, it cannot ignore the positions and bodies from which one speaks, nor the effects of power that this entails. In this sense, the city itself becomes the work (Lefebvre, 2010) of multiple and contradictory knowledges, which challenge epistemic hegemony and require other forms of listening, analysis, and recording. In short: other more sensitive methods.

In this sense, undisciplined practices (Tavares & Ramos, 2021), critical and/or collective practices that emerge from researchers or popular expressions and collectives, such as urban, artistic, and technopolitical interventions (Lima, 2015), are options that are more ethically committed to the diverse sociopolitical reality of Latin America. In addition, these new methods can contribute to ways of reading, recording, analyzing, and constituting alternative collections of subaltern territories, destabilizing the disciplinary limits of Architecture and Urbanism, and proposing new embodied epistemologies. This does not mean rejecting or erasing all the knowledge already accumulated, as if we were condemned to absolute skepticism. On the contrary, it is precisely against the trap of total cynicism, as Haraway (1995) calls it, that we need to take a stand. The critique of the dominant epistemic structures does not imply the annihilation of the past. However, rather the proposal of insurgent deviations and reuses capable of building and elaborating other research methods and practices within the research body. As Anna Tsing (2021) suggests, amid the ruins and uncertainties left by the modern project, it is still possible to find precarious alliances, contact zones, and new forms of life in common. Within this scenario of instability and multiplicity, the task of urban research is also to open the way to possible worlds in which embodied knowledge can flourish. These new urban sensibilities not only strain the epistemological limits of the field but also require other ways of conducting inquiry. It is in this context that we propose the concept of case-experience as an insurgent, embodied, and critical methodological strategy, which we deepen in the following sections.

3 The experience of La Rioja and the emergence of the case-experience

Traditional case study methodologies are often anchored in comparative strategies aimed at extracting patterns, identifying recurrences, and formulating generalizations applicable to a universe of similar situations. This approach, although useful for some investigations, tends to disregard singular dynamics and the multidisciplinary contexts marked by political tensions that shape contemporary urban experiences. As proposed by Cavallazzi (1993), the concept of case-reference thus emerges as an alternative to this model, offering a critical lens of an interdisciplinary nature for analyzing singular urban scenarios situated in concrete reality, capable of illuminating theoretical premises without necessarily generating general rules. To put it more explicitly, according to Cavallazzi (1993), the case analyzed would not be the empirical purpose of the study, but rather a point of support for constructing theoretical categories, in a logic opposed to the merely illustrative or exemplary use of classic case studies. The methodology developed by Cavallazzi (1993), therefore, is profoundly marked by a broad vision, carried out interdisciplinarily with seams of normative analysis, observation of the territory, and theoretical reflections, presenting, in the end, criticisms that help to destabilize the universal, abstract, and functionalist forms of Urban Law and Urban Planning.

Thus, except for the methodology of the reference case proposed by Cavallazzi (1993), the master's dissertation from which this text is based was prepared (see note 1). In it, a very unique case was addressed because it was the first housing block fully financed by the Argentine government to provide housing to the LGBTQIA+ population, especially transvestites and transsexual sex workers. Throughout the research, it was necessary to distinguish between the case study and reference case categories. The second stage included analyzing various experiences with housing policies aimed at women and the LGBTQIA+ population in Latin America and Europe. Examples such as housing cooperatives in Uruguay, shelters in Colombia, legislative advances in Brazil, as well as projects such as *Lebensort Vielfalt* and *L.O.V.O* in Berlin and *Rainbow Houses* in Belgium and the Netherlands, were examined. These studies helped situate the research within the state of the art and recognize the exceptional character of *Habitar en Igualdad*, at least in the Latin American context. Unlike other cases, the Argentine program provided for professional training of future residents and did not require financial compensation. It also stood out as a policy of redistribution and recognition.

In turn, the analysis of the *Renacer blocks I and II* in La Rioja as a reference case (Cavallazzi, 1993) was important because it allowed: 1) to understand the institutional design of the program that financed the construction of the houses; 2) to visualize which political and social agents were involved in the process; 3) analyze legal guarantees that made it possible to pursue the policy; 4) analyze stages of the implementation of the policy and the construction of housing. In the end, it was also possible to measure the policy's projected objective advances not only in Argentina but also in South America, as well as the limits and obstacles that compromised its continuity. However, at the end of the dissertation, the limits of the notion of case study and case-reference became evident as we sought to decipher urban processes marked by contemporary conflicts that include intersectional issues and that cross the researchers themselves through a sensitive field experience. In other words, it was evident that although both models could offer valuable tools for the La Rioja scenario, direct contact with the

subjects and spaces researched could yield results not only on paper but also in the researchers' own reality. This demanded the proposal of a new methodological category: the case-experience.

Unlike studies based solely on bibliographic and documentary sources, case experience requires incorporating experience as a constitutive part of the analysis. The research carried out *in loco*, through field visits, conversations with residents, public and private agents, and third-sector organizations, showed the importance of this situated and implied dimension. The focus is no longer on rational, distanced explanation, but on an embodied mode of knowledge, attentive to the territory's tensions and powers. From the beginning, *Habitar en Igualdad* escaped the usual classifications in Architecture and Urbanism. It was not a conventional case study, as it lacked systematized data and replicability between provinces. Nor did it fully fit the case—reference model, as it was formulated in an uncertain, both legal and empirical, manner. Despite official announcements between 2019 and 2023 in cities such as Resistencia, Puerto Madryn, Santa Rosa, and Bariloche, only in La Rioja have the twenty-five units for women and the LGBTQIA+ population been effectively built. The singularity of the experience and its fragile institutionalization imposed direct presence as an investigative condition.

Despite being backed by a joint resolution from the ministries of *Territorial Development* and *Women, Gender, and Diversity*, the program lacked robust legal instruments to guarantee federal funding to the provinces. This legal instability, associated with the absence of updated public records and the growing institutional opacity caused by the Argentine political transition, made any attempt at remote research unfeasible. It was in this context that, in October 2023, I contacted various institutional and community actors to organize a field immersion for January 2024. The urgency of the gesture responded to the need to observe, listen, and experience the object of research from a situated presence. Between October and December 2023, I sent dozens of messages to public agencies at the federal and provincial levels, using institutional emails, social networks, and presentation letters. Only the Ministry of Women, Gender, and Diversity and the *Fundación Vamos a Andar* (FUNDAVA) responded, albeit in a limited way, as shown in Figure 1. The information received was not enough to guide the research remotely, but FUNDAVA's availability proved decisive. The institution has committed to establishing contacts with people involved in the program's development and implementation in La Rioja, serving as an anchor for research.

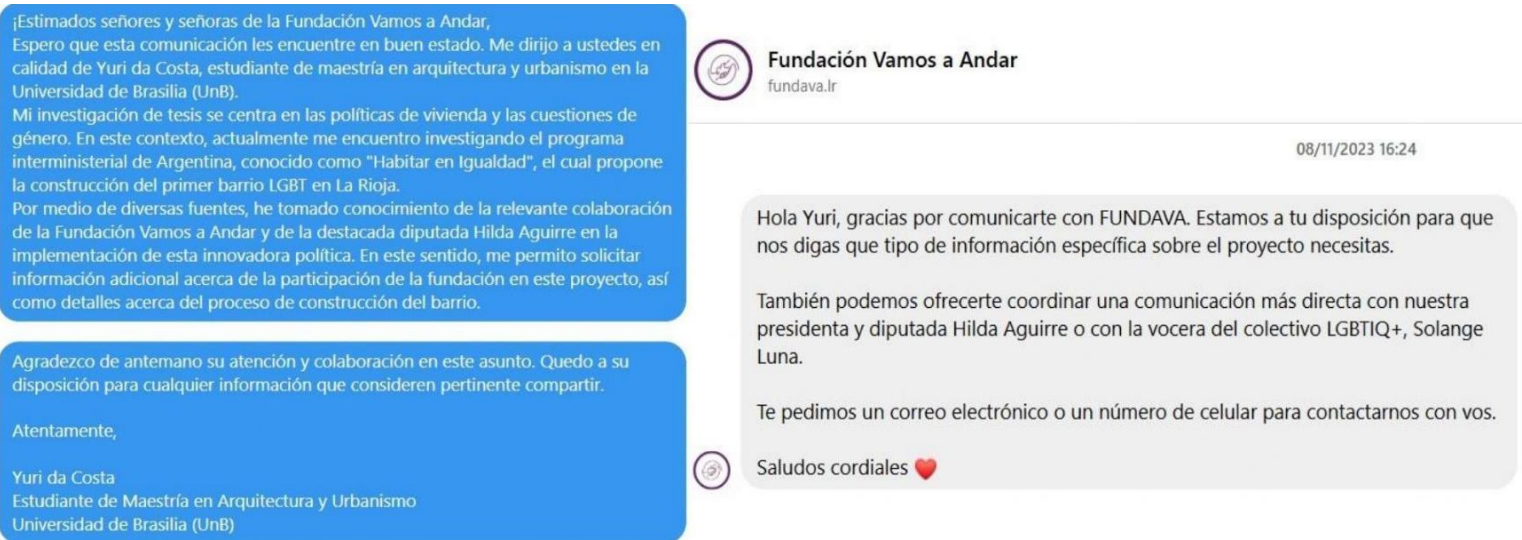


Fig. 1: Initial conversations with *Fundación Vamos a Andar*. Source: Yuri da Costa, 2024.

At the end of 2023, I reduced my contact with FUNDAVA; however, it was evident that the political instability of the presidential elections consumed all of FUNDAVA's and other public bodies' human and political resources in Argentina. The few ministries that had responded no longer provided updates, and Javier Milei's growing popularity also did not make it easy to conduct in-depth research on policies dedicated to gender and sexuality issues, which the far right sees as a preferred political target for criticizing progressive governments. Thus, in January 2024, I landed in Buenos Aires, with a visit scheduled to the *Ministerio del Desarrollo Territorial* and the *Ministerio de Mujeres, Género y Diversidad*, both of which are responsible for creating *Habitar en Igualdad*. However, I faced the abrupt deinstitutionalization of ministries and the suppression of public policies on gender and housing, necessitating the addressing of the vestiges of a collapsing policy. A single official who was

willing to give some information explained to me that not only was *Habitar en Igualdad* suspended, but also all federal housing programs, including the ministries themselves.

The situation led me to think about what Ann Laura Stoler (2013) proposes, that ruins are not limited to rubble from the past, but act as living structures that organize affections and relationships in the present. The buildings of the ministries visited in Buenos Aires, still marked by institutional signs, continued to house civil servants who remained in their posts, even without clear guidelines, as if they were performing an already absent State. Silences and misinformation mark the presence in these spaces, and it revealed not only the technical emptying of the housing policy investigated but also a profound process of institutional fraying. Politics, although still recorded in documents and speeches, no longer materialized as an active practice: it hovered like an interrupted promise and a memory in dispute. Despite this, what remained was to research *Habitar en Igualdad* not only as an empirical object but also as a political and epistemic decision to refuse the disappearance of a policy that made women and LGBTQIA people visible within the scope of housing policies in South America. By insisting on documenting a policy about to be extinguished, the methodological gesture was also converted into a practice of mourning and resistance (Butler, 2011) and a bodily practice felt in the face of the shock there in the ruins of the ministries: an attempt to preserve in the discourse and in studies on public housing policies those lives that the new government was trying to erase, both on the symbolic and material levels.

Therefore, the approach to *Habitar en Igualdad* did not unfold in a linear or preplanned way. It was marked by constant interruptions and rearrangements, requiring a methodological inflection guided by the urgency of establishing direct contact with the subjects involved in the formulation, implementation, and use of public policy. Upon arriving in La Rioja (Figure 1), shortly after the chaotic context witnessed in Buenos Aires, I was able to resume contact with FUNDAVA, primarily through Luciana de Soria, the institution's administrator and the daughter of the founder, national congresswoman Hilda Aguirre. In initial conversations, Luciana de Soria presented the foundation's history, created in 2008 with operations initially focused on the care of children in vulnerable situations. According to her, FUNDAVA has expanded its scope, becoming a reference center in welcoming, training, and assisting historically marginalized groups, such as women and the LGBTQIA+ population.

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Fig. 2: Records from the central area of the city of La Rioja. Source: Yuri da Costa, 2024.

After this introductory conversation, Luciana de Soria led me to the *Renacer I* and *II housing blocks*, still under construction, enabling photographic records and data collection for the research. The route to the site showed the distance between the

new housing units and the consolidated urban fabric of La Rioja. When asked about the location of the new blocks, Luciana de Soria explained that the initial area offered by the government of La Rioja was more peripheral and disconnected, and had been replaced by a more accessible one, with the guidance of the then federal minister Jorge Ferraresi. However, what I have witnessed is that the current area, although located between the consolidated neighborhoods of Victoria Romero and Humberto Arturo Illia (Figure 3), is still disconnected from the urban center and has a precarious urban infrastructure, revealing a pattern of spatial segregation that is frequent in urban policies aimed at the low-income population in Latin America.

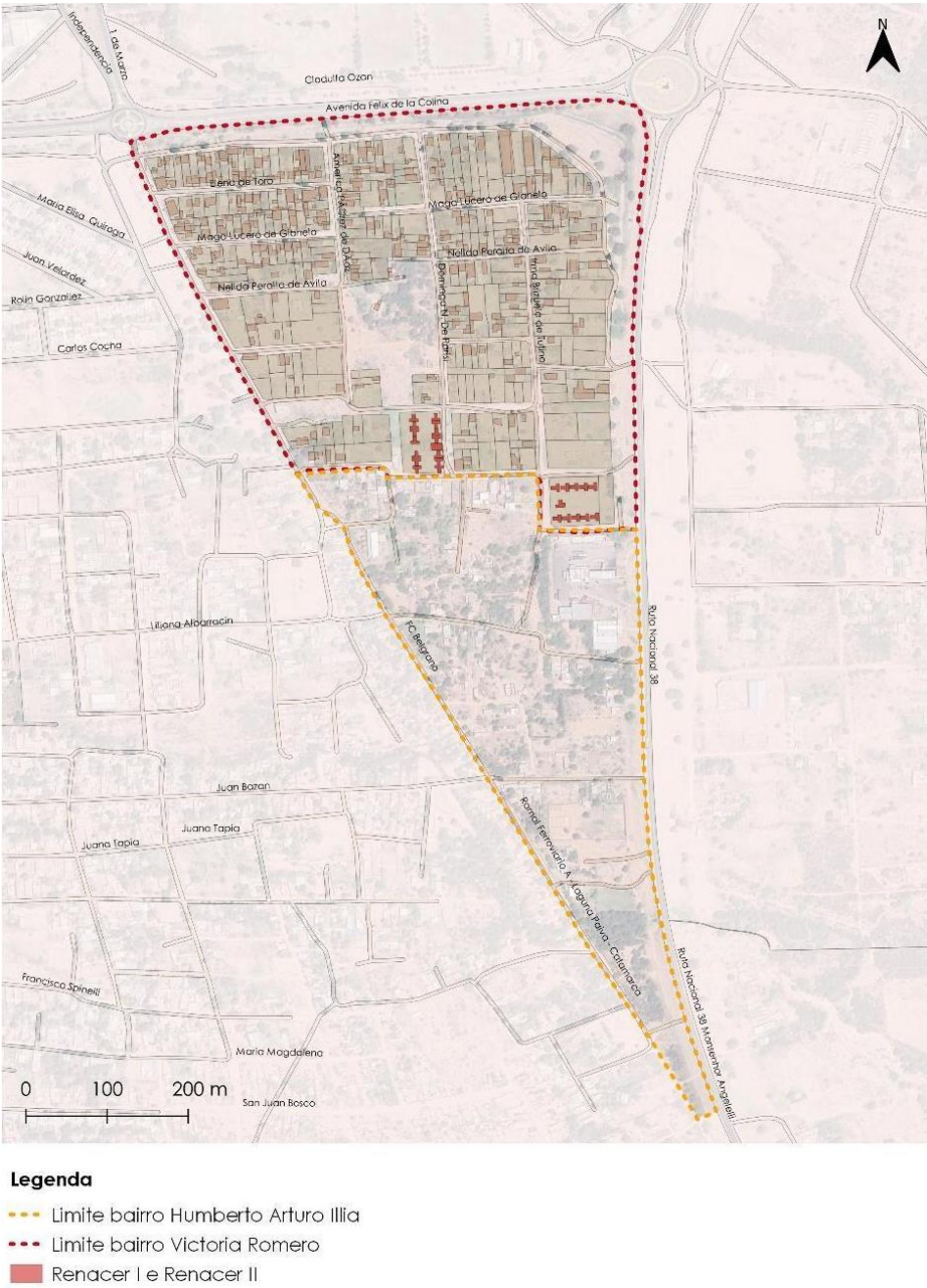


Fig. 3: Location of the Renacer I and II blocks and their respective boundaries with the neighboring neighborhoods. Source: Authors' own elaboration in QGIS software, based on Google Earth images, 2024.

The difference between the urban center and the surroundings of the aforementioned neighborhoods was evident: while the center concentrated buildings with mixed uses, cultural facilities, tree-lined squares, and consolidated urban infrastructure, the neighborhoods around the new blocks had a low mix of uses, low tree cover, and evident deficiencies in basic sanitation. Upon arriving at *Renacer I*, where some units had already been completed, the reality of the complex contrasted with images

of the institutional reports: houses built in raw masonry, without external finishing, flanked a dirt road (Figure 4). The scene clashed with the policy's formal promises, but not with Luciana's enthusiasm in the presence of a Brazilian researcher interested in the experience. Her warm welcome, while genuine, intensified a fundamental tension in me: how to be there to listen and, at the same time, maintain critical responsibility for the act of writing? How to reconcile affective involvement with the necessary analytical discernment? It was precisely this friction between presence and distancing that strengthened the formulation of the case-experience as a method that not only describes the field, but is shaped by the relationships, affections, and fractures that emerge in it.



Fig. 4: Surroundings of the construction of the new housing blocks. Source: Yuri da Costa, 2024.

The houses that were being built in La Rioja were also part of prototypes previously established by the *Prototipos de la Dirección Nacional de Programas de Habitat program*. According to Luciana de Soria, the chosen modality was carried out with the help of the population and is entitled *Individual between Blind Gables* (the lots of the courts were created from a blind gable), giving rise to rectangular terrains next to each other. The typology has two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a kitchen integrated with a living room, with a pre-structure built for future expansion, depending on the residents' needs. When I arrived in La Rioja, I already knew that these prototypes existed, which helped me understand the typology. It was also planned to have landscaping with permeable, natural soil in front of the housing units, a permeable parking lot floor, and permeable soil at the back of the housing units, which I immediately realized would not be delivered, as shown in Figure 5 below.



Fig. 5: Image provided by the extinct *Ministry of Territorial Development* (left) and reality found in La Rioja (right). Source: *Ministry of Territorial Development* and Yuri da Costa, 2024. Available at: <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/>. Accessed on: August 20, 2023.

I also noticed that the materials used in the final project did not correspond to those foreseen by the *Prototipos de la Dirección Nacional de Programas de Hábitat* or to the publicity images of the *Habitar en Igualdad* program. The housing units delivered in 2024 also do not have the finishes initially planned. It is possible to see, for example, that the houses were not painted in light colors (which would help reduce the impacts of La Rioja's climate), the external surfaces were left untreated against bad weather, and the soil was delivered with compacted earth, making it challenging to absorb rainwater, grow vegetables, and plant trees. Another worrying point is that the blocks do not have trees, the paving of the roads has not been completed, and the promised social facilities (square, social areas, and a hall for commerce and local services to be managed by residents) have also not been built, but have still been delivered and partially occupied as of April 2024.

After visiting La Rioja, Luciana de Soria directed me to two key individuals: the first, her mother, Congresswoman Hilda Aguirre, and the second, Solange Luna, an important activist and representative of the collective of transsexual women and transvestites, La Rioja *Chicas Trans Autoconvenidas*. Informal talks with Hilda Aguirre and Solange Luna took place in Buenos Aires, as Argentina was on the eve of its first major general strike of 2024 in protest of the reforms presented by the newly elected Milei government. In Buenos Aires, Hilda Aguirre received me in her office at the National Congress, where she clarified additional points regarding the construction of the housing blocks. She clarified, for example, that she considers herself a Catholic woman, with a political trajectory marked by initially conservative positions, having even voted against marriage equality in Argentina in 2010, but that her personal relationship with Solange Luna profoundly transformed her performance. The alliance between the two, forged in mutual listening and in the recognition of the dignity of differences, has become a political instrument for the realization of the right to housing for women in situations of violence, transvestites, trans women, and other sexual and gender dissidents, with a strong campaign with the government of La Rioja for the construction of these twenty-five houses.

The transformation narrated by Hilda Aguirre brings us back to Butler's (2018) formulation about precariousness as a basis for political alliances: it is not about shared identity, but about the possibility of recognizing in the other the vulnerability that also constitutes us. In addition, it was evident to us that political practices truly committed to social transformation are not born of ideological purity, nor will they always meet all the premises outlined in the traditional manuals of architects, urban planners, and technical jargon. As Gracia Trujillo (2020) clarifies, when we are faced with systematic violence directed at women and the LGBTQIA+ population in vulnerability, it is not enough for us to affirm difference as a value: it is necessary to build critical alliances that challenge the structures of exclusion and name the devices that sustain cisheteronormative privilege. This perspective allows us to understand the performance of Congresswoman Hilda Aguirre not as a simple contradiction between the conservative past and the progressive present, but as a concrete expression of the ambiguities

that cross the field of real politics. The rapprochement with Solange Luna and the defense of *Habitar en Igualdad* reveal the transformative potential of encounters, even (or especially) when forged in contexts marked by mistrust, risk, and uncertainty.

The conversation with Hilda Aguirre helped to clarify another important doubt: the non-continuity of *Habitar en Igualdad* in the other provinces initially announced. For her, the answer was simple: the growing strength of the far right in Argentina caused great fear among governors and deputies that they would lose political support. This enunciates something old: the use of housing policies as political capital. In this scenario, the right to housing is no longer seen as an ethical and constitutional imperative, becoming instead a symbolic commodity that can be granted to certain bodies but denied to others. As Monique Wittig (2022) argues, compulsory heterosexual thinking, existing within political discourses and imperatives such as that of Argentina, reveals not only a structure of desire but a material and discursive organization of social life, which defines who can have access to recognition, citizenship, and, consequently, urban space and housing. The refusal to implement policies aimed at these individuals does not stem only from cultural divergences, but from the need to maintain a social regime that expels unwanted lives from the condition of subjects of rights.

It is in this context that the insistence of both the congresswoman and the collective of transsexual women and transvestites in continuing with the program, even in the face of local criticism and resistance, gains strategic contours. In addition, Hilda Aguirre pointed out that the accusation that building housing would create ghettos revealed layers of hypocrisy that permeate so-called progressive urbanism. Now, even if Buenos Aires, the cosmopolitan capital, refused to implement more inclusive and plural housing based on the argument of universal integration, in fact, the selective silencing of dissent is what is perpetuated. Hilda Aguirre shares the position of her fighting comrade, Solange Luna, who considers the argument that the new housing blocks would only serve to spatially restrict the LGBTQIA+ population shallow. Solange narrated that more layers need to be analyzed; for that, she used clippings from her own life. Solange Luna spoke, for example, about her adolescence, when she started to live fully as a transsexual woman and that she visited the house of her other transsexual and transvestite friends and already realized the precariousness of housing: *“always renting to three, four, five [people] in one apartment... apartments that are actually neighborhood houses or spaces that someone had vacated and that were simply rented”* (our translation).

The conversation with Solange shows that research subjects are also producers of knowledge from the moment they anchor their arguments and reports in their lived experience. Solange’s lived experience reveals, for example, that the issue of the housing deficit is not only economic: transphobia is also present in this calculation and is constantly ignored by policies. The refusal of property owners, the marginalization of formal work, and daily violence make up a cycle of exclusions that makes the right to housing unfeasible. For Solange, community life among her own is therefore also part of the policy that must be observed and made visible, since it is a strategy of mutual care, resistance, and survival. Living together, sharing tasks, and creating solidarity networks is part of a way of life that challenges cisheteronormative norms of domesticity. By revisiting these conversations, I realized how much the bodily experience shifted the research’s axis. It has become impossible to ignore the abyss between theoretical critiques formulated from urban centers and the material reality of Latin American peripheries. The hypocrisy of discourses that condemn the ghettoization of sexual dissidence while systematically refusing its presence in consolidated spaces has also become evident. The arrival in La Rioja, with its conservative atmosphere and hostility to dissident bodies (including mine), revealed a field tensioned by inequality, but also crossed by radical forms of solidarity and political imagination. It was in this clash between institutional invisibilities, the experience of dissident bodies, and community resistance that the case-experience emerged not only as a method but also as an ethics of critical presence.

4 Weaving paths from paradigm to experimentation within the contemporary metropolis

The transition from paradigm to experimentation in the contemporary metropolis requires a critical review of traditional ways of knowing and researching the urban. In this item, we propose consolidating the case experience as a response to the logic of analytical distancing that still prevails in Architecture and Urbanism. As mentioned, the theories and practices of Architecture and Urbanism are historically structured under Eurocentric and disciplinary premises, which necessitate the exploration of new instruments capable of addressing the complexities that characterize cities and the urban experience of inhabitants of the Global South. This was evidenced, for example, when carrying out fieldwork in La Rioja, where it was not enough to describe *Habitar en Igualdad* as an innovative policy; it was necessary to experiment with another way of doing urban research, one that was not restricted to the collection and analysis of data, but that was capable of implicating the

researcher himself as a body and situated presence. What emerged, then, from this experience was not just a case study or case-reference (Cavallazzi, 1993), but a sensitive process of presence, listening, and political implication. It was from this experience that the proposal for a case-experience method emerged, an alternative to conventional analytical methodologies predominant in urban research.

Unlike the reference case, whose legitimacy is anchored in exemplifying theories or modeling good practices, the case-experience proposed here is built on the intertwining of research, experience, body, and territory. The production of knowledge does not take place on the margins of the processes but is incorporated into them. Starting from a critical epistemology (Harding, 1986) that refuses, therefore, neutrality as a criterion of scientificity, the case-experience calls on the researcher to recognize the place from which they produce their knowledge. The epistemological displacement that this method requires also implies a revision of the traditional categories that organize scientific practice. In La Rioja, the notion of object of research proved inadequate, exterminating bodies and their experiences, as it sought to encapsulate a set of lives in dispute for recognition, space, and dignity within abstract categories. The subjects of the research, dissidents of sex and gender, social and political actors, were not givens, but rather presences that spoke, resisted, and populated their places with power. The logic of objectification, characteristic of technocratic urbanism, was interrupted by the need to build a methodology oriented by relations rather than representations. The proposal of the case-experience is, therefore, to refuse distance as a criterion of validity and to institute another grammar for producing knowledge, one that starts from the bond, from listening, and from the committed response.

This type of investigative practice demands sensitivity, but it is not limited to affection; It requires care, but it is not depleted in listening. The case-experience aims to be both contributive and responsive: it responds to the bodies and territories that summon it. This implies understanding that it is not a matter of applying a method to a field, but of letting it be transformed by the field, constantly reconfiguring the paths of research. This transitory and unstable character of the method brings it closer to embodied objectivity (Haraway, 1995), in which knowledge emerges from assumed partiality, commitment to situated life, and refusal of epistemic cynicism. The ethics of this method are thus organized around responsibility rather than alleged impartiality. This is manifested in how the silences of the documents are heard, the absences in the urban layout are perceived, and the fractures between what is planned and what is realized are noted. In La Rioja, the non-fulfillment of the program's architectural promises, such as collective spaces and community facilities, was not only an empirical fact but also a sign of the precariousness of public policy toward dissident bodies and, at the same time, an invitation to situated and responsive criticism.

Going further, what is proposed here is also a disobedience: it is not intended to separate technical knowledge from experiential knowledge. We understand, as Beatriz Preciado (2011) does, that there is no way to maintain a disruptive and dissident practice without questioning the body itself, its normativities, and its forms of presence in space. Incorporating this perspective, therefore, means understanding the territory not only as a physical and analytical support, but also as a space of symbolic, performative, and micropolitical dispute. Therefore, the case-experience aims to throw light not only on what is visible, but also on what is silenced. In the case of La Rioja, not only is access to housing at stake, but also the very possibility of reconfiguring the ways of inhabiting and imagining the city, even in the face of contexts hostile to minorities of sex and gender. Briefly, the case experience, as developed in this research, is a method situated in and grounded in an embodied, politically implicated conception of science. It is structured based on five main characteristics: 1. Ethical and political implications, recognizing the presence of the researcher as part of the field and rejecting neutrality as a condition of validity; 2. Epistemological instability as a critical power that allows challenging fixed analytical categories and opening space for the complexity of urban territories and their subjects; 3. Methodological corporeality, which understands the body of the researcher and the subjects involved as a place of knowledge production and reciprocal affectation; 4. Intersectional sensitivity, which understands the relations between gender, sexuality, race, and class as constitutive dimensions of urban processes and not as isolated analytical cuts; 5. Methodological responsiveness requires research to be committed to the subjects and contexts investigated, seeking not only to represent but to respond ethically to the demands that emerge in the field.

It is important to note that the proposed systematization does not seek to mold the case experience into a normative mold. It is a situated and changeable description, formulated from empirical experience and the analytical demands of research. Recognizing epistemological instability as a central feature entails acknowledging that these guidelines can be reformulated,

nuanced, or discarded depending on the context. This ambiguity is part of the method, which does not intend to offer a fixed grammar of urban research but to inspire other forms of listening, presence, and production of knowledge in dialogue with the territories and subjects involved. The development of the case-experience was only possible because it did not come from an abstraction, but from a concrete experience, crossed by tensions and ethical decisions in the field. During the master's research, it was evident that the very choice of the theme—investigating housing policies for women and the LGBTQIA+ population in vulnerable situations in Latin America—was already a political position, given the scarcity of references and institutional invisibility. Persisting was, above all, a gesture of resistance. The case-experience proposal enabled us to recognize and legitimize this situated and engaged position as a strategy to address the absence of sources and to build knowledge from experience.

Choosing a critical theoretical basis was also a political gesture. It would not be possible to analyze housing and gender from cisheteronormative categories; it was necessary to deconstruct, disassemble, and reorganize the theoretical field of housing studies itself, as part of the research experience. Instability, in this sense, did not paralyze the course: it moved it. This time, the epistemological instability did not represent a fragility, but rather a strong opening to question the very foundations of pre-established canons by the field of Architecture and Urbanism, such as: What is gender? What is family? Who can be considered a priority public in a housing policy? Finally, the case experience is continuous: the research did not end with the dissertation's defense. The commitment to the subjects and territories investigated remains alive through continued research in the doctorate, feedback on the results to the community, partnerships with research groups, and dialogue networks built throughout the process. It is, therefore, a methodology that not only interrogates the world but is committed to it, affected by it, and, whenever possible, transformative.

5 Final considerations

This paper began with the observation that scientific research in Architecture and Urbanism in the Global South needs to find paths distinct from the categories of thought imposed by the Global North. The path taken was the development of the case-experience method, used to investigate and understand the struggle for the right to housing of transsexual women in La Rioja (Argentina), which led to the construction of housing enclosed within a pre-existing urban fabric. In this way, the research was concerned with articulating new contributions to scientific thinking in Architecture and Urbanism in South America, along with debates over different ways of inhabiting and perspectives on gender and sexuality, issues explored within the academy and in the practice of architects and urban planners.

We understand that thinking about the urban from experience implies the researcher's body as an instrument of listening, analysis, and response. Thus, this paper showed the limits of the traditional methods of Architecture and Urbanism, often anchored in technocratic rationalities, in the face of the ethical and political demands of contemporary urban territories. This became evident in the investigation of the housing blocks in La Rioja, built for dissident subjects of gender and sexuality within the framework of the *Habitar en Igualdad* program. The case-experience method, developed from this empirical immersion, does not radically oppose disciplinary legacy, but proposes a necessary displacement. Its construction emerged from the tension between theory and field, observation and experience, revealing itself as a critical practice of knowledge that transforms research into a space for radical listening and co-presence. The methodological experience allowed us to affirm that situated and embodied knowledge intensifies the analysis of complex urban processes.

The results found in the empirical investigation of *Habitar en Igualdad* validated the ethical and political urgency of the case-experience method as follows: 1. by observing instability and institutional ruins (the presence in Buenos Aires and La Rioja revealed the institutional fraying of politics, however, the method allowed us to face this situation not only as an empirical fact, but as a gesture of resistance (Butler, 2011) to document a policy about to be extinguished; 2. through the mismatch between the institutional promise and the project's execution (the absence of finishes, afforestation, and promised social equipment was not only a technical failure, but a sign of the precariousness of public policy when it is aimed at dissident bodies); 3. rescue of voices and displacement of subjects (the method enabled the displacement of subjects—trans women and transvestites—from mere objects of research to co-producers of knowledge); 4. identification of epistemic tensions (conversations with Hilda Aguirre and Solange Luna highlighted the hypocrisy of discourses that condemn ghettoization while systematically refusing the presence of dissident bodies in consolidated spaces).

Thus, the presence of the researcher as a Latin American queer subject involved in the field revealed dimensions inaccessible to detached analysis: the silences of the territory, political absences, and the fractures between promise and execution. Therefore, to assume the case-experience is to accept incompleteness as rigor, instability as deepening, and responsibility as an epistemic principle. It is not a prescriptive norm, but a critical experimentation, always situated. It invites other researchers to recognize their positions and limits, and to investigate the urban as a living field of dispute in which we are all entangled. Far from being a replicable model, the case-experience is, finally, a critical tool that is sensitive to the specificities of urban contexts, calling for methodological and epistemic responsibility. It does not end but instead invites the continuous inquiry into urban processes that challenge the ways of knowing and intervening in cities.

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