THE POLITICS OF INTIMACY IN ARGENTINA'S INTERIOR:
REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ERADICATION IN
THE EVERYDAY (1990-2020)

Rose Chabot
Department of Political Science
McGill University, Montreal
December 2024

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Abstract/Résumé

English

This dissertation analyzes the politicization and incorporation of reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence eradication policies across three Argentine provinces, from 1990 to 2020. Existing literature suggests that women's rights agenda strengthened during the Left Turn in Latin America, with many governments adopting gender equity laws and a deeper commitment to social rights and redistribution. The problems that women continue to face are therefore seen as a result of pervasive gaps between law and practice. This dissertation challenges these claims and demonstrates that exclusionary norms were sometimes firmly entrenched into policies since their inception, thereby shaping how women's rights are defined and implemented on the ground. I argue that this is an effect of economic and institutional neoliberal reforms implemented in the region in the 1990s—ranging from state decentralization and privatization to new social policy approaches to policy. As I argue, these reforms have had long-term impacts on the gendered politics of intimacy in contemporary Argentina, including further entrenching inequality and curtailing the implementation of women's rights agendas. The mechanisms by which this happens are two-fold. First, by fragmenting and restructuring the central state, neoliberal institutional reforms have *scaled down* social policymaking to the subnational level. Second, by effectively *scaling out* policymaking from the state to civil society, the social and economic logics of neoliberalism have permeated the institutionalization of reproductive rights and gender-based violence.

Based on ten months of fieldwork—including archival research, participant observation, and 94 interviews—this dissertation makes three theoretical contributions. First, it expands the scholarship on neoliberalism and gender equity, by demonstrating that women's rights and their ability to reduce social exclusions can be understood as situated political processes involving everyday negotiations between increasingly intertwined states, feminist movements, and women. Secondly, it posits that the massive, federalized feminist uprisings that have gained momentum since 2015 in Argentina constitute plural and context-specific responses to the neoliberal incorporation of international women's rights agendas. Thirdly, on a conceptual level, I coin the term "subnational gender justice regime" to describe everyday practices and discourses emerging within, across, and against a web of subnational policy institutions, feminist movements, conservative sectors, and women that negotiate social recognition and power redistribution between members of society.

Français

Cette thèse analyse la politisation et l'incorporation des droits reproductifs et des politiques d'éradication de la violence basée sur le genre dans trois provinces argentines de 1990 à 2020. La littérature existante suggère que l'agenda des droits des femmes s'est renforcé durant le virage à gauche, avec de nombreux gouvernements d'Amérique latine adoptant des lois sur l'égalité de genre et un engagement plus profond envers les droits sociaux et la redistribution. Les problèmes que continuent de rencontrer les femmes sont donc perçus comme étant le produit de lacunes persistantes entre la loi et sa mise en œuvre. Cette dissertation remet en question ces affirmations et démontre que les normes exclusionnaires ont souvent été fermement ancrées dans les politiques depuis leur création, façonnant ainsi la manière dont les droits des femmes sont définis et appliqués. Je soutiens que cela est un effet des réformes néolibérales mises en œuvre dans la région durant les années 1990—allant de la décentralisation de l'État et la privatisation aux approches néo-managériales des politiques sociales—qui ont eu des impacts à long terme sur la politique genrée de l'intimité dans l'Argentine contemporaine, y compris le renforcement des inégalités sociales et de genre et une mise en œuvre fragmentée des agendas des droits des femmes. Deux mécanismes produisent ces observations. Premièrement, en fragmentant et en restructurant l'État central, les réformes institutionnelles néolibérales ont déplacé la construction politique et sociale des droits au niveau sous-national. Deuxièmement, en élargissant la participation de la société civile, les logiques sociales et économiques du néolibéralisme ont pénétré l'institutionnalisation des droits reproductifs et de la violence basée sur le genre.

Basée sur dix mois de travail de terrain—y compris des recherches d'archives, des observations participantes et 94 entretiens—cette thèse offre trois contributions théoriques. Premièrement, elle élargit les recherches sur le néolibéralisme et l'égalité de genre en démontrant que les droits des femmes et leur capacité à réduire les exclusions sociales peuvent être compris comme des processus politiques situés impliquant des négociations quotidiennes entre des États, des mouvements féministes et des citoyennes, de plus en plus imbriqués. Deuxièmement, elle postule que les soulèvements féministes massifs et fédéralisés qui ont gagné en ampleur depuis 2015 en Amérique Latine peuvent être compris comme des réponses plurielles et spécifiques au contexte, face à l'incorporation néolibérale et fragmentée des agendas internationaux des droits des femmes. Troisièmement, sur un plan conceptuel, je propose le terme « régimes de justice de genre sous-nationaux » pour décrire les pratiques et discours quotidiens émergeant au sein, entre et contre un réseau d'institutions politiques sous-nationales, de mouvements féministes, de secteurs conservateurs et de citoyens qui négocient la reconnaissance sociale et la redistribution du pouvoir entre les membres de la société.

Acknowledgements

En primer lugar, esta tesis le debe todo a Argentina y a sus habitantes, que me recibieron con muchísima hospitalidad. Un país que adopté, creo, de la misma manera que me adoptó desde que inicié un año de estudios en la Universidad Nacional del Litoral, en 2014. Por lo tanto, quiero comenzar agradeciendo a todas las personas que me enseñaron su país con paciencia, generosidad, mucho amor y humor. En un momento en el cual las políticas que estudié en esta tesis están en peligro—así como un sistema universitario público único en el mundo—quisiera reconocer el enorme trabajo de las personas que participaron en esta investigación: lxs activistas, trabajadoras estatales, periodistas y otras. Se dedican a una tarea exigente tanto emocional como físicamente: la de apuntar a un mundo mejor para las mujeres. Gracias a todxs lxs que confiaron en mí al compartir sus experiencias, análisis y luchas, así como sus mates y bizcochos. Aprendí mucho más de ustedes de lo que una tesis puede contener.

Merci à ma famille et tout particulièrement mes parents Sophie et Alain, pour le soutien inconditionnel, les attentions constantes et la certitude que j'allais y arriver; et à mes sœurs Marie-Soleil et Chloé. La triade des Chabottes est maintenant rassemblée! Merci à mes grands-parents – Thérèse, Marcel, Lionel et Denise—tout particulièrement à mes mamies; Thérèse qui m'a poussée à entreprendre cette aventure et à me rendre jusqu'au bout et à Denise, dont la force féministe m'inspirera toute ma vie. Merci à oncles et tantes; spécialement à Nico pour le chalet, Sarah pour la méditation et pour parler d'avortement avec autant de passion que moi et Jean-Frédéric pour la pression à terminer! Merci à toutes mes cousines et à Sam, pour ton amitié et savoir que je peux compter sur toi. À ma filleule Viviane; cette thèse est pour toi. Je vous aime! A mi familia en Argentina. Alicia, gracias por creer siempre en mí, por compartir tanto con mucho cariño, tu rigor científico que me enseñó mucho. Euge, mi hermana, por gracias por acompañarme siempre en la vida. Las extraño y las abrazo. Gracias a la familia extendida también; y particularmente a Ernesto, por prestarnos el departamento en Buenos Aires, a los Deni rubios – Silvina, Javier, Juan, Malena y Luchi – siempre recordaré con afecto esta semana en City Bell. Gracias a Leo, Andrea, Goyo y Toto, por los cuantos asados, meriendas, y las idas y vueltas a Retiro o Ezeiza (con o sin pandemia). Gracias a Alicia Buero también, por acompañar siempre. Un gracias enorme a las hermanas Perdomo, Euge y Pato, por prestarnos el departamento en San Miguel y por las cuantas empanadas tucumanas (sin duda, las mejores). Gracias a Cecilia Castells y Pelusa Lucchini por la ayuda y la bienvenida en La Plata.

Of course, I would like to thank my chairs and committee members, whose guidance and encouragements were key in the completion of this dissertation. Thanks to my advisor Manuel Balán, for believing in me and inviting me to do something I would not have even imagined doing ten years ago, or ever. During those years you gave me all the freedom to follow the (ten thousand) ideas, topics, approaches I got interested in—always supportive of my intellectual intuitions and pushing me to keep exploring. Gracias por todo eso, y mucho más. Gracias also to my chair Tania Islas Weinstein. You arrived later in this journey, but your guidance, especially in thinking more precisely about what I wanted to say, was crucial to finishing this dissertation. Gracias por todo tu apoyo. Many thanks to Kelly Gordon; I reached your office on more than one occasion in search of guidance, and your support was key for me to stay on board. Thanks to Debra Thompson, for critically engaging with my research and believing in my increasingly unconventional approach. I would also like to thank all the professors from McGill and beyond who, at one point or another

iii

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Área Metropolitana de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires' Metropolitan Area, AMBA)
Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, CONADEP)
Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer (Latin American and the Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights, CLADEM)
Consejo Nacional de la Mujer (National Women's Council, CNM)
Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres (National Women's Encounter, ENM)
Encuentro Regional de Mujeres (Regional Women's Encounter, ERM)
Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género (Latin American Team for Justice and Gender, ELA)
Federación Obrera Tucumana de la Industria Azucarera (Tucumán Workers' Federation of the Sugar Industry, FOTIA)
Frente para la Victoria (Front for Victory, FPV)
Frente Progresista, Cívico y Social (Progressive, Civic, and Social Front, FPCS)
Fuerza Republicana (Republican Force, FR)
Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer (Foundation for Women's Study and Investigation, FEIM)
Gender-based violence (GBV)
Human Rights Committee (UNHRC)
Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina (National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina, INDEC)
Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IAHRC)
Laboratorio Industrial Farmaceutico (Industrial Farmaceutical Laboratory, LIF)
Mujeres Autoconvocadas de Rosario (Self-Organized Women of Rosario, Mujeres Autoconvocadas)
Multisectorial de Mujeres de Santa Fe (Multisectorial of Women of Santa Fe, MMSF)
Multisectorial de Mujeres de Tucumán (Multisectorial of Women of Tucumán, MMT)
Organization of the American States (OAS)
Partido Comunista Revolucionario (Revolutionary Communist Party, PCR)
Partido Justicialista (Justicialist Party, PJ)
Partido Republicano (Republican Party, PRO)
Partido Socialista Popular (Popular Socialist Party, PSP)
Proceso de reorganización nacional (National Reorganization Process, NRP)
Programme to Strengthen Assistance to Domestic Violence in Primary Health Care (PROFAVI)
Red de centros de asistencia a la víctima (Network of victim assistance centres, CAV)
Red de Profesionales de la Salud por el Derecho a Decidir (Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide, RPSDD)
Socorristas en Red – feministas que abortamos (Network of Caregivers – Feminists Who Abort, SenRed)
Unión Cívica Radical (Radical Civil Union, UCR)
United Nations (UN)
World Health Organization (WHO)

List of Appendices

Appendix I: Integration of a Feminist Research Ethic and Approach

Appendix II: List of Interviews

Appendix III: Interview distribution across issue area, type of participant, and province

Appendix IV: Sample of Interview Questionnaire

Appendix V: Ethics Certificate

Introduction

A FEMINIST DILEMMA

In Latin America, reproductive rights and gender-based violence eradication are situated at the political crossroads of the intimate and the moral. By raising key concerns about women's autonomy and self-determination,[1] these are usually seen as flagship feminist issues that challenge patriarchal norms about the traditional family, gender relations, and reproduction. When they are incorporated into state citizenship regimes with laws and policies, they are generally resisted as they touch upon some of the main moral pillars of states and societies since colonial times. This dissertation centres on the political construction of reproductive rights and gender-based violence as feminist political and policy issues in three Argentine provinces between 1990 and 2020. It inquires into how gender justice regimes[2] have been institutionalized and transformed shaped by different governance models, intersecting social inequalities, as well as power-ridden political, social, and normative conflicts.

Latin America and the Caribbean is generally seen as a pioneer in adopting regional and national policy instruments to combat violence against women, including the 1994 Belén do Pará Convention, national laws on prevention, assistance, and sanction, as well as the criminalization of femicide. Yet overall, criminal and civil justice measures still appear to protect women inadequately from gender-based violence (Htun and Jensenius 2020; Tapia Tapia and Bedford

---

[1] Throughout this dissertation, I employ the term "woman" as a political and social category, therefore including cis women, transgender women, and non-binary persons who identify with this gender. When discussing abortion, I consider as abortion seeker any person with reproductive capacities regardless of their gender identity, including mostly cis women but also, non-binary and trans men.

[2] In this dissertation, I define gender justice regimes as everyday practices and discourses emerging within, across, and against a web of subnational policy institutions, feminist movements, conservative sectors (including religious, judicial, and health sectors), and women that negotiate gender recognition and power redistribution between members of society. See Chapter 1 for a detailed conceptualization of this concept I develop borrowing from historical feminist institutionalism's concept of citizenship regime (Jenson 2006; 2001; Orloff 1996) and Nancy Fraser's (2003; 2007) gender justice approach.

2021). Latin American women indeed continue to experience physical, psychological, sexual, symbolic, and economic gender-based violence daily and are murdered at high rates, mostly by their male intimate partners (MESECVI 2017). Violence against women often takes place within the intimacy of familial and social relations, and this complex issue remains an important concern for Latin American democracies, affecting women's rights to health, life, and integrity. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), in 2022, one gender-related killing of a woman occurred every two hours in the region—that is, at least 4,050 femicides (CEPAL 2022, online). Strong social norms that naturalize and reinforce the heteropatriarchal family model, tend to normalize violence committed against women in intimate relations and limit the enforcement of existing laws. While pervasive in all social sectors, women's vulnerability to violence is also shaped by contexts of highly gendered and racialized socioeconomic exclusion through significant rates of labour informality and weak welfare service provision in the areas of health, housing, education, and social assistance (Fregoso and Bejarano 2010; López, Caballero, and Rodríguez 2010; Menjívar and Walsh 2017; Ríos 2010; Walsh and Menjívar 2016). The extreme rate of patriarchal violence perpetrated against women and LGBTQI+ and tolerated by states, is thus an integral component of the low-intensity democracies in Latin America and the Caribbean (Hilgers and Macdonald 2017b; Kurtz 2004).

Women's exclusion from citizenship in the region is also rooted in historical and ongoing restrictions on reproductive autonomy through different maternalistic[3] institutional arrangements (Barroso and Bruschini 1991; De Zordo 2012; Miller 2010). Until the early 2000s, in most

---

[3] Koven and Mitchell (1993, 4) define maternalism as the "ideologies and discourses which exalted women's capacity to mother and applied to society as a whole the values they attached to that role: care, nurturance and morality." I define this concept more extensively in Chapter 1.

countries of Latin America, contraception and sexual and reproductive health counselling were either prohibited or only accessible to a minority of women, through private healthcare. Abortion has been heavily restricted or completely prohibited in most countries, forcing most pregnant persons to seek clandestine abortions and undergo unsafe procedures (CEPAL 2010). Unsafe abortion is indeed considered one of the most pressing social and health problems in Latin America, affecting the health, well-being, and lives of approximately four million women annually (World Health Organization 2012, 2).[4] Even when partially liberalized for therapeutic, ethical, or eugenic reasons,[5] access to abortion services remains limited due to ongoing stigmatization, and individuals seeking it are subject to mistreatment and institutional violence, generating gendered exclusions by class and race (Bergallo 2014a; Berro Pizzarossa 2018; Singer 2022). Despite some improvements in the past twenty years, unwanted pregnancies and low access to reproductive health and rights are still pervasive today, especially for teenagers.[6] Since the third wave of democratization in the 1980s, feminist movements throughout Latin America have thus never stopped demanding institutional and societal changes to increase their access to basic human rights (Álvarez 2014; Lacombe and Marteu 2015).

---

[4] Unsafe abortions are intimately tied to women's unmet sexual and reproductive health needs. The lack of access to sex education and information, alternative life opportunities (including education, employment), contraceptive methods, and healthcare in proper and safe conditions affects mostly young, socioeconomically marginalized women (including poor, less educated, Indigenous, and Black women), and are seen as driving the high rates of unwanted pregnancies in the region (Moloney 2009; World Health Organization 2012).

[5] Therapeutic abortions are permitted when a pregnancy poses a threat to the health or life of the pregnant person. Ethical abortions are carried out in cases of rape, while eugenic abortions refer to those performed on individuals with disabilities.

[6] With family planning policies, the accessibility of contraceptive methods, and the massive entrance of women to the workplace, fertility rates have been in constant decline in Latin America, dropping 64% (from 5.9 children in 1950 to 2.1 on average in 2005-2010). However, this rate has been much slower among the adolescent population and has even seen a relative increase when compared to other age groups (20-35 years old), making Latin America the leading region in adolescent fertility (CEPAL 2010, 71). Between the 1990s and the 2000s, the proportion of children born to adolescent mothers who were unwanted increased, reaching levels close to 60% in Peru, Colombia, and Bolivia (CEPAL 2010, 73).

Among its Latin American counterparts, Argentina is usually depicted by scholars and policymakers as being at the forefront of progressive politics in the region. This middle-income country is often qualified as "more European," due to its large population of European descent, its lower rates of social and economic inequality, its higher living standards, and literacy rates (Huber and Stephens 2012a). Despite being a historically maternalistic and familialist[7] state, the presence of strong feminist and LGBTQI+ movements in Argentina have led to important, yet non-linear legal efforts to address inequalities and exclusions affecting women, sexual, and gender minorities (Lopreite and Rodríguez Gusta 2021). Following a decade of neoliberal social conservatism and economic reforms during the 1990s, the Left Turn (2003-2015) indeed marked what was seen as the progressive expansion of reproductive rights and anti-gender-based violence policy. The adoption of national policies concerning family planning and birth control in 2003, sex education in 2006, same-sex civil union and adoption, and a gender identity law in 2012, have expanded sexual and reproductive rights. Since a Supreme Court ruling in 2012,[8] a set of state protocols and measures have also facilitated access to lawful abortions, until the legalization of abortion on demand in 2020 (Lopreite 2022).[9] Furthermore, the adoption of a domestic violence law in 1994, a more expansive gender-based violence law in 2009, and the

---

[7] Familialism is defined as a discursive and ideological framework for the institutionalization of unequal power relations within and among familial bodies (Haney and Pollard 2003). I define this concept more extensively in Chapter 1.

[8] Despite the presence of un-penalized abortions, lawful abortions were rarely accessible in practice until 2012, when the Argentinean Supreme Court Ruling F.A.Ls. affirmed the state's obligation to provide the service (Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación 2012).

[9] Under specific circumstances—as per article 86 of the 1921 Argentinian criminal code— abortions were free of sanctions in the case of a danger for the pregnant woman's health or life or in the case of rape of an intellectually disabled woman ("*mujer idiota o demente*"). Abortions done outside of these specific circumstances were punishable with prison terms of one to four years, for those who practiced it on themselves or others. The law adopted in 2020 includes women and "gestating persons" ("*persona gestante*") as legal figures with to access abortion rights.

criminalization of femicide in 2012[10] are positive steps in the state's regulatory and policy interventions on the issue of gender-based violence against women.

However, if the legal and policy instruments developed domestically to address gender inequalities since the 1990s reflect Argentina's increasing compliance with its international human rights commitments, their implementation has varied significantly, creating a gap between the letter of the law and its practical application (García Del Moral 2019). Despite what seems like a progressive incorporation of gender equality agendas, a wave of feminism re-emerged to denounce those implementation gaps (see Natalucci and Rey 2018). Large-scale feminist movements, such as the Ni Una Menos and the Green Tide, have indeed mobilized against femicides/feminicides,[11] for the legalization of abortion on demand, and voiced women's discontent with the status quo. With the return of the Centre-Right in 2015-2019, the post-Left Turn era announced a more uncertain political climate for women's rights in the country.

In 2015, the femicide of fourteen-year-old Chiara Páez in a rural town in the province of Santa Fe triggered massive mobilizations throughout the country, attended by approximately 250,000 people denouncing the persistence of patriarchal violence in the country's homes, workplaces, state, online platforms, and streets (Laudano 2017; Stefanetti 2019). While since the 1980s, feminist activists have advocated for the politicization of violence against women, this

---

[10] In fact, Argentina's criminal code reform typified the murder of a woman as an expression of gender inequality and as "aggravated homicide." As such, the term "femicide" was not legally incorporated, but is nonetheless frequently used in judicial implementation of the article (Brunke and Boira 2021).

[11] The term "femicide," coined by feminist movements in the 1970s and brought to academia as a concept by the radical feminists Diana Russell and Jill Radford (1992), is the misogynistic murder of a woman because she is a woman. In the early 2000s, Mexican feminist, activist, and legislator Marcela Lagarde adapted the concept to Latin America through the term *feminicidio*: the ensemble of violations of women's human rights, which contain the crimes against, and the disappearances of women, committed through a broad array of political and institutional causes, including systemic impunity (Lagarde 2006). Indeed, Lagarde argued that systemic impunity is inherent to the definition in the Latin American context.

broad-based, decentralized coalition of associations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), networks of activists, ordinary citizens, and journalists were mobilized massively and demanded additional state protection and intervention. Activists and families of victims also fiercely denounced the police and judiciary systems' complicity in ongoing impunity around patriarchal violence in the country.[12] The rise of Ni Una Menos thus brought a mixture of disillusionment and rejection of the state with a strong desire to reform its approach to address the issue of gender-based violence, particularly in intimate relations.

Then, in 2018, large protests known as the Green Tide, symbolized by a green scarf, also surfaced amid the first debates on abortion legalization driven by the *Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito* (National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe, and Free Abortion, thereafter National Campaign) (Alvarado et al. 2019; Vacarezza 2021). Since 2005, the National Campaign has advocated in favour of abortion legalization, building alliances with the public health sector, human rights movement, and cross-partisan legislative coalitions. The campaign has connected with strong pressure from the streets to overcome important religious resistance to women's bodily autonomy in society and institutions (Tarducci 2018). Despite existing laws on sexual and reproductive health, sex education, and growing, but still limited, safe abortion access when permitted, feminists demanded better implementation and broader abortion rights.

---

[12] On February 8th, 2021, the feminicide of eighteen-year-old Úrsula Bahillo committed by her partner, a police officer in the province of Buenos Aires, triggered yet another set of protests attended by thousands of people in different cities throughout Argentina (BBC News Mundo 2021). In Úrsula Bahio's case, not only was the perpetrator a member of the provincial police forces, but a widely shared WhatsApp recording also revealed the victim's multiple, unsuccessful attempts to report her partner's violent behavior to the local police station, sent only a few hours before her assassination. In *BBC News Mundo*. "'Un ser de luz': quién era Úrsula Bahillo, la joven asesinada a puñaladas por su exnovio policía a pesar de las múltiples denuncias." *BBC News Mundo*, 2021. https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-56093328.

These movements reflect widespread dissatisfaction with pervasive gender inequalities and persistent demands for the meaningful inclusion of women, as well as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and gender non-binary individuals (LGBTQI+), within the Argentine citizenship regime (de la Paz Toscani, Rosa, and Vidosa 2023; Di Marco 2010a; Gago 2020a; Stefanetti 2019). Yet, on December 30th, 2020, when abortion on demand was legalized, President Alberto Fernández proudly claimed that he had finally "defeated patriarchy," which provoked a mix of irk and laughter from many feminists, who perceived the president's enthusiasm as somewhere between naïveté and presumptuousness.[13] During my first fieldwork conducted only a few months before the adoption of the abortion law, a legislator and feminist activist who was part of the National Campaign told me:

> If we achieve this new turning point of the legalization of abortion in Argentina, patriarchy will not fall. We will continue working to ensure that abortion is truly guaranteed because overnight we won't achieve it in Tucumán, Salta, or Corrientes. But if such an event [were] to happen, if we were to go home, we would face enormous setbacks. We have to keep going, pursuing the feminist agenda. It needs to remain highly active on the streets, and we need to set more dates to keep pushing forward until younger generations renew the state.*[14]*

This perceived necessity to renew the state hinted, beyond the law itself, at an implicit concern for reproductive justice,[15] through ensuring the accessibility of abortion, particularly in more conservative areas of the country; it placed the bill as another point of departure rather than a destination. This observation sheds light on a tension among feminists, regarding the role of the

---

[13] *La Nación*. "'Fin al Patriarcado': Ofelia Dijo Que Sintió 'Cringe' Por Alberto Fernández." December 5, 2021. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/politica/fin-al-patriarcado-ofelia-fernandez-dijo-que-sintio-cringe-por-alberto-fernandez-nid12052021/.

[14] Interview with the Provincial Deputy of the Equality and Participation Bloc. In-person, in Rosario, Argentina, February 26, 2020.

[15] The concept of reproductive justice emerged from the work of Black feminist activists from US-based SisterSong Collective in the late 1990s, in response to the individualistic, liberal pro-choice paradigm that dominated US feminist reproductive rights activism. The concept sought to bring attention to the racial and class inequalities encountered when *accessing* abortion, sexual and reproductive health resources, and human rights for safe and sustainable communities more broadly (Ross 2017; Ross et al. 2001). I return to this concept in Chapter 1.

state in feminists' political project. In fact, paradoxical demands have emerged from these contemporary feminist movements: public denunciations of states' role in perpetuating gender inequalities—both through action and omission—often go hand in hand with demands for greater state intervention on issues historically considered as part of the private sphere.

On the one hand, recent feminist movements build on a historical trajectory of women's movements that perceive states as spaces where widespread, gendered violence against women, girls, and adolescents is committed, legitimized, and reproduced (Barrancos and Archenti 2017; Bohn and Levy 2021; Vargas 2002). Yet, on the other hand, many feminists within these movements perceive the state as a vehicle responsible for addressing and resolving gender injustices and inequalities to guarantee that women benefit from plain citizenship. This dilemma regarding the role of the state in feminist struggles and political projects is also exemplified in tensions I observed surrounding the pro-abortion rights protest slogan, "Legal abortion in the hospital!" which was chanted widely during the Green Tide pro-abortion mobilizations in Argentina in 2018. For many feminist advocates, the slogan symbolized the state's duty to uphold its obligation to assist those seeking abortion through public healthcare. However, the slogan was also cautiously regarded by autonomous feminist sectors, such as grassroots feminist collectives, who viewed the complete relegation of abortions to the state with suspicion—as being overly disciplining, bureaucratizing, and medicalizing. Instead, since the early 2010s, they had pushed for the feminist accompaniment of self-managed abortions as a more radical expression of bodily autonomy and reappropriation (Atienzo et al. 2023; Burton 2017b; Vacarezza and Burton 2023).

One could therefore argue that the recent wave of feminist mobilizations in Argentina, mirror a historical and unresolved dilemma among Argentine feminists: the role that states *can* and *should* play in the quest for transformative change toward gender equality and justice. This dissertation centres on different facets of this state dilemma experienced by Latin American feminist movements, and how navigating it shapes Argentina's gender justice regime. It explores whether, why, and how changing political and economic circumstances have shaped how feminist movements in Argentina have approached the state dilemma and challenged citizenship regimes.

DISSERTATION INQUIRIES AND GOALS

In this dissertation, I investigate how states, feminist activists, and women negotiate reproductive rights and anti-gender-based violence policies in the wake of the incorporation of the international women's rights agenda in the 1990s. This dissertation unpacks the reasons why and the mechanisms through which the women's rights agendas have not allowed for a complete transformation of Argentina's gendered citizenship regime. More specifically, this dissertation seeks to answer three sets of questions:

1) Why have the radical transformations of Argentina's gender regime—characterized by a combination of maternalism and familialism since the 1990s and also by the increased incorporation of the international women's rights agenda to legislation and policy—not led to substantive social inclusion for women? How have gendered exclusions persisted and evolved since the 1990s?

2) What roles have Argentine women's and feminist movements played in institutionalizing feminist issues between 1990 and 2020? How are women, particularly socioeconomically marginalized women, included in this process?

3) What is the relationship between the Argentinian state and feminist and women's movements? In what ways has this relationship transformed the state?

This dissertation is primarily inductive, exploratory, and empirically grounded. Rather than aiming for theory testing, it embraces a logic of discovery and seeks to contribute to theory-building in a vastly understudied area of research, integrating insights from a plurality of social science disciplines (Reichertz 2019; Strauss and Glaser 2017; Wuest 1995).

SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

This dissertation argues that neoliberalism, as a path-dependent system of policies, discourses, and practices legitimizing and enforcing market progress,[16] has had long-term impacts on the gendered politics of intimacy in Argentina. By fragmenting and weakening the central state, neoliberal reforms during the 1990s *scaled down* the locus of feminist intervention and conservative resistance to the subnational level and *scaled out* policymaking to civil society. In that sense, neoliberal governance re-localized the problematization[17] of reproductive rights and gender-based violence during the Left Turn, which has become enmeshed in historically constructed subnational citizenship regimes, which I call "subnational gender justice regimes."[18] In turn, despite adopting international women's rights agendas during the neoliberal decade,

---

[16] I define neoliberalism in more details in Chapter 1.

[17] I understand the term "problematization" from a Foucauldian-inspired perspective, as adapted by Caro Bacchi (1999a; 2012) in her approach to policy problems. I detail my analytical and methodological approach in Chapter 2.

[18] Detailed conceptualizations of "gender justice regime" and its subnational variant are contained in Chapters 1 and 2 respectively.

these rights have not been uniformly applied across Argentina. Instead, they have been filtered and reinterpreted by subnational actors, sometimes enhancing or limiting their meaning, goals, and instruments since their inception. Consequently, policies adopted on reproductive rights and gender-based violence in response to the international women's rights agenda are not feminist in and of themselves, but the product of ongoing, everyday, and situated negotiations, resistances, and challenges defining and delimiting gendered access to citizenship.

Through state privatization and an increasing reliance on non-governmental women's organizations and women themselves for the survival of communities, neoliberalism has complicated feminist and women's movements' relationships with the state in Argentina. Indeed, when seeking access to health or assistance, feminist networks, organizations, state workers, and women themselves must now navigate across diverse subnational gender justice regimes. Ultimately, this dissertation posits that the massive, federalized feminist uprisings that have intensified since 2015 in Argentina and the dilemmas women experience with regard to their relationship with states can be unpacked as situated responses to the neoliberal incorporation of international gender equality policy agendas. Often, reforms have led to blurring the historical boundaries between states and societies and consequently, between autonomous and reformist strategies of feminist transformation.

Theoretically, this dissertation makes three claims. First, it both challenges and complements feminist scholarship in political science which emphasizes the importance of disaggregating gender policy areas according to the patriarchal norms and the institutions they challenge (Htun and Weldon 2018). By chronicling neoliberalism's decentring of the central state as the main locus of authority and legitimacy in regulating "intimate" issues, this

dissertation demonstrates that reproductive rights and gender-based violence eradication policies, and the public-private divides they challenge, are themselves territorially fragmented. This dissertation shows how territorialized sociopolitical arrangements have become more salient since the neoliberal decade and how they play into ongoing gender, racial, and class inequalities in Argentina, despite important advances in women's rights agendas.

Second, this dissertation shows that since the neoliberal decade, political conflicts surrounding gendered inclusion as a political process are not confined to central legislative, executive, and judicial institutions. Policies concerning reproductive rights and gender-based violence are comprised within broader political and social processes, and unfold in provincial legislatures, local state offices, hospitals, courts, universities, but also NGOs, grassroots feminist organizations, and the media. By focusing on rights and policy trajectories from their initial politicization to their implementation, I illustrate how gender justice regimes are historically constructed processes that precede and exceed policy change. Consequently, I assess the ability to secure reproductive rights and gender-based violence eradication not only through formal instruments, but through everyday discourses and practices that intervene in the political construction of gendered social differences and hierarchies. In that sense, gender equality issues and policies in Argentina have become ongoing political battlefields where actors in and outside the state make and unmake—or at least, challenge—gendered social exclusions that underpin institutions such as the family, intimate relations, and reproduction.

Third, this dissertation builds on the literature in political geography, which argues that neoliberalism has structurally rescaled statehood at the subnational level and deepened territorialized socioeconomic inequalities within countries (Brenner 2004). Building on these

claims, I posit that these processes, which are also gendered, have reshaped both feminist policy areas and political projects in enduring ways. Instead of focusing on the capital city, this dissertation adopts a subnational comparative analysis centred on three provinces of the interior of Argentina. I advance that feminist and women's movements outside capital cities participate in the politicization of issues and the implementation of policies in ways that do not always match what is observed in the centre, or capital city. If women's rights are constructed in different subnational contexts according to local power inequalities and arrangements, then women's and feminists' forms of resistance are also historically and geographically situated (Kandiyoti 1988).

CONTRIBUTIONS

This dissertation makes theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions to the fields of comparative politics, women and gender studies, and public policy. First, while the literature often highlights pervasive gaps between law and practice as responsible for pervasive gender inequalities in Latin America, this dissertation instead discusses how exclusionary class, gendered, and racialized norms were sometimes institutionalized within policies since inception and within various subnational contexts in Argentina. Instead of positioning the adoption of national-level feminist legislation as inherently indicative of progress, this dissertation calls for a more cautious assessment. I aim to demonstrate that feminist issues are politicized through territorially anchored political contention, both within and beyond the realm of policy. Reproductive rights and gender-based violence constitute illuminating sites of analysis, because they are generally understood as feminist challenges to two forms of social and institutional patriarchal resistances: familialism and maternalism. Through these rights and policies, the political (de)construction of gendered exclusion is often thought to unfold, challenging in

13

sometimes coherent, sometimes contradictory ways, what is possible for "women" and "men" to become.

Second, this dissertation contributes to feminist scholarship that questions a common claim that the third wave of democratization opened a homogeneous window of opportunity for feminist movements to meaningfully implement women's rights agendas in Latin America (Friedman 1998; Okeke–Ihejirika and Franceschet 2002a; Vargas 2002). Instead, subnational gender justice regimes form a multiplicity of windows of different shapes and sizes, that open and close, filter, appropriate, or push back against feminist demands. These windows particularly affect the lives of lower-class and racialized women in different parts of the interior, who tend to experience greater exclusion while also relying on public services. These conclusions demonstrate the epistemic importance of breaking the limits of the central state as the main actor in the implementation of women's rights and including all the actors who partake in the problematization and institutionalization of feminist issues instead.

With only a few exceptions (see, among others, Beer 2019; 2020; Franceschet 2010; 2011; Lopreite 2020; Ruibal 2018a; Smulovitz 2015), the study of gender policymaking in Latin America has rarely been scaled down to the subnational or provincial level in comparative politics, and even less so from an interpretive perspective (see Simmons and Rush Smith 2021). By grounding comparisons of areas within Argentina's interior and comparing a variety of experiences within one country, this dissertation disrupts methodological nationalism and sheds light on how different interpretations of the social and political world can coexist. This research design, therefore, aligns with an epistemological critique of what is often assumed as the centre of politics, agency, and power—that is, national-level legislatures, ministries, justice systems,

14

and actors situated in capital cities. By incorporating the voices of women from different provinces in Argentina, I sustain that policies are not simply designed and transferred from the top down, but that they are constituted actively locally (Abramowitz and Moran 2012; Fregoso 2014; Merry and Levitt 2017; de Souza and Rodrigues Selis 2022). In turn, unveiling how women from the interior of Argentina tackle the dilemmas they face and how they make sense of women's rights, allows for a finer theorization of feminist struggles.

Therefore, this dissertation joins the scholarship that questions conceptual assumptions prevalent in political science, especially regarding the supposed monolithic and homogeneous nature of the state (see Alvarado, Cruz Hernández, and Cobra Mejía 2019). Instead, through the bridging of a post-structural approach with an interpretive comparative lens (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016; Simmons and Rush Smith 2021), women's rights manifest herein as contested, negotiated, and situated discourses and practices unfolding between subnational state institutions, feminist movements, conservative actors, and women. Indeed, the dissertation unpacks reproductive rights and anti-gender-based violence as components of what I call the "subnational gender justice regime," a concept merging different feminist scholarships to capture the institutional reproduction and contestation of territorialized gendered class, sexuality, and racial exclusion that operate both at the symbolic and material level.

Third and last, this dissertation informs theories of state-society links in an era of neoliberalism as fluid and interwoven. As Sonia Álvarez and others maintain, feminist analyses should move beyond binary, blanket assessments that obscure the variety of approaches, resources, strategies, and meanings, and should recognize the ambiguity inherent to contemporary feminist advocacy (Álvarez 2014; Funk 2013). This study concretely shows the

limits of binary analytical categories such as autonomy-reformism in feminist activism, as they can obscure the many ways in which activists and women—and even also committed public servants and street-level bureaucrats who associate with feminist causes—navigate, resist, and transform citizenship regimes within given institutional and social constraints. If the categories of autonomy and institutionalism have been useful in understanding key debates between different approaches to feminism, then they do not manifest as dichotomous, mutually exclusive strategies. Through the prism of gendered social representations, feminist transformations from specific historical and geographical contexts can then appear as complex, non-linear processes taking place within, outside, and through states, and that vary according to the character of the subnational state and feminist issue.

The theoretical and epistemological insights proposed in this dissertation may be useful for other empirical analyses beyond Argentina and beyond struggles related to reproductive rights and gender-based violence. This approach can indeed be replicated for the study of political issues in cities, departments, regions, and other substate levels with the ability to legislate or enforce legislation throughout Latin America, including but going beyond the federal states of Mexico and Brazil, for example, Colombia or Bolivia. In turn, these theoretical insights may inform research on other issues through which intersecting social hierarchies are created, debated, and challenged at different scales—such as environmental struggles or demands from racial minority groups for recognition and political inclusion.

Methodologically, this dissertation's ethnographic sensibility (Pader 2014; Simmons and Rush Smith 2017) allows for capturing how both more powerful and marginalized groups understand and approach gender inequalities. During ten months of fieldwork, I collected vast

and diversified archival material from women's and feminist movements, NGOs, associations, states, and provincial and national media outlets. I also conducted ninety-four semi-structured and unstructured interviews and performed ethnographic observations in women's organizations, domestic violence offices, and healthcare centres.[19] The original data collected through this fieldwork research constitutes a significant empirical contribution to qualitative scholarship in Argentina.

A SUBNATIONAL POLICY COMPARISON

In this dissertation, I adopt a critical feminist epistemology and analytical perspective that focuses on the subnational construction of policy problems, objects, subjects, and places amid transforming governance models (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016). This analytical lens is useful to unpack reproductive rights and gender-based violence not as policy or issue areas that address external problems, but as situated constructions of gendered political problems, subjects, and places. What do reproductive rights and gender-based violence mean in practice? What do they entail for policymakers, feminist movements, and citizens? And how do these social and political constructions transform over time in different contexts? What identities and behaviors are encouraged and normalized (but also discouraged or sanctioned), including through the rules, regulations, practices, and discourses that materialize them? What assumptions do these policies contain and what gendered social exclusions do they reproduce or address?

The dissertation's comparative research design incorporates multiple forms of variation: geographic-, temporal-, and issue-based. First, this dissertation adopts a subnational interpretive comparison to the study of women's rights in different sites: the provinces of Buenos Aires,

---

[19] See Chapter 2 for a detailed description of the methodology and methods I employed in this dissertation.

Santa Fe, and Tucumán. Instead of understanding these provinces as "cases," I indeed treat them at "sites" of analysis for the study of the interrelations between two phenomena that exceed their administrative and territorial boundaries: women's rights and neoliberalism (see Riofrancos 2021; Simmons and Rush Smith 2021).[20] Indeed, these three provinces have indeed had different historical trajectories with political economy since Liberal state formation, patriarchal institutions such as familialism and maternalism, local women's and feminist movements, women's rights incorporation, social conservatism, and structural social inequalities. Together, they are insightful sites for the comparative study of feminist politics, for they constitute women's rights in practice and are constituted by them and a multiplicity of other macro-level and global processes.[21]

For each subnational space, I trace and analyze patterns of change and continuity in gender justice regimes across three historical periods in Argentina: the neoliberal decade (1990-2003), the Left Turn (2003-2015), and the Post-Left Turn feminist uprisings (2015-2020). Through within-case analyses, I give ontological space for change and transformation as empirical questions to be explored and thus rejecting structural determinism. By looking at feminist issues and policies through the lens of their situated problematizations, I elaborate a "cartography of struggles" (Mohanty 1991) that highlights both territorialized heterogeneity of

---

[20] This case selection strategy is frequently used in ethnographic studies of neoliberalization. As suggested by Peck (2013, 151–52), "selecting and theorizing cases in an orthogonal or awkward relation to emergent explanatory conceptions, in order both to interrogate and reconstruct those conceptions. This means positioning local cases in relational and conjunctural terms, rather than terrain of typicality or exception. It means striving to make part–whole connections, while recognizing that this more-than-the-sum-of-the-parts phenomenon only exists by dint of its parts. It means uncovering local constitutions of global forces, rather than resorting to top down 'impact' models. And it means rendering the moving landscapes of neoliberalization as theoretical problematics in their own right (rather than placing these in the shadow of presumed convergence), probing power centres and vulnerable flanks, mapping the spatialities of consent and conflict, and tracing interdependencies through hierarchies and networks."

[21] In Chapter 3, I explain in more details the dissertation's subnational, interpretive, and comparative research design and specifically, the site selection strategy.

experiences with gender justice regimes, as well as individual and collective agency, daily resistance, and pushes for institutional transformation.

Last, through a multi-sited, fieldwork-grounded research (Kushner and Morrow 2003), the dissertation offers a third dimension of variation across two quintessential feminist issues: reproductive rights (in particular, abortion) and gender-based violence (in particular, intimate-partner violence against women). While I do not systematically compare the issues within each chapter, I observe the ways in which they have evolved relatively separately (provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe) or intertwined (province of Tucumán) in shaping the subnational gender justice regime. By focusing on different issues and how they relate politically to one another within and across cases, we can get a broader view of the forms of challenge, resistance, and bargains that women and local feminist movements adopt in different contexts – and their impacts on gender justice.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The first chapter sets the dissertation's conceptual framework and reviews the literature on neoliberalism, feminism, citizenship, and gender justice in Latin America. Drawing from previous work in feminist political science and comparative politics, I propose the concept of gender justice regime to bridge intersectional approaches to citizenship regime with a gender justice framework. I argue that the concept of a gender justice regime can offer a more comprehensive view of the neoliberal transformations in Latin American states and societies that have taken place in the region since the 1990s—while incorporating both structure and agency in the theorizing of symbolic and material exclusion in the region.

Chapter 2 introduces the dissertation's feminist epistemological and methodological approach. After discussing my positionality as a feminist researcher and my reflexive practice, I describe the major analytical paradigms in political science for the study of gender and citizenship. I then offer an alternative analytical approach from critical feminist policy, Carol Bacchi's "What is the problem represented to be?" approach. The chapter then unpacks the dissertation's main methods and primary data employed. Chapter 3 lays the subnational research design upon which subsequent empirical analyses are built. This chapter first examines empirically the changes in Argentina's citizenship regime from the neoliberal era to the legalization of abortion in 2020, before highlighting that despite significant strides at the national level, disparities in the territorial implementation of these laws have remained. The chapter thus subsequently introduces the dissertation's subnational comparative research design, centred on the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Tucumán.

The three empirical chapters that follow constitute the core empirical contribution of this dissertation. Chapter 4 argues that in the province of Buenos Aires, pioneering family violence policies were introduced during the neoliberal era amidst a growing emphasis on public insecurity issues among lower-class sectors. With the Left Turn, policies aimed at eradicating violence adopted a gender perspective, state assistance and protection policies have continued to be predominantly shaped by a judicial logic, addressing heterosexual intimate-partner relations in ways that often perpetuate gendered exclusions among the most vulnerable. Since the neoliberal crisis, grassroots feminists and women experiencing violence in the outskirts of Buenos Aires navigate what I term a "purple area" within the gender justice regime, shaping their interpretation of women's rights and their political engagement. Expanding on Javier Auyero's concept of grey area of democracy (2007) and echoing feminist movements' use of the colour

purple, I argue that lower-class women are differently positioned within and between their families, social organizations, and communities with regards to violence, shaping their relationship to states and feminist movements. It is within this political space that grassroots feminists, bolstered by the growth since the 2015 Ni Una Menos movement, blend daily assistance to victims, anti-neoliberal political activism, and community organizing.

Chapter 5 explores the trajectory of reproductive rights in the province of Santa Fe. The chapter demonstrates that since the 1990s, local alliances among feminist NGOs, public health actors, and the Socialist Party in the city of Rosario have fostered a synergistic environment for the recognition and inclusion of impoverished women as subjects with rights to bodily autonomy. Following the rise of the Green Tide in 2018, grassroots networks advocating for legal abortion services have further challenged and undermined maternalistic institutions in Santa Fe. These networks have led to the opening of greater institutional spaces for the sustainable recognition of women's reproductive autonomy.

In Chapter 6, I argue that in the province of Tucumán, a conservative, authoritarian government resistant to local feminist movements during the 1990s implemented domestic violence and reproductive health policies that curtailed women's autonomy. This has entrenched a subnational gender justice regime blending maternalist and familialist elements, where poor women who are mostly racialized are targeted as suspicious by state policies. Despite the adoption of national gender-based violence eradication policies during the Left Turn, resistance to sexual and reproductive autonomy has upheld the province's repressive and patriarchal regime. Since 2018, networks of feminist and women's organizations and healthcare workers in Tucumán, have challenged institutionalized gender violence and exposed the state's exclusionary

regime. Through both internal critique and external activism, coalitions of feminist networks and women's human rights movements have focused on contesting the repression, control, and criminalization of marginalized women. The dissertation concludes with key take-away points and offers suggestions for future research amid what is increasingly seen as a global backlash against feminism (Biroli and Caminotti 2020; Pérez Bentancur and Rocha-Carpiuc 2020; Zaremberg et al. 2021).

***

Chapter 1: The Conceptual Framework and Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines why Argentina's gender citizenship regime has been shaped by ongoing social inequalities despite the formal incorporation of international women's rights agendas into federal legislation during the 1990s. I explore why and how impoverished and racialized women have not fully benefitted from the existing reproductive rights and anti-gender-based violence policies that were implemented in the country. If using an intersectional lens to discuss citizenship is an enlightening way in which to discuss women's social positionality within a given state and with regards to intersecting systems of domination, then I argue that this lens cannot fully capture the extent and nature of the relationship between structural exclusions and agency – both in material and symbolic terms.

In this chapter, I unpack analytical lenses that I find more encompassing and appropriate to capture the relationship between structure and agency in a "post-neoliberal" setting, that is, following neoliberal reforms such as those implemented in Latin American countries between the 1970s and 1990s. To address the gaps that a purely intersectional approach would create, I thus conceptualize the term *gender justice regime* – merging Nancy Fraser's gender justice approach to the concept of citizenship regime – to capture the everyday practices and discourses emerging within, across, and against policies, feminist movements, conservative sectors, and citizens that together define social recognition and power redistribution (based along the lines of class, race, sexuality, and gender) between members of society.

This chapter will introduce the major concepts mobilized in this dissertation and familiarize the reader with the Latin American context. The chapter is organized as follows. I

begin by introducing the concept of the gender justice regime.[22] To open the black box of the state, I draw on feminist neo-institutional approaches, borrowing the mezzo-level concept of gender citizenship regime (Jenson 2007; 2009). Then, I turn to the concept of *gender justice*— particularly Nancy Fraser's approach (2007; 2009)—which incorporates notions of symboli representation and material power redistribution. These different theories and lenses allowed me to generate the concept of a gender justice regime, meaning the sets of negotiated and situated institutional practices and discourses that produce social differences, hierarchies, and exclusions based on class, race, sexuality, and gender within citizenship regimes.

The chapter follows with an exploration of key concepts used in this dissertation: maternalism, familialism, and neoliberalism—situating them in the Latin American context, particularly in relation to the constitutional incorporation of international women's rights in the 1990s. In this second section, I discuss and contextualize two types of institutional and social resistance to feminist agendas, focusing on their institutionalization since early state formation: maternalism and familialism. I then briefly summarize the international and regional-level changes that took place during the 1990s, along with the recognition and incorporation of new human rights to the women's rights agenda: reproductive rights and the recognition of gender-based violence as a violation of women's human rights.

In the third section, I show that neoliberalism, as a political, economic, and social system implemented around the world since the 1970s-1980s, yet intensified and accelerated during the 1990s, has reshaped the logic of citizenship in Latin America. These transformations occurred through the incorporation of new human rights that challenge patriarchal institutions, the creation

---

[22] In Chapter 3, I introduce the concept's territorial dimension—following which I use the term "subnational gender justice regime."

of new mechanisms of political participation under liberal democratic principles, and new patterns of socioeconomic redistribution centered on targeted assistance and individual development and capacity-building. I show how these changes have profoundly affected Latin American states and societies, demanding new conceptual tools to theorize social inclusion and exclusion patterns. In this chapter, I argue that the material and symbolic effects of neoliberal have had structural effects on citizenship regimes in Latin America, as well as generated new modes of collective action and identities that require taking actor agency into account. In addition, these changes demand a set of conceptual lensed that incorporate states as main actors in the construction of citizenship regimes, but they also require accounting for feminist organizations, networks, associations, and women themselves as "quasi-policymakers," or as actors having gained greater responsibility in their individual and community wellbeing since neoliberalism. The concept of gender justice regime thus allows unveiling how actors from both the state and society, negotiate their inclusion to citizenship through human rights—their meaning, categories, and instruments.

GENDER JUSTICE REGIME

Before I turn to the concept of the gender citizenship regime of interest in this dissertation, I briefly define what I imply by the concept of gender. It is, like most concepts mobilized in this dissertation, a contested concept.[23] Approached from the individual,

---

[23] Early theorizing of gender understood the relationship between sex and gender as one of nature opposing culture (De Beauvoir 1989). For Simone de Beauvoir, gender was a sex-based relational process of social differentiation. "Sex" constituted the biological, natural order divided between men and women—or males and females—whereas "gender" was a set of learned roles, attributes, and behaviours grounded in the supposed biological features of women (sexual apparatus, hormones). For De Beauvoir, it is through socialization in the family and society that unequal power relations between men and women become crystallized through gender *roles*, as women learn to abide by their socially assigned functions. Socially constructed as the Other, women thus remain excluded from plain participation in public life, subordinated to men in all aspects of their lives, and taught to embrace behaviours associated with passivity, dependency, maternal care, and immaturity. Since De Beauvoir, however, it has become increasingly accepted that both sex and gender pertain to the realm of the social. Since the late 1980s and 1990s, as

interactional, and structural levels, its definition has varied historically and across feminist schools of thought—and in political science, it has often remained confounded with binary sex (see Bayes 2012; Lovenduski 1998). As an academic concept, gender initially emerged among second wave[24] Western feminist thinkers (broadly ranging during the period from 1940 to 1980) and experienced important transformations with the contributions of queer, Black feminists, and post-colonial/de-colonial feminists, many from the global south (Ackerly and True 2018). While there is no common agreement among feminist scholars on how to define gender and its relation to sex and other systems of social difference, I adopt Joan Scott's understanding of gender as an analytic category, which puts the lens on unequal power relations between sexed individuals (Scott 1986). For Scott, sex and gender constitute a set of socially constructed binary norms constituting femininity and masculinity and power relations between those perceived as men and women—in which men and the masculine dominate over women and the feminine.[25]

---

part of the third wave of feminism, gender and patriarchy conceptualized by modern Western feminists were criticized for being universalizing, heteronormative, and essentializing (Bourcier 2002; Butler 1990; Wittig 1980). Scott sustained that the creation of hierarchical social representations of "the masculine" and the "feminine" were based on *real or imagined* sex differences. Gender socialization relied on four interrelated elements: (1) multiple representations (myths, symbols, analogies)—often contradictory—that are based on culturally available symbols; (2) normative concepts expressed in religious, educational, scientific, legal, and political doctrines that give meaning to those symbols and forges the appearance of a "natural" sex order; (3) these concepts are organized through social institutions and organizations, such as the labour market, education, and the polity at large, that are political; and last, (4) gender is a subjective identity that while social, remains experienced at the individual level. Along this shift, sociological studies on gender started conceptualizing gender as something performed or "done" (West and Zimmerman 1987). For Judith Butler, for example, sex is not a biological or "natural" given but constitutes the binary attribution of sex differences which are placed into social hierarchies and "performed" or materialized through gender, a set of practices, conducts, and ways of being (Butler 1990; 2004).

[24] I acknowledge that the wave analogy in feminist historicizing is problematic and increasingly contested, as it centres Western feminist thought and politics, renders invisible and marginalizes Global South women's and LGBTQI+ movements and thought. For a discussion of the "wave" analogy, its political uses, and problems, see Bard (2017) and from a Latin American perspective, see Alvarado et al. (2020). I therefore refer to this analogy in quotation, and only when referring specifically to Western feminist theory.

[25] For Joan W. Scott (1986, 1067), it was imperative to go beyond essentializing attributes that attach the term "woman" to biological features—their sexual organs, gonads, hormones, and chromosomes. She conceptualized gender as "a constitutive element of social relationships based on *perceived* differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power" [italics added for emphasis]. The term "perceived" is crucial here, as for Scott, what constitutes gender systems are not biological differences but rather, human *perceptions* of those differences. West and Zimmerman's (1987) early conceptualization of gender echoes Judith

While the study of gender inequality in political science has mainly been centred on gender as a core analytical lens (see Benstead 2021; Dhamoon 2011), Black feminists in the United States have argued that race, class, gender, and sexuality constitute interlocked systems of oppression that cannot be analyzed independently or taken as mutually exclusive in shaping women's positioning in the matrix of domination (Hill Collins 1990; Crenshaw 2017a; hooks 2015). In the Latin American context however, decolonial critiques sustain that gender is also a product of colonialism that cannot be analyzed separately from the colonial systems of domination that shape the lives of popular-sector, Indigenous, Afro-descendant women in the Americas (Lugones 2019). A focus on the intersecting patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist systems and their effects thus seems necessary to understand what is specific to patterns of social exclusions and injustices in Latin America (Mendoza 2012, 54). A gender lens that disregards class and racial inequalities is quite limiting, especially as, in many countries, poor and racialized women constitute a numeric majority and have suffered greater exclusion from citizenship throughout history.

In this dissertation, I thus incorporate a broader set of complex inequalities, capturing how gender interacts with class, race, and sexuality, for the analysis to acquire logic and ontological depth relevant to the Latin American context (Anthias 2013; Moghadam 2022; Shaver 1990). For María Lugones, it is indeed imperative to study gender through "actual people within social, economic, religious, political histories within structures of power in changing historical conflicting processes of formation and transformation" (Lugones 2019, 35). Thus, analyzing the reality of marginalized and racialized women in Latin America involves

---

Butler's later book *Undoing Gender* (2004), where they redefine gender as performative. This reconceptualization of binary sex and gender as social constructions, and of gender as performance opens the door to individual agency in altering gender representations and norms.

deconstructing the term "woman" as a universal subject (see Guy 2012).[26] I argue that a broader

understanding of social inequalities and their mechanisms of reproduction and transformation is

necessary in any colonial or post-colonial society, such as those in the Americas (see Costa

2013). Focusing on interlocking systems of domination that shape women's exclusions from

citizenship also allows an understanding of how, in a globalized world, class, race, sexuality, and

gender exclusions have produced multi-layered citizens, whose lives are territorially situated at

the crossroads of global and local structures (Yuval-Davis 1999).[27]

My ontological approach to gender social exclusions in this dissertation centres on the

political construction of these intersecting social differences and hierarchies – through discourses

and practices situated at different scales and produced by states, social groups, and citizens.

Suppose the concept of a gender citizenship regime, which I address next, has incorporated

intersectional views and principles, I propose the related but alternative concept of a gender

justice regime, which incorporates the previously mentioned inequality formation *and*

contestation processes in the context of post-neoliberal reforms.

FROM GENDER CITIZENSHIP REGIME TO GENDER JUSTICE REGIME

As a mid-range approach to gender, the concept of gender citizenship regime finds its

roots in feminist historical institutionalists' efforts to unveil how social policies and other

institutions are shaped by and shape social and gender norms and relations in society. Building

on the concept of "social policy regimes" (Shaver 1990), [28] early approaches have centred on the

---

[26] This critique has also been articulated in other post-colonial contexts as well (see Oyewumi 1997).

[27] In this dissertation, I focus mostly on place, class, race, gender, and sexuality.

[28] Sheila Shaver coined the term social policy regime to compare gender-state relations in welfare states across time and place, over three dimensions: (1) the gender basis of legal personhood in the liberal democratic welfare state, including equality and difference in both legal authority over self and body. This dimension also includes gender parities in obligation to contribute and right to claim the benefits of social citizenship; (2) the institutionalization of the sexual division of labour through paid and unpaid employment; (3) the institutionalization of dependency in the

impact of specific social policies on the gendered arrangements between families, markets, and states—while concepts such as "gender order" have emerged to capture the structural patterning of gender relations in an entire society (Flood 2007). Scholars from this tradition have adopted definitions of gender regimes centred on gender norms (see Wobbe 2003), family arrangements (see Jenson 1997; Sainsbury 2013), or market relations models (ex.: the male breadwinner welfare system) (Borchorst 2009; Lewis 1992). As part of this trend, the concept of gender regime thus slowly replaced the language of patriarchy during the 1990s, linking macro-level approaches to gender to mezzo-level institutions and relations (Connell 1987; Orloff 1993; 1996).

A key assumption underlying dominant understandings of liberal democratic regimes[29] is the equality among members of the polity to exercise political power (Dahl 1983); an assumption that the concept of citizenship directly addresses for the meaningful realization of this ideal. Famously theorized by T.H. Marshall in the context of the progressive expansion of Western European liberal democracies and welfare states in 19th and 20th century, citizenship is traditionally understood as the combined civil, political, and social rights universally granted to members of a political community (Marshall 1950).[30] Yet, feminist thinkers have long highlighted the gendered nature of citizenship, noting how the concept embodies a false universalism and impacts gender norms and relations. Indeed, women's delayed incorporation

---

rights and obligations of citizen entitlements and the privileging of heterosexuality over other forms of sexual relation (Shaver 1990, 5).

[29] For a review of multiple definitions of the concept of democracy, see Coppedge (2002) and Diamond (2002).

[30] Civil rights include freedom of speech and expression, freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, property rights; and the right to access justice and legal processes; political rights include voting rights and the right to freely compete for public office, freedom of association and to join political parties, the right to participate in political decision-making, and social rights include the right to education, healthcare, social security, and the right to decent working conditions (Marshall 1950).

into political, civil, and social rights regimes and their historical exclusion from both the *public*

and the *political*, point to the gendered nature of Western political systems, critiqued as deeply

androcentric and patriarchal (James 1992; Pateman 1997; Sylvia Walby 1994; Yuval-Davis

1997). Through the concept of gender regime, Connell (2002) observed how gender relations

within institutions implementing social rights provided a structural context for gender relations *in*

society, through the gender division of labour, the relations of power, emotion and human

relations (especially sexuality), and culture and symbolism.[31] Yet, while valuable contributions,

these conceptual approaches miss an important aspect of citizenship: they have tended to look at

gender inequalities from the state toward society, with generally little concern for the role of

societies in shaping states' gender regimes.

In turn, the relational concept of "citizenship regime," which also incorporates the notion

of civil society participation, offers a more complete portrait. This concept has been theorized as

having a relatively stable and structuring—yet still dynamic—effect on relations between states

and societies. These relations are formed and structured by the formal and informal institutional

arrangements that shape citizens' gendered rights and responsibilities, as well as their inclusion

in decision-making, patterns of collective action, and sense of belonging to the polity (Jenson

2009; Jenson, Remacle, and Pereira 2007; Marques-Pereira 2007). A key concern of scholars of

citizenship regimes has been understanding how these regimes come to be, but also what these

institutional arrangements can accomplish in a democratic regime. Looking at the effects of

---

[31] Judith Lorber understands gender regimes as a mezzo-level *set of institutions* that "establishes patterns of expectations for individuals, orders the social processes of everyday life, is built into the major social organizations of society, such as the economy, ideology, the family, and politics, and is also an entity in and of itself" (Lorber 1994, 1). Walby (2004) instead understands gender regimes along two main dimensions: a continuum from domestic to public (with market-led, welfare state-led, and regulatory polity-led trajectories), and a continuum of the degree of gender inequality. Gender relations are constituted through four levels of analyses: the overall social system, the gender regimes and their three dimensions, different domains (the economy, the polity, civil society, and the social organization of violence), and social practices.

specific regimes, feminist materialists have centred on their gendered *distributional effects* within and between families, markets, and states.

Yet, accepting the Butlerian claim that gender is something *done* or *performed* involves observing gender as an assemblage of practices and discourses that *constitute* what a man and a woman are. In this view, which the dissertation partly embraces, gender represents all the actions and discourses that make the distinct and hierarchical social categories, based on real or imagined sex differences, instead of social relations that *distribute* power and resources between externally constituted entities (Eveline 2005). Scholars from a post-structural perspective have thus instead focused on regimes of representation and social differencing rather than distribution, which "can be analyzed as places of encounter where identities are constructed and also where violence is originated, symbolized, and managed" (Escobar 2012, 10). These scholars study regimes and policies as *making* masculinity and femininity under a binary, hierarchical social order unfolding through policy and law (see, for example, Eveline 2005; Lombardo, Meier, and Verloo 2013; Meagher and DiQuinzio 2005; Widding 2011).

Yet, for materialist feminist scholars such as Nancy Fraser, an exclusive focus on social representations does not entirely solve the issue of socioeconomic inequalities between men and women—or relies on an assumption that symbolic and material inequalities are co-constitutive. In this dissertation, I embrace a conceptualization of citizenship that considers both symbolic and material inequalities as analytically separate yet interlinked categories. As I propose next, this attention to the representational *and* redistributive components of citizenship—combined with a concern for the process of making and transforming intersecting social inequalities—can be better reconciled through a gender justice framework (Fraser 2007; Young 2011).

Gender justice speaks mainly to socioeconomically marginalized women's *substantive* enjoyment of human rights (Elson 2002). Nancy Fraser's (2007; 2021) broad conceptualization is particularly useful, since it incorporates both a material concern for *redistribution* and a non-essentialist account of *recognition*. This double-perspective allows evaluating class-differentiation (as well as race, ethnicity, nationality, and religious differentiation) as rooted in the economic structure of society, and gender (and sexuality) as status-differentiation rooted in the heteropatriarchal social order. Forms of status subordination that Fraser identifies include gendered violence such as sexual harassment, assault, domestic violence, different forms of exclusions from the public sphere, and the denial of full citizenship rights and protections to women and LGBTQI+. These, for Fraser, operate in relation to, yet conceptually separately from, other inequalities rooted in the economic system.

For Fraser (2003), redressing both distributive and recognition injustices is necessary to any gender justice project. This dissertation adopts this conceptualization of gender justice centred around policies affecting mostly impoverished and racialized women in different provinces of Argentina. I focus on how the combination of recognition (or misrecognition) of those constituted as women, interacts with distribution (or maldistribution) in the construction of gender justice regimes. Gender justice thus involves looking at two interdependent institutional mechanisms, or processes: (1) meaningful *participation,* in which members of society are equally heard in the institution and equally respected; (2) reciprocal *recognition* and status equality among all, through the deinstitutionalization of androcentric cultural norms and practices and their replacement by a recognition of women as full peers (Fraser 2007). Thus, more than focusing on structural exclusions like an intersectional approach, a gender justice approach is also fundamentally concerned with the possibilities for substantive representation

and meaningful institutional change through participation. Therefore, this process-oriented concept, focused on participation, recognition, and power redistribution allows conceptualizing both structure and agency in our understanding of citizenship.

A related concept embraced by reproductive politics scholars in the United States, is that of "reproductive justice." For Ross and Solinger (2017, 9), reproductive justice is the combination of reproductive rights and social justice; it incorporates three principles to foreground bodily and sexual autonomy, as well as gender freedom: (1) the right not to have children; (2) the right to have children; and (3) the right to parent children in safe and healthy environments. Thus, in this perspective, reproductive rights must incorporate safe and dignified fertility management, childbirth, and parenting that includes both the absence of state intrusion in intimacy which interferes with autonomy—be it mental, physical, or spiritual—as well as compliance with the state's obligation to foster safe and healthy communities. In that sense, reproductive justice approaches, while including reproductive rights, go beyond a liberal understanding of reproductive choice to incorporate women's access to the plain enjoyment of these rights.

However, considering that Latin American feminist movements, and Argentine movements in particular, have been strongly shaped by human rights discourses and frameworks (stemming from the legacies of women's mobilizations during and after the dictatorship), one may reasonably wonder if a gender justice approach – and a reproductive justice approach in particular – reflect the feminist politics of intimacy in a way that is respectful and meaningful for local actors. As Lynn Morgan (2015) argues, the reproductive rights framework embraced by feminists in Argentina – and feminist movements' resistance to embracing a reproductive justice

framework – is more the result of rhetorical legacies amongst women's and feminist movements, than a disregard for intersecting inequalities, such as class and racial exclusions. In fact, particularly since 2001, feminist movements in Argentina have seen the growth of "popular feminism," propelled by socioeconomically marginalized, often racialized women (Di Marco 2010). Because race has mostly been erased as a defining feature of Argentine politics, class-based identities and demands often replace race-based claims in those mobilizations – and yet, women of Indigenous or African descent often consider themselves as part of the broad category of popular feminism. For these reasons, when Argentinians employ a reproductive rights framework, they also consider within their claims impoverished women's access to those rights; in other words, while the lexicon of human rights resonates deeply in Argentine feminist movements, their meaning often broadly aligns with reproductive justice frameworks as understood in other contexts, including in the United States. For this reason, this dissertation conceptually relies on a gender and reproductive justice framework as it explores the situated meanings of reproductive rights in different subnational contexts of Argentina.[32]

In sum, my conceptual approach borrows from and merges the concepts of citizenship regime, gender justice, and reproductive justice into a cohesive framework that captures the symbolic and material components of gendered social exclusion as well as women's agency in challenging these exclusions through participation. My approach centred on gender justice is indeed broadly coherent with the concept of reproductive justice and other feminist intersectional approaches to human rights. However, the concept of gender justice focuses on both the *symbolic* and the material exclusions generated from different patterns of representation, distribution, and

---

[32] I return to this discussion in Chapter 3, where I dive into the Argentine context, describing in greater details the country's trajectory with women-led human rights movements, authoritarianism, patriarchal institutions, and neoliberalism.

participation within institutions. Moreover, given that this dissertation focuses on both reproductive rights and the eradication of gender-based violence, the concept of gender justice captures a greater diversity of rights, representations, and inequalities than an issue-centered concept such as reproductive justice. Finally, as I will show later in this chapter, a gender justice approach allows for a more flexible and broader understanding of rights definition than the concept of a *citizenship regime*, because it does not assume the meaning and form that these rights might take on the ground.

In all, within this dissertation, I define gender justice regimes as the everyday practices and discourses emerging within, between, and against networks of policies, movements, and citizens that together define social recognition and power redistribution among members of society based on class, race, sexuality, and gender.

MAPPING THE POLITICS OF INTIMACY IN LATIN AMERICA

In this section, I begin by tracing the historical construction of maternalistic and familialist states in Latin America, as strong patriarchal institutions in place since early state formation and shaping gender citizenship regimes in the region. Then, I describe the two areas of rights of relevance to this dissertation, gender-based violence and reproductive rights, as they emerged and were defined in the international women's rights agenda. I highlight how Latin American feminist movements have pioneered and contributed to the international women's rights agenda for the recognition, prevention, and sanction of violence against women and regarding reproductive rights (Joachim 2007). In both cases, domestic women's and feminist movements have faced important resistance from the state and the Catholic church, which can be tied to earlier maternalistic and familialist citizenship regimes. I therefore map the relationship between structural gendered exclusions in place since colonial times in the region, their

35

institutional entrenchment into state formation processes with path-dependent effects on subsequent gender citizenship regimes, and the recent incorporation of what have been labelled as new rights to the international women's right agenda amid neoliberal reforms.

MATERNALISM AND FAMILIALISM

While the establishment of liberal democracies in the late 19th and early 20th centuries granted propertied, literate male citizens civil, political, and social rights in the region, women and particularly impoverished, Indigenous, and Black people remained formally excluded from basic citizenship rights (Dore and Molyneux 2000; Pearce 2010). Despite the formal re-incorporation of citizenship rights following the third wave of democracy in the 1980s, Latin American societies are still characterized by ongoing gendered, racialized, and classed exclusions, Otherization, and erasure from the democratic polity (Rivera Cusicanqui 2010).[33] In this section, I show how maternalism and familialism were built in articulation with these historically entrenched social exclusions, while constituting core components of Latin American states and societies.

First, let me define *maternalism* and *familialism*. Koven and Mitchell (1993, 4) describe maternalism as the "ideologies and discourses which exalted women's capacity to mother and applied to society as a whole the values they attached to that role: care, nurturance and morality." Often associated with Western Catholic societies, maternalism usually involves institutions that conflate motherhood and womanhood through policies favouring women's predominant role in biological and social reproduction and with restrictions on birth control policies. Maternalistic

---

[33] While the slave trade was abolished in most newly independent countries in the 1810s, it often took much longer for internal slavery to be abolished or partly abolished in Venezuela (1818), Mexico (1829), Paraguay (1869), Argentina (1853-1861), and Brazil (1888). These have entrenched colonial logics and systems into modern state formation in the region.

states usually reinforce the idea that childbearing and raising children are women's unique contributions to society and uniquely constitutive of femininity (Ramm 2020).[34] Maternalistic policies thus encompass a set of social policies, sometimes compensating mothers on the grounds of their assumed difference, that is, policies that explicitly or implicitly rely on women's assigned reproductive and caretaking roles (see Blofield and Martínez Franzoni 2015a; van der Klein et al. 2012). [35] These institutions also usually do not confer persons who can gestate plain autonomy over their bodies; biological reproduction is indeed encouraged or mandated through the criminalization or unavailability of contraceptive methods and abortion (Álvarez Minte 2020).

Following the emergence of maternalism as a concept, scholars in the west have also studied states' structuring of gender relations and roles within families. Familialism, as defined by Lynne Haney and Lisa Pollard (2003, 5), is a discursive and ideological frame constitutive of "sets of symbols, narratives, and metaphors that centre on ideal relations within and among familial bodies." The nature of state interventions in family issues or composition—or the absence of intervention—are expressed through regulations on marriage and divorce, child adoption or family composition, and the regulation of care work or domestic violence (Siim 1990). Through its policies, the state thus constitutes, protects, and sometimes also transforms family models; those familial representations have thus widely varied across historical and

---

[34] An important distinction was made by Adrienne Rich (1986) between motherhood—as a male-defined and controlled institution—and mothering—as a potentially empowering experience which can be re-appropriated.

[35] In her comparative analysis of the United States with European countries, Theda Skocpol (1995) argued that in the US, a "maternalistic" welfare state was characterized by women-led public agencies implemented regulations and benefits to "protect" women and children—as opposed to paternalistic state in Europe based on the male breadwinning model. As Esping-Anderson (1999) argued in the European context, Catholicism is often associated with familialist regimes in which care responsibilities largely rely on women's unpaid labour (Glass and Fodor 2007).

geographical contexts (Martínez Franzoni 2008; Shaver 2018, 13). Of course, familialism in the west (and, although through different modalities, in the colonies) has tended to rest on the reinforcement of heterosexuality and traditional gender roles, through which the nuclear family was constructed as women's "natural" sphere of existence. Familialist regimes can also emerge by implicitly assuming household responsibility over their members' welfare, which usually tends to fall on women's unpaid labour; familialist regimes are therefore gendered (Saraceno 2016). As a classifying category delimiting and reinforcing gendered and sexual social difference, familialism is also inherent to colonialism; separating the public from the private, the West from the non-West, the (colonial or imported) modern from the (local or native) backward, and were often key components of colonial projects (Haney and Pollard 2003).

Turning to the empirical context of interest in this dissertation, particularities of the Latin American maternalistic and familialist state formations have posed important challenges to the inclusion of women into citizenship regimes during the 20th century (see Ramm and Gideon 2020). Throughout the region, familialism and maternalism have taken different shapes and followed different trajectories than in Western Europe, where they were first conceptualized. The incorporation of Roman Catholic law in early Latin American civil codes indeed institutionalized male domination—particularly, fathers—over women through a set of interlocked laws and policies such as marriage, *(patria potestad)*, and a strong control over women's sexuality and reproductive behaviours (Das Dores Campos Machado and Freston 2016; Fabris 2019). At the same time, the Catholic Church, then responsible for the management of social affairs, was slowly being replaced by secular education, public healthcare, and social security systems—mirroring the French *laïcité* model. But, secularity in the region remained elusive, as the Catholic

church's political and social influence was maintained (Blancarte 2008; Vaggione and Morán Faúndes 2017).

Feminist scholars have thus commonly framed state control over women, through social reproduction and the family institution, as key components of Latin American nation-state formation and development. By the 1930s, as working women were taking increasingly active roles in workers movements and strikes, challenging their traditional gender norms associating women with passivity, obedience, and confinement to the private sphere, the regulation of their lives, bodies, and sexuality would have become imperative for political and elites to preserve the young Latin American nations' social fabrics. As a result, the institutionalization of medicine and public health occurred in conjunction with state-building projects, and early child and maternal health policy embraced ideals of restoring and strengthening both "the family" and "the race" in the face of their "moral and biosocial degradation" (Molyneux 2000, 48).[36] Despite improving women's health and lowering maternal mortality rates (Zárate 2020), many of these state regulations over women's bodies also included penal measures that confined them to their role as mothers in the private sphere, such as the plain or partial criminalization of abortion, often involving paternalistic notions of protection and eugenic sanitary measures. In addition, Latin American states have implemented both pro and anti-natalist policies in alternation or simultaneously, targeted at different population groups based on racist, classist, and eugenic rationales of control over population sizes and composition (Carter 2018).

---

[36] Health and security legislations were oriented toward the protection of mothers and children, fertility (including protection from sexually transmitted diseases), death during birth giving, and early maternal-infantile health (Goldsmith Weil 2020; Zárate 2020).

Throughout the 20th century and with growing bottom-up pressure for the expansion of citizenship regimes, women were included on the grounds of their assigned gender roles, such as mothering and unpaid caretaking within their families (Molyneux 2010; Venticinque 2015). The rise of classic populist governments in various Latin American countries in the 1940s[37] would partially incorporate workers through fragmented social security systems (Pautassi 2000a). Up until the 1980s, the welfare regimes developed under populist governments remained truncated, focusing exclusively on formally employed male breadwinner protection (Barrientos 2009). In turn, only women in families with formally-employed men were gradually included in citizenship, in so far as they complied with their traditionally assigned gender roles of biological and social reproducers.[38] Populist governments granted women limited social benefits on the grounds of their marital status, or their relationship to either their breadwinning husbands or their children—reinforcing both maternalism and the idea of women's natural domesticity in the nuclear family (Ehrick 2005; Pieper Mooney 2020; Rosemblatt 2000; Staab 2012; Vaughan 2000). Meanwhile, poor and unemployed women—for the most part, racialized—remained entirely excluded from social benefits.

In political science, the logic of political and social inclusion/exclusion in citizenship in South America has traditionally been theorized as occurring through bottom-up pressures, resisted by top-down pushbacks, and counter-movements that were led by conservative political, economic, and military elites—which persisted throughout the 20th century (Chalmers 1977; Collier 1979). Latin Americans have indeed experienced multiple and drastic transitions between

---

[37] These include Lázaro Cárdenas in Mexico (1934-1940), Getulio Vargas in Brazil (1934-1945; 1951-1954), Juan Domingo Perón in Argentina (1946-1952; 1952-1955), and later, Salvador Allende in Chile (1970-1973).

[38] If reaching the 1950s, most South American women and illiterate populations had been granted universal suffrage, women and the lowest income groups remained excluded from unemployment insurance or assistance (Mesa-Lago 1997).

macroeconomic models tied to political regime instability that are thought to have significantly

reshaped gendered relationships between states, civil society, families, and markets.[39] Through

corporatist interest articulated between the 1940s and the 1990s, civil society's controlled

inclusion is thought as having undermined its autonomy from the state, and organized social

actors were thought of as having remained broadly subordinated to state power (Oxhorn 1995;

2012).

In the Southern Cone region of Latin America, liberal democratic regimes during the 20th

century survived for short episodes and were interrupted by exclusionary authoritarian and

conservative civil-military governments frequently. Starting in the 1960s, global economic

concerns for overpopulation in the global south led to the first family planning programs that

were grounded in neo-Malthusian ideologies, and that targeted Black and Indigenous populations

in countries like Brazil, Colombia, and Peru (dos Santos 2012; Carter 2018; Tella 2022). In the

1970s, the bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes took power in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile,

Paraguay, and Bolivia, combining technocratic modernization of states and the demobilization of

lower and working-class sectors through political and social exclusion (Collier and Cardoso

1979). Maternalistic and familialist regimes are therefore seen as having remodelled accordingly

to adapt to the changing macroeconomic policy and political regime changes.

In this context, individuals on the left, part of political or social organizations,

homosexuals, and their families would be framed as subversive or as internal enemies fomenting

chaos and national destruction, while conservative, military-friendly families who embraced

---

[39] The region witnessed transitions from a Liberal export-oriented economic model (19th century-1930s) to a state-led development model known as import-substitution industrialization model (ISI) (1940s-1970s), to a neoliberal market-based model (1970s-1990s).

traditional Catholic values were glorified as saviours of the nations (Regueiro 2015). During this

period, women who challenged traditional gender roles by adhering to revolutionary ideals or

being associated with "immoral" sexual practices such as homosexuality, having multiple sexual

partners, or prostitution—experienced systemic and gendered forms of state control and

punishment (Agustina Luna 2023; V. Álvarez et al. 2020).[40] Therefore, in a context of high

repression and religious conservatism, Latin American women have frequently relied on

traditional gender roles as shields and instruments for political activism.[41] As Ramm (2020, 26)

argues, these movements have embraced gender difference and "subverted motherhood from a

private and personal matter and transformed it into a political driving force," yet without

substantively questioning traditional models of femininity and masculinity.[42]

It is by facing these ideological, social, and political forms of resistance that feminist and

women's movements emerged and unfolded in Latin America, demanding women's inclusion as

plain citizens through economic, political, and social rights (Molyneux 2000). While second

wave feminists in Europe and North America were making significant steps in the realm of

women's rights, Latin American women, under authoritarian regimes until the 1980s,[43] faced

important political limitations. The international and regional arenas were, for more privileged

women who could access them, interesting venues to push for a women's rights agenda as

---

[40] At the same time, following the beginning of the international women's rights frameworks in the 1970s, authoritarian regimes in the region embraced ideas of modernization that framed some of the traditional patriarchal norms as backwards and an impediment to Latin American countries' insertion in "the Western world". Despite their clear conservative ideological stance, authoritarian regimes responded to this agenda to some extent (Htun 2003).

[41] The quintessential organizations Madres and Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, mobilized as mothers to denounce their children's disappearance, killings, and torturing under the authoritarian regimes (Jelin 1990; Zarco 2011).

[42] Similarly, Indigenous and popular-sector women in the region often mobilize on the grounds of motherhood to claim rights (Arriagada 2020; Celentani 2022).

[43] Democratizations took place in 1983 in Argentina, 1985 in Brazil, and 1990 in Chile.

domestic spheres were blocked (Sternbach et al. 1992). Yet not all women were equally represented within feminist movements in the region; often, Black and Indigenous women remained underrepresented in these more elite and institutionalized venues.

Historically, feminist movements have tended to be mostly composed of intellectual and middle-class women; in turn, popular-sector women's movements joined class-based and human rights struggles to a greater extent, often organized through Catholic churches rooted in the 1960s' Liberation theology. By the late 1970s, anti-imperialist sentiments among people on the left in the region had raised suspicions and a rejection of second-wave feminisms, qualified as bourgeois and a distraction to class struggles for liberation. Similarly, feminist sectors struggled to integrate women-led organizations in marginalized neighbourhoods, which did not explicitly challenge gendered norms of motherhood and caregiving (Lebon and Maier 2010).[44]

To conclude this section of the chapter, scholars of gender citizenship regimes in Latin America have emphasized how maternalistic and familialist institutional arrangements have shaped Latin American states since early state formation and across political regimes. These ideological frameworks also strongly resonate among many women's movements, including human rights and popular-sector movements. In the following section, I turn to the third wave of democratization in the 1980s, and the subsequent incorporation of the international women's rights agenda on reproductive rights and gender-based violence in the 1990s—with a particular focus on regional instruments relevant to the Latin American context.

---

[44] As I show in the next section and throughout this dissertation on the Argentine case, this division between feminist and women's movements will erode throughout the 1990s and 2000s (see Marco 2006).

Following the Decade for Women's Rights (1979-1989), the United Nations (UN) adopted the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979), which would, along with the Third Women's Conference in Nairobi (1985), pave the way for the emergence of a women's rights agenda at the international level. The CEDAW installed the right of women to be free of discrimination in the realm of health, security, and labour, among others—recognizing women as subjects of rights. Those international instruments revolved around women's right to equality from a negative, rights-based anti-discrimination approach (Erdman 2023; Marques-Pereira and Pfefferkorn 2011).

It was during the 1990s that the United Nations human rights system, under the impulse of feminist and women's movements now included in Women's Conferences, embraced an agenda on gender *equity* between men and women, propelling states to provide equal *opportunities* through gender-sensitive policy (Joachim 2007). The 1995 International Women's Conference in Beijing marked clear shifts in conceptualizations of women's rights toward equity between the sexes—then understood as a binary[45]—by ensuring men and women's equal opportunities through affirmative policy actions (Vargas and Cuevas 2020). This paradigm would be complemented by progressive approaches centred on women's empowerment, including through gender mainstreaming in all areas of state policy (Kennett and Payne 2014; Mazur 2009; Rai 2018; Staudt 2018).

---

[45] This understanding was challenged in the 2007 Yogyakarta Principles that recognize the existence of trans, intersex, and non-binary individuals, and provide non-binding guiding principles for the protection of their human rights ("The Yogyakarta Principles" 2024).

First, violence against women became increasingly recognized as a human rights violation and an impediment to gender equality. In the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, gender-based violence—then equated to violence against women—was included in international human rights instruments as an obstacle to women's human rights to security, life, and health. In Latin America. The Organization of American States (OAS) led to the most exhaustive instruments regulating this gendered violence, inciting states to adopt domestic regulations to prevent, sanction, and eradicate it. The 1994 Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (thereafter, Convention of Belém do Pará) defines violence against women as "any act or conduct based on gender, which causes death, harm or psychological suffering to women, both in the private and public domain" (OEA 1998, art.1).

As part of this convention, member states were required to adopt preventive (art. 7) and protective (art.8) measures, change their legal frameworks to punish gender-based violence against women (art.9), and improve victims' access to justice (art.10). States were also required to develop coordination and cooperation mechanisms with other member states (art.12), as well as collecting data and conducting research on gender-based violence (art.13). In all, the Convention of Belém do Pará represented the first binding regional instrument recognizing violence against women as a human rights problem, the product of a system of unequal gender power relations that manifests through different forms in the public and the private sphere. While international instruments targeted violence committed not only intimate relations and families, they recognized women's right to health, integrity, dignity, and life as basic human rights, trumping the historical division between the public and the private.

Moreover, in 2009, femicide appeared in regional jurisprudence through the case Gonzalez, Monreal and Monárrez v. Mexico (also known as the "Cotton Field" case), from the Inter-American Court on Human Rights.[46] The court ruling associated the murder of women because they are women, as products of both ongoing patriarchal norms in society *and* systemic state impunity fomenting a climate of violence through its normalization (Brunke and Boira 2021). Starting in 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) also became increasingly involved in reframing domestic violence as a health problem at the international level (Buzawa and Buzawa 2017).

Second, through the 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, reproductive rights emerged as human rights issues (Marques-Pereira and Raes 2002). Through the Cairo Declaration and Programme of Action (1994), the UN system produced what Petchesky called an "almost-feminist" conceptualization of reproductive rights (1995, 1), defined as:

> […] a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. (UNFPA, 1994, 45)

In the Beijing Platform of Action (1995), reproductive rights are explicitly situated in the global agenda on gender equality, recognizing that women have the right and ability to make free and informed decisions concerning reproduction, without discrimination, coercion, and violence. The Platform of Action indeed emphasized the obligation for states to provide comprehensive

---

[46] It is only in the 2000s that femicide is recognized through the OAS Committee of Experts on the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Para, in a Declaration on Femicide (2008).

reproductive health care services, including both family planning and maternal care. Yet, while the right to contraception and family planning was supported by a large majority of member states, abortion remained ambiguously treated in the Cairo and Beijing Conferences, triggering large opposition from the Vatican and Catholic states. Despite a paradigmatic shift from population control to human rights approaches, reproductive health and rights remained limited to those which are not against the law—in specific reference to abortion (Erdman 2015).[47]

The emergence of the right to safe abortion began appearing more clearly in the second half of the 1990s, with treaty bodies increasingly formulating calls for states to decriminalize abortion by removing punitive measures and improving the safety and accessibility of legal abortions. However, it is only by the 2010s that the human rights system has progressively pushed for the liberalization of abortion beyond narrow health or ethical circumstances, and for comprehensive reproductive health services for women and girls (Fine, Mayall, and Sepúlveda 2017).[48] Yet, abortion is still excluded from UN documents or Development Goals due to its controversial nature amongst member states, and despite the increasing incorporation of sexual and reproductive health and rights. In Latin America, abortion was incorporated into the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development adopted in 2013 by the Inter-American System. However, inconsistencies have nonetheless persisted in international law; reducing maternal mortality rates became a key global development priority and was set as the fifth

---

[47] Still, concerned with the health consequences of clandestine abortions, the Program of Action indicated the need for access to safe abortions when permitted, and access to quality post-abortion care to address complications of unsafe abortion (UNFPA 1995).

[48] Highly resisted by conservative states and sectors, these "new rights" are now part of the Sustainable Development Goals and a core component of the UN's gender equality agenda (Death 2010).

Millennium Development Goal, while sexual and reproductive health were both sidelined (ECLAC 2010).

Next, I will argue that the domestic incorporation of reproductive rights and gender-based violence as human rights issues and their ability to challenge maternalism and familialism, took place amid major socioeconomic and political transformations brought by neoliberalism in Latin America. This argument aims at further supporting the adoption of a gender justice approach to citizenship.

NEOLIBERALISM, FEMINISMS, AND GENDER JUSTICE REGIMES: CONTEMPORARY DEBATES

I first open this section by introducing the concept of neoliberalism. I explore how scholars have theorized the relationship between neoliberalism, citizenship, and feminisms in Latin America for the period covered in this dissertation, that is, between 1990 and 2020. I discuss how neoliberalism has transformed Latin American states and societies on the three dimensions of the gender justice concept: (1) through new rights-based forms of recognition; (2) through new forms of participation in policymaking through civil society participation; and (3) through new forms of limited redistribution through targeted social policy. Building on vast interdisciplinary feminist literature, I therefore explain how neoliberalism as a gendered system has had important impacts on gender justice regimes in Latin America. Because of these major transformations carried out by states and civil society, I claim that a focus on citizenship through the prism of state-society relations as mutually exclusive concepts may partly obscure the more intricate ways through which gendered citizenship rights and responsibilities are built in practice since the 1990s. I then turn to the literature from the Left Turn (1998-2015) and subsequent years (2015-2020) to uncover how scholars have understood the transformations in Latin American

citizenship regimes during this period, sustaining that more theoretical work is needed to understand patterns of change and continuity between historical periods.

NEOLIBERALISM

The concept of neoliberalism is often qualified as slippery, unclear, catch-all, too negatively connotated, especially by persons on the left, and therefore analytically useless—to the extent that recently, some have called for abandoning it altogether (Dunn 2017; Venugopal 2015).[49] Scholars have adopted functionalist-structuralist approaches, as well as more policy-oriented approaches to define it. Despite a multiplicity of definitions, a point of convergence in the literature defines neoliberalism as an economic, political, and ideological system facilitating the circulation and concentration of capital under the premise of the primacy of market capitalism, through the regulation of social order (Perreault and Martin 2005).

In this dissertation, I demonstrate how neoliberalism operates on three interlinked dimensions: the economic, the political, and the social. I adopt Peck et al.'s (2018) definition of neoliberalism as a path-dependent, pragmatic, and contextually embedded system composed of policies, discourses, and practices. Socially, this ideological system generally favours the individual over the collective. Politically and economically, the institutions that compose it favour the accumulation and concentration of capital through market capitalism, over redistribution. Yet, neoliberalism is thus not a unitary phenomenon, nor constant over time, and

---

[49] Studied from a wide range of social science disciplines beyond economy, neoliberalism has been defined as an ideology or a philosophy with a set of practices universally aspiring to restore class power through income inequality (Garrett 2019), a set of deregulating and decentralizing policies (Larner 2003), an "ensemble of coordinates" operating under a common logic of governing (Ong 2007), or a shared "problematic" around liberalism which re-centred the market (Biebricher 2019).

rather, can be understood as a *process*, what some scholars approach as neoliberalization (Larner 2003; Peck and Tickell 2002).

First, it is usually argued that neoliberal reforms have entailed a deepening of free-market capitalism that has transformed the role of the state in regulating the economy. Some of the policies implemented under the Washington Consensus since the 1990s, have included fiscal discipline, reorientation of public expenditures, tax reform, financial liberalization, unified and competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization, openness to foreign direct investment (FDI), privatization, deregulation, and the reinforcement of property rights (Williamson 2009). Second, beyond specific economic policies, neoliberalism is also a political project in which states play a key role, radically distinct from the earlier Keynesian economic model. Contrary to 19th century laissez-faire model,[50] contemporary neoliberal states are understood as dense, active, and continuously monitoring and controlling people for the promotion of the market economy.[51] Indeed, neoliberalism is often thought of as enforced through a process of coercive, proactive, and invasive forms of state intervention to impose market rule—but also through compensatory measures that prevent social fallout (Garrett 2019).

As a dynamic set of processes, neoliberalism has also varied in its intensity, ranging from smaller policy adjustments to regime shifts to radical system transformation (Jessop 2002). Focusing on temporal variation, Peck and Tickell (2002) suggest that neoliberalism has had both

---

[50] While "Liberalism" emphasizes the return of a political and economic model situating the individual rights and freedoms in the public sphere guaranteed through limited state intervention in the market, the prefix "neo" signals modernizing efforts to address the shortcomings of an old, 19th century liberal agenda, namely, replacing complete laissez-faire by state regulation and ridding Liberalism of its initial religious underpinnings (Biebricher 2019).

[51] As Eagleton-Pierce (2016) points out, there has been overall little reduction in government size and spending among Western states. They point toward the state's active role in capitalist economy through measures of social stability and pacification, to ensure the reproduction of the workforce.

rollback elements, through the retrenchment of the Keynesian welfare state in the 1980s, but also

more active rollout components through new regulatory reforms. Therefore, scholars have

argued that rather than retracting or eroding the state, within a globalized capitalist economy,

states have become spatially reconfigured and rescaled. While neoliberalism has eclipsed the

central state as main regulator of social norms and relations, statehood has been rescaled in an

upward and downward way, through multilevel institutional venues for the regulation, including

international institutions, and also cities, regions, and other substates (Brenner 1999; 2004;

Fraser 2010; Jessop 2002; Peck and Tickell 1994).[52] The central nation-state's loss of autonomy

has thus created the need for supranational coordination and the space for subnational resurgence

(Jessop 1993).

Departing from an all-encompassing, static, and hegemonic definition that leaves little

room for historical and geographical variation, in this dissertation I focus on actually existing

neoliberalism and consider internal contradictions, as well as forms of resistance to neoliberal

projects. As Jamie Peck, Neil Brenner, and Nik Theodore argue:

> Understood as an ideological matrix and as an adaptive rationale for ongoing
> projects of state and societal restructuring, fortified and guided by a strong
> discourse of market progress, neoliberalism plainly cannot exist in the world in
> 'pure', uncut, or unmediated form. Instead, its 'actually existing' manifestations are
> – and can only be – partial, polycentric, and plural; its dynamics of frontal advance
> and flawed reproduction are marked by friction, contradiction, polymorphism, and
> uneven geographical development, and not just because the project-cum-process
> has been somehow 'blocked' or half-cocked – in that it remains incomplete – but
> because volatile hybridity is the condition of existence. (Peck, Brenner, and
> Theodore 2018, 3)

---

[52] The concept of "globalization" has emerged to describe the "double movement of globalization on the one hand
and devolution decentralization or localization on the other," generating a form of the global-local disorder (Peck
and Tickell 1994, 318).

Considering the major transformations experienced by states during the 1990s, in this dissertation I adopt definitions that move away from structuralist-functionalist and rationalist Weberian paradigms that have dominated the discipline. [53] While states are major actors in the creation and enforcement of citizenship regimes, in practice, they rarely monopolize the processes of inclusion and exclusion to citizenship. In addition, with the rise of globalization, social scientists have increasingly challenged traditional conceptualizations of the state as monolithic, permanent, and deterministic entities, observing how the transformation of global economies, the rise of the international human rights agenda, transnational social flows, identities, and organizations, have "re-scaled" and changed the locus of power in the management of human relations, down to the local and up to the global (Brenner 1999).

---

[53] First, earlier Marxist functionalist views understood the state as instrumental to the capitalist class and their interests (Almond 1988), only to later be re-conceptualized in the 1980s as autonomous from economic and social forces (Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol 1985). Re-defining one of the most classic concepts in political science and sociology, these scholars build on Weberian understandings of the modern, European Westphalian state, as the successful enforcement of the monopoly over the legitimate use of violence within a given territory and its population—through rationalization, depersonalization, and bureaucratization (Weber 2019 [1922]). Yet, both these definitions had problems: both structuralist-functionalist and rationalist Weberian definitions were over-deterministic in their own way, by embedding in their conceptualization the "outcome" of state action (that is, either its instrumentalization for the domination of the capitalist class, or its autonomous and successful monopolization of the use of force). In turn, modern European feminist scholars building on and going beyond these paradigms have provided key insights into the *gendered* nature of state control through the public/private divide, expressed through their institutional features, processes, and effects. Liberal feminism, rooted in philosophers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Harriet Taylor, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, embrace a theory of the state as a neutral arbiter of social and political relations. Contemporary liberal feminist views, including those of Betty Friedan, Elizabeth Holtzman, Patsy Mink, are grounded in rationalistic understanding of individual sovereignty support the state's efforts to support negative and positive rights to provide equal opportunities for men in women in the market, such as social policies and the welfare state. Yet, unlike radical feminist thinkers, they tend to disregard patriarchal relations in the private sphere, namely, the family (see Tuana and Tong 1995). Yet, for many modern feminists, the state is seen as instrumental to patriarchy (radical feminists) or capitalism (Marxist and socialist feminists). The state's patriarchal control over women's bodies and lives unfolds through institutions such as marriage, *patria potestas*, the legality of marital rape. Laws, norms, practices and discourses, are thus seen as instruments of domination through coercive and disciplinary regulation (W. Brown 1995; Sylvia Walby 1989). For radical feminists, patriarchy acts as a structure and a process unfolding especially through the violent, gendered control and appropriation of women's sexuality and reproductive capacities (Delphy 1981; MacKinnon 1989). For socialists and Marxists, women form a class of biological and social reproducers through unpaid and forced labour in the family, upon which the capitalist system rely (Federici 2004; Rich 1986). They understand patriarchy and capitalism as interdependent systems of oppression (Guillaumin 1978; Sylvia Walby 1989).

In what comes next, I centre on the form of gendered neoliberalism that has characterized

Latin America. In this region, neoliberal reforms have taken on multiple shapes and forms over

space and time. First, on the economic dimension, since the 1970s, neoliberalism was associated

with conservative authoritarian regimes but later during the 1990s, it resurged under

democratically elected populist leaders (Eaton 2006; Oxhorn, Selee, and Tulchin 2004; Perreault

and Martin 2005). Pushed by bilateral agencies since the military dictatorships of the 1970s and

deepened since the 1982 Mexican default and during the 1990s under the "Washington

Consensus," initial reforms involved drastic structural adjustment programs that emphasized the

deregulation of finance capital, the flexibilization of the labour force, and state downsizing

(Eaton 2006; Przeworski 2003; Sikkink 1998; Williamson 2009).[54] By the second half of the

1990s, however, the region experienced the rise of "neoliberalism with a human face"—also

known as the New Social Policy (NSP)—which sought to address the social deficits of the

previous approaches. Through NSP, civil society organizations, families, and citizens were

perceived as "stakeholders" in the policy process, participating in its design and implementation.

For many of its proponents, these reforms were seen as potentially democratizing.

Decentralization would lead to the democratic inclusion of civil society through participatory

mechanisms, making states more accountable and increasing grassroots political participation

(Banaszak, Beckwith, and Rucht 2003).[55] NGOs were seen as cost-effective, smaller scale, and

decentralized thus more democratic entities for welfare provision than large, weak, or corrupt

states (Bebbington and Farrington 1993; Fifka et al. 2016; Frantz 1987).

---

[54]   Namely, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the Interamerican Development Bank, and the
U.S. government through its development agency (USAID).

[55] "Progressive" NGOs in particular, were seen as more connected to popular sectors' social movements (M.
Macdonald 1994).

Second, on the political dimension, much related to the economic one and hyper-inflation and debt crises, states privatized key areas of social services, implemented administrative and political decentralization, and severely cut back government spending in the 1990s (Falleti 2010; Oxhorn, Selee, and Tulchin 2004). Consequently, key social services were deeply re-structured, including health, housing, education, and welfare—combining decentralization and privatization (Göttems et al. 2021).[56] Throughout the region, rescaling remained highly asymmetrical, whereas local institutions would gain responsibility without power, and supranational institutions, power without responsibility (Peck and Tickell 2002).

As a rather polymorphic phenomenon, it has been argued that neoliberalism can survive amid apparent changes in political systems, such as regime or legal changes. In theorizing different forms of "post-neoliberalism," Brenner et al. (2010) introduce four different ideal scenarios for the intensity and nature of these legacies: (1) residual neoliberalization, where neoliberalism is contested but still operates in practice; (2) disarticulated counter-neoliberalization, where social and political alliances promote some market-constraining regulations in a dispersed and un-coordinated way; (3) orchestrated counter-neoliberalization, where neoliberal orthodoxy is challenged through bigger-scale movement or state-based regulatory experiments; and (4) deep socialization, where alternative, social democratic, solidaristic model infiltrate political agendas all spatial scales.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE GENDER JUSTICE REGIME

---

[56] Just like economic policies, social sector reforms have varied in time and across countries. Three periods have nonetheless characterized healthcare reforms in the region: a national solidarity logic (1950s-1990); a market-oriented competitive logic (1990-2000); and a public programs logic with competition between service providers (2001-2015) (Göttems et al. 2021).

In this section, I "gender" neoliberalism on three dimensions: by unveiling its gendered assumptions, instruments, and effects on Latin American states and societies. I argue that neoliberalism transformed the three dimensions of gender justice as proposed by Nancy Fraser: (1) women's recognition has become channelled through the language and instruments of individual rights; (2) women's political participation has become channeled into more institutional vehicles such as NGOs and INGOs; (3) the role of the state in socioeconomic redistribution has shrunk, along the rise of a new social policy approach – with important gendered effects. In this section, I argue that the concept of gender justice regime allows these new elements into our understanding of citizenship regimes.

Recognition through Human Rights

Firstly, neoliberalism has accompanied a shift in patterns of recognition, from class-based forms of collective representation to women as subjects of individual rights (Oxhorn 2001; Roberts 2015). In the Western context, the turn to the women's rights framework is often understood as having led to a transition from prior paternalistic, maternalistic, and familialist regimes in place since the late 19th century toward liberal welfare regimes grounded on individual rights (Giles 2019). The adoption of women's rights agendas indeed seemed to have generated and accompanied important changes in citizenships regimes and societies (Htun and Weldon 2012). Here, I show that reproductive rights and gender-based violence have changed the logic of social recognition, by situating women as subjects of individual citizenship rights. In that sense, this trend has generated what Poulantzas (1972) coined as an "identification effect," through which "women" were homogenized as a single group experiencing the same oppression. This shift has implications both for state policies and societal claim, implications that a gender justice approach can attend to.

Both proponents and critics of neoliberalism argue that the traditional family model has been in crisis since the 1970s as evidenced by changes in women's participation in the labour market, sexual liberation, divorce, and the growing acceptance in Western societies of non-heterosexual identities and practices (Cooper 2017). Violence against women in families, workplaces, and in the streets have been increasingly challenged by domestic violence and sexual harassment laws for example—seemingly eroding prior familialist regimes (Meyer 2018). Moreover, the legalization of contraception and abortion in many Western countries has led scholars to say farewell to maternalism as a main logic underlying system of social provision (Orloff 2008, 1). With the emergence of policies promoting paternal co-responsibility, state-co-responsibility, and/or social equity, feminists perceived some welfare states as increasingly de-maternalizing (Blofield and Martínez Franzoni 2015a). As Giles (2019) highlights, 19th century Liberalism was characterized by an emphasis on individual freedoms coupled with paternalistic and maternalistic regulations in which women as mothers were considered to provide a crucial role in society. With neoliberalism, these essentializing gendered components of maternalistic, paternalistic, and familialist policies were replaced by the language of individual universalism—yet without eliminating gendered power inequalities within families and societies. As a result, sex differences between citizens, real or imagined, were completely removed from presumed notions of citizen rights and responsibilities. Neoliberalism thus rests on specific assumptions about universal rationality, individual sovereignty, and self-sufficiency, and its instruments are centred on gendered, classed, and raced notions of individual choice, risk management, and competition.

Scholars have thus shifted their research interests, to measure the extent to which new policies were compatible with other individual aspirations, such as paid work and other intimate

social arrangements than marriage (Gordon 1994; Skocpol 1992). On the contrary, care policies, states' interventions in the family's gendered organization and labour distribution would defamiliarize social policy (Orloff 1996), as women were gaining independence (both economic and in terms of unpaid care burden) from family relations, either through paid work or social security provisions (Saraceno, Lewis, and Leira 2012).[57] Eventually, scholars turned to the concepts of de-gendering and re-gendering to assess how states make an unmake gender norms and relations through social policies (Orloff 2009).

During the 1990s, many Latin American countries also constitutionalized the international women's rights agenda, created their first women's institutes, and begun the process of adapting their domestic legal frameworks to their new international obligations (Okeke–Ihejirika and Franceschet 2002b; Roggeband 2014; Sikkink 2019). Enthusiasts, on the one hand, argued that the incorporation of the international women's rights agenda constituted an important opportunity for democratic deepening in Latin America. After all, as mentioned above, the language and politics of human rights have been key in Latin American women's movements since the third wave of democratization, both to deepen democratic processes and demand full inclusion to citizenship (see Molyneux and Craske 2002). Yet, if many Latin American states have constitutionalized international human rights instruments in the 1990s and gained new obligations as member states of international and regional organizations, the incorporation of international women's rights into domestic legal frameworks was neither immediate, nor linear.[58]

---

[57] To emphasize the gendered distribution of care work within families, Sophie Mathieu (2016) instead introduces the concept of de-motherization in interaction with de-familiarization, referring to how care work is distributed within the family (between women and men), and between women and the state.

[58] I dive deeper into these discussions in Chapter 2, where I introduce neo-institutional approaches and their ontologies of change and continuity.

Going back to the concept of gender justice regime elaborated above, I proposed to focus on both the *distributional* and *status recognition* components of citizenship. Given this dissertation's focus on reproductive rights and anti-gender-based violence policies, I am interested in unveiling whether they have, and how, challenged, in practice, maternalistic and familialist regimes. A gender justice regime approach, in turn, offers the possibility to analyze how structural and agentic aspects of such a process of recognition and redistribution pervade institutions. First, Nancy Fraser's class-like (and race) differentiation allows for incorporating how maternalistic and familialist arrangements are rooted in and strengthen structural gender, class, and racial material inequalities. Second, this concept's focus on status differentiation—or the gendered representations in institutions that entrench exclusions symbolically—and how the incursion of new human rights may challenge prior institutional arrangements. Third, a focus on the role of meaningful participation of oppressed sectors in these institutional processes allows accounting for women's agency in challenging institutions and pushing for other patterns of power redistribution.

Participation through NGOs

Since neoliberal reforms, forms of democratic and institutional participation that have shaped Latin American societies and states throughout the 20th century were deeply transformed. This process has involved, among others, the emergence of new social groups as collective political actors and the institutionalization of social movements, mostly through NGOs. Indeed, NGOs became key vehicles to relate with states and international organizations, and increasingly became partners in the pursuit of their social and economic development goals. International financial and development agencies such as the World Bank, pushed for new social policy approaches focused on human development rather than income redistribution. This new approach

centred on civil society participation, unfolded through targeted social support that would empower citizens as stakeholders, through people and NGOs' participation in each step of the policy process and tools of good governance, and participation (Gideon 1998; Molyneux 2008). These new opportunities for civil society participation in policymaking and governance were propelled by states as a way of deepening young Latin American democracies.

As a result of the important trends, different assessments have intensified and crystalized in the literature, regarding the relationship between neoliberalism, gender inequalities, and patterns of social inclusion/exclusion. In line with these assessments, historical debates between autonomous and reformist branches of feminist movements have intensified, amid the rise of state feminism, increasingly transnational and fragmented feminist movements, and feminist NGOs that embraced the international women's rights agenda (Keck and Sikkink 1999; Segato 2021; Sternbach et al. 1992). Feminist movements in Latin America similarly experienced what Sonia Álvarez qualified as an NGO boom (Álvarez 1999). In this context, NGOs were sometimes seen as facilitators in the adoption of the international women's rights language and instruments, creating enabling environments that would spread international norms on gender equality, empowerment, and mainstreaming (Hawkins and Humes 2002; Kardam 2005; Sikkink 1995).

The shift toward evidence-based policy and NGO participation in what scholars call "governance feminism" (Halley et al. 2018) was initially thought of as providing feminist movements with opportunities to reshape expertise in ways that include historically excluded voices and, thus, bring more legitimate knowledge claims to spaces of power (Rankin, Vickers, and Field 2001). Monitoring, public exposure, and formal mechanisms of horizontal

accountability through litigation, for example, have been viewed as new mechanisms for civil society to push for the enforcement of rights (Peruzzotti and Smulovitz 2002; 2006). This "third form of accountability," often referred to as societal or as social accountability, is now commonly seen as a crucial mechanism for law enforcement in Latin America, a region in which states generally lack strong mechanisms of horizontal or vertical accountability, capacity, and a clear separation of powers (Mainwaring, Leiras, and Brinks 2014; O'Donnell 1996). NGOs could have therefore become new actors, alongside states, of legibility practices—but in ways that propose increasingly homogenous ways to assess the world and produce subjects for state intervention (Scott 2008).

At the same time, feminist movements in the region seemed to experience a certain de-mobilization in terms of mass movements (Álvarez 1999). In a system qualified as a perverse confluence between neoliberal reforms of the state, the market, and liberal democracy (Dagnino 2008), civil society and collective action, especially from lower-class sectors, faced greater barriers. States are indeed less willing and unable to work in a synergetic alliance—and controlled inclusion through workers unions during the populist era was seemingly replaced by coerced marginalization of impoverished sectors of society (Oxhorn 1995; 2012). Participation became infused with a consumerist logic, where citizens receiving services were seen as clients. Thus, this state-society arrangement would provide the structural foundation of delegative democracies, where elections do not serve as effective mechanisms of vertical accountability (O'Donnell 1994).

For many feminist scholars, NGOs and women's agencies had become increasingly reliant on the UN system or private actors for funding, often from the global north, adopting a

market logic (Stoffel 2008). This increasing dependency on the state would have driven the demobilization of autonomous feminist sectors, such as grassroots women's associations, while reformist strategies would have depoliticized and professionalized feminist movements. Increasingly consulted as gender experts, institutionalized feminisms grew at the expense of marginalized, unorganized women, and grassroots organizations; they had lost their essence and power of democratic representation, traded their critical power for a technocratic and apolitical gender perspective, and therefore tamed their ability to keep states accountable. Therefore, while the institutionalist sectors of the movement grew in size and power, tempering some of its demands to accommodate more conservative political elites, autonomous and more grassroots sectors representing the poor remained marginalized (Castro 2001; López and Petras 1994; Vargas and Cuevas 2020).

These more critical perspectives argued that state-centred feminisms in Latin America, which usually constituted middle- and upper-class women, had contributed to reinforcing racial and class inequalities within movements and in society by aligning feminist agendas with international development agencies and capitalist interests (Fraser 2009; Mendoza 2012).[59] Movement actions such as awareness campaigns and mobilizational actions would have been traded for results-oriented actions and policy impact assessments (Álvarez 1999). Reliance on data production would lead to a growing dependency on expert competencies to produce what

[59] Mendoza argues that: "This division was largely a division amongst the urban, middle-class creole-mestizo movement. The women's movement of poor women in urban marginal and rural areas had not benefited from the generosity of the external donors. From being local partners in the feminist struggle, they became the objects of development goals set by international organizations that now dominated the agendas of feminist organizations" (Mendoza 2012, 51).

was considered more objective quantitative data and eventually lead to a depoliticization of feminist demands (Laforest and Orsini 2005).

By embracing policy discourses and agendas on gender equity through state feminism, states would have coopted feminist projects to fit their own neoliberal agenda (Banaszak, Beckwith, and Rucht 2003; Elman 2003; Stratigaki 2004).[60] More radical feminist perspectives would be either ignored, or used as a discursive and institutional tool to dismantle social protections, re-externalize social reproduction, and infuse modernization from above, more than allowing for women's empowerment from the grassroots (Craske 1998; Fraser 2015; Gideon 1998; 2002).[61] Feminist governance models would forge a counterproductive alliance with neoliberal policy agendas promoted by states and international organizations, making the movements complicit in the institutional failure to address gender inequalities (Bernstein 2010; 2012; Lind 2003; Schild 2015).

In all, under neoliberalism, Latin American societies experienced important shifts in the modes of political participation, through an institutionalization of social movements, a trend that feminist movements did not escape. Understanding forms of inclusion and exclusion from citizenship should, therefore, account for this supposed change in modes of participation among sectors that challenge patriarchal norms observed in the literature. A gender justice approach

---

[60] By targeting marginalized sectors of the population, NGO-implemented programs were seen as being used to limit civil unrest and maintain clientelist relationships with the state (Gideon 1998). Their new role as policy "co-implementors"—and thus, their increasing financial dependence on state and IGO funding—go hand in hand with a state-shrinking approach to social policy and unpaid work (S. A. López and Petras 1994). NGO programs were increasingly grounded in conditionality, sometimes require women's voluntary work and productive role, increasing their reproductive burden instead of empowering them (Moser 1989).

[61] In fact, with the exception of Brazil, women coming from women's movements generally hold very small presence in formal politics, usually dominated by feminist women within political parties and union leaders (Vargas and Wieringa 2019).

centred on the institutional process of meaningful participation in the definition of citizenship rights and power distribution between members of society accomplishes this task.

Redistribution through New Social Policy

Third and last, I show here that neoliberalism has increased gendered socioeconomic inequalities and re-shaped the policy instruments in place to address (or mitigate) them. Since the 1990s, women throughout the world and mothers in particular have been primarily affected by poverty and unemployment—while also being the primary producers, consumers, and reproducers of their communities (Giles 2019; Jenson 1997; Shahrashoub Razavi 2013).

Just as international women's rights were increasingly incorporated into domestic legal frameworks, Latin America was entering this second phase of neoliberal reforms (Molyneux and Razavi 2002). During this period, a discourse emerged in global-level international development discussions on the feminization of poverty, shedding light on women's economic precarity, yet at the same time, privileging policies that framed them as responsible for poverty reduction (Barrientos, Gideon, and Molyneux 2008; Chant 2008; Gideon 2002; 2014b). Universal or quasi-universal welfare state policies were increasingly replaced by targeted policies that were deemed more effective and less costly. During this period, impoverished women and mothers in particular, became targets of conditional cash transfer programs and micro-loans aimed at empowering them as key players in the health, economic development, and capacity-building of their families and communities (Nagels 2016; 2021; Shahra Razavi and Staab 2018).

Along with the shrinking of social policies and support systems, child-centred, expert-guided, privatized caretaking, concepts such as intensive mothering or moral norms around what is considered good motherhood have also emerged. These concepts seek to describe the

heightened burden (financial, temporal, emotional) and class-based, racialized moral expectations that neoliberalism implicitly exerts on mothers (Crittenden 2002; de Souza 2013; Hays 1996). Neoliberal transformations have brought back individual choice and responsibility (and blame) at the centre of states' gendered management of welfare and social order (Blofield et al. 2021; Lowe 2016). At the same time, women are often represented as submissive and dependent clients of the state in their interactions with policy (Auyero 2011). Meanwhile, regulation in the realm of reproductive rights and sexuality has largely remained controlled, and states were permeated by a Vatican-led resistance against these rights in particular (Craske 1998).

By the end of the 1990s and the early 2000s, the impacts of neoliberal reforms on gender inequalities were stark and paradoxical. For example, Kurt Weyland (2004), sustained that neoliberalism had strengthened the sustainability of democracies in Latin America by increasing top-down pressures, but at the same time, the tightening economic constraints and the weakening left parties and unions had limited democratic quality by shrinking participation and accountability. Feminist social scientists also debated the gendered consequences of neoliberalism on Latin American economies, states, democracies, and societies. Most perceived that the exclusionary effects neoliberal governance were now strongly felt in Latin America over worsened real wages, unemployment rates, and increased poverty and inequality, especially among women (Gwynne and Kay 2000; Hite and Viterna 2005; Huber and Solt 2004; Mesa-Lago 1997).[62] The feminization of poverty, women's informal labour participation, increased unpaid labour, and changes in family composition and relations had increasingly sparked women

---

[62] In Latin American and the Caribbean, poverty passed from 40 percent in 1980 to 48% in 1990, with 79 million people living in extreme poverty (ECLAC 2007, 59–60).

to organize collectively for their survival, politicizing their intimate and family lives (Montaño 2007; Pereira and Raes 2002).

Therefore, the return to democracy from the 1980s to the 1990s led to important legal changes in Latin America, but access to rights by historically excluded sectors to citizenship regimes remained limited (Gideon 2006). Moreover, the unequal reach of democratization left what Guillermo O'Donnell (1993a) qualified as "brown areas" of democracy, where large portions of populations remain excluded on the grounds of their class, race, and gender. For these people, democracy operates at a low intensity, and remains characterized by vertical, clientelist relationships between elected authorities, states, and citizens—that blend authoritarian and democratic features (Kurtz 2004). The rule of law is not applied uniformly across territories and social sectors, and violence is still a key component of state-society relations and democratic life (Auyero 2007; Brinks and Botero 2010; Brinks 2020; Goldstein and Arias 2010; Mainwaring, Leiras, and Brinks 2014). In this context, women from popular sectors rely on a wider range of practices and support systems states, due to their historical exclusion from citizenship, weak states, and a high degree of informal labour (Rai and Lievesley 2013). Popular sectors especially show higher reliance on family, community, and friends kinship networks for wellbeing and social reproduction—networks whose sustainability rests on women's unpaid labour (Ewig 2010; Martínez Franzoni 2008; Ramm 2020).

Moreover, since neoliberal reforms, women seemed to experience higher and different forms of gender-based violence in many areas of Latin America. The crisis of feminicides in the Mexican Ciudad Juarez in the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), had sparked transnational feminist debates on the role of state impunity and neoliberalism in

65

fomenting the misogynous killing of marginalized women (Segato 2005; Staudt 2009).[63] The

literature has highlighted the role neoliberalism has played in increasing rates and intensity of

violence against women in the region (Prieto-Carrón, Thomson, and Macdonald 2007; Segato

2005; K. A. Staudt 2010; Weissman 2010; Wright 2011). In the context of global economic

changes, "gender conceptions, including masculinities, along with perception and experiences of

threat, entitlement, and rights among women and men" are challenged and can lead to sustained

or increased male violence against their female partners (Staudt 2010, 188).

To conclude this section, the early enthusiasm for the institutionalization of feminism and

the democratic potential of neoliberal reforms had largely faded among feminists by the early

2000s. Many critical views put into question the capacity of individual rights alone, targeted

social policy, and NGOs to bring about gender justice and equality. Importantly, neoliberal

reforms had major impacts on states and societies, by introducing new human rights obligations

through which women were recognized as subjects of rights, challenging the central state as a

main regulatory organization, and opening policy to civil society participation. These changes, I

argue, require a conceptual reassessment of how we understand states, civil society, and the

relationships between them following these reforms.

Unlike dominant approaches in political science that see the state as either a function of

capitalist interests or entirely autonomous from society, I approach the state more from an

---

[63] Much of the Latin American literature on feminicides has been developed in the context of *maquiladora*
[factories] workers employed in the outskirts of Ciudad Juárez, close to the United States border. Infamously known
for extremely violent acts of torture, gang rapes, and cruel assassinations of women, the extreme forms of violence
committed against mostly poor, mostly Indigenous or migrant women, Ciudad Juarez represents an extreme case of
systemic impunity, particularly high since the NAFTA agreement. If part of this impunity is attributed to states'
direct participation in femicides or its outright neglicence in its administrative and investigative duties, the
embeddedness of the Mexican political system in organized crime, for which feminicides are deeply incorporated as
performative and communicative devices amongst gang membership rituals, would also be the core of their inability
to investigate those crimes and sanction perpetrators despite increasing public awareness (Segato 2005; 2014).

ethnographic perspective. Given states' transformations under neoliberal reforms, for anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (2001, 126), neoliberalism has exacerbated two elements of the state: its lack of institutional fixity as an open field for the deployment of power, and its effects outside national institutions and governmental sites. I am therefore interested in tracking the "everyday forms in which relations of subjection are constructed" (Auyero 2011, 24)—yet, I sustain that these relations and processes, since neoliberal reforms are not confined to state offices anymore; present a broader view of how these representations through localized practices, discourses, networks, and relations, are therefore needed to capture how citizenship is negotiated in the everyday, particularly by oppressed groups with more powerful ones.

Moreover, following neoliberal reforms, civil society [64] appears as traversed by transnational resources, communication, and identity-formation dynamics, generating new forms of social and political citizenship (Oxhorn 2007; Sikkink 1995). Contrary to dominant approaches in the discipline that understand civil society as situated outside the state, I am instead interested in the webs of unequally powerful actors, including those situated within traditional state institutions such as ministries, courts, legislatures, and state offices, but that also pertain to feminist networks and organizations taking more fluid shapes. In this context, the state

---

[64] The concept of "civil society" also has a long trajectory since the Enlightenment, and in 19th century social sciences, with Alexis de Tocqueville's (1850) famous work on liberal democracy in the United States. Civil society then included those institutions, collectivities, and groups that are believed to exist "outside" and autonomously from the state. These groups are seen as taking active part in the construction of democratic life—and eventually, citizenship regimes—by curtailing state power and allowing citizens to manage their social lives more directly. While some scholars adopt normative understandings of civil society (Oxhorn 1995), I opt for a more descriptive approach that does not presume civil society's more "democratic" or "inclusionary" intentions. Philip Oxhorn (1995, 251-252) conceptualizes civil society as, "the social fabric formed by a multiplicity of self-constituted territorially- and functionally based units which peacefully coexist and collectively resist subordination to the state, at the same time that they demand inclusion into national political structures." Therefore, his conceptualization of civil society inherently frames it as "good," pacific, and progressive; I seek to avoid this presumption about civil society actors' intentions and synergetic relationship with states, instead paying attention to the power relations between them, as well as the political and social projects they organize for.

and civil society should be disaggregated and the boundaries between states and societies should be a subject of investigation more than presumed (Mahajan 1999; Migdal, Kohli, and Shue 1994; Mitchell 1991). In this sense, as Trouillot (2001, 133) argues, the fragmented location of state power can be found, "not only in organized politics but in the many practices through which citizens encounter not only government but also a myriad of other state-like institutions and processes that interpellated them as individuals and as members of various communities." By focusing on everyday practices and discourses through which social representations and power distribution are negotiated, I hope to have demonstrated that the concept of the gender justice regime allows for the address of the theoretical assumptions contained in the concept of the citizenship regime.

THE LEFT TURN AND BEYOND: A POST-NEOLIBERAL ERA?

With the crisis of neoliberalism in the late 1990s and early 2000s, many Latin American countries turned to the left, with the election of Left and Centre-Left governments throughout the region of Latin America (Levitsky and Roberts 2011).[65] In the context of widespread changing political colours in the region, many analysts signalled a post-neoliberal era (Gideon and Molyneux 2012; K. M. Roberts 2009), characterized by more or less radical and segmented projects of inclusion and redistribution, rights-based governance, and social investment-oriented social provision (Arza et al. 2022; Garay 2016; Gideon 2014a; Handlin 2013; Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter 2010). The Left Turn that swept the region was seen by many scholars as a window of opportunity for progressive social movements to push an agenda on social justice, human

---

[65] These include Venezuela (1998), Chile (2000), Brazil (2002), Argentina (2003), Uruguay (2004), Bolivia (2005), Peru (2005), and Ecuador (2006). Most scholars agree that there is not one but many "Lefts" in the region, and different typologies of Left governments have emerged, according to their degree of institutionalization, populist/programmatic appeal, or policy radicalism/moderation (Cameron 2009; Cleary 2006; Schamis 2006).

rights, and gender equality forward (Cameron 2009; Levitsky and Roberts 2011). In this last section of the chapter, I review debates in the literature regarding these shifts and continuities in gender citizenship regimes under the left—and following the Left Turn.

Between 2000 and 2015, with the election and re-election of left governments in Latin America, feminists have seen at least some of their demands addressed by states. On the one hand, feminist legislative coalitions led to the adoption of new gender-based violence prevention and sanction laws that have sometimes expanded and gendered previous laws. Starting in the 2010s, Latin American countries have also typified and criminalized femicide as an aggravated crime involving greater sanctions for perpetrators (Beer 2017; García-Del Moral 2020; Saccomano 2017; Tapia Tapia and Bedford 2021). On the other hand, countries in the region have widely adopted birth control, family planning counselling programs, sex education laws, and assisted reproduction for the past two decades (Coenga-Oliveira and Chabot 2024; Díez 2020).[66] Pressure to liberalize abortion laws has led countries such as Colombia (2006) and Brazil (2012) to decriminalize abortion in limited circumstances, and Mexico City (2007) and Uruguay (2012), to legalize the practice on-demand (though with gestational limitations), expanding significantly their reproductive rights frameworks. Left and centre-left governments in the region have benefitted from a global commodity boom in the first years of the 21st century, supporting more generous and universal welfare and social policy—a trend which cooled down following the United States' financial crisis in 2008 (Handlin 2013; Huber and Niedzwiecki 2014; Huber and Stephens 2012b).

---

[66] In parallel with these changes, between 1990 and 2008, Latin America has seen a decline in unsafe abortion incidence, dropping from 45 to 31 unsafe abortions per 1,000 women of between 15 and 44 years old—still leading the world's 17 per 1,000 rate (World Health Organization 2012, 3).

However, scholars have emphasized how these formal changes were combined with strong elements of continuity with earlier institutions, limiting these policies' effective implementation (Grugel and Riggirozzi 2018; Hartmann 2016; L. Macdonald and Ruckert 2009; Yates and Bakker 2014). Indeed, the record of the past three decades has been mixed, with a fragile transformation of citizenship regimes overall, despite significant advances in terms of formal incorporation of women's rights (Marques-Pereira 2005; Nagels 2020; Staab 2012). Many of the gender equality policies adopted during the Left Turn face implementation issues, enduring patriarchal norms in states and society, underfunding, and a lack of strong measures of accountability (Bergallo 2014a; Ewig 2010; Hiner 2020; Htun and Jensenius 2020). Health programs (Lopreite and Macdonald 2013a) or conditional cash transfers (Nagels 2018a), for example, still tend to rely on maternalistic assumptions about women's caretaking and reproductive roles and have deepened gender inequalities. Overall, many argue that the post-neoliberal ideal of the Left Turn was unsuccessful in dismantling more deeply rooted structural inequalities (Balán and Montambeault 2020; Riggirozzi 2020).

With the electoral defeats of left governments by 2014 and the rise of right and centre-right governments, the region seemed to experience a return to varying degrees and types of neoliberalism—at least until 2018, when left governments were re-elected into office (Montambeault, Furukawa Marques, and Nagels 2024). At the same time, since 2015, the massification and expansion of feminist movements throughout the region seem to indicate a re-birth of large-scale street-based movements in the region, this time propelled by young women and LGBTQI+. NGOs, on the other hand, seemed to be accomplishing more movement work, pushing scholars to recognize ambiguities in their relationship with states and other more autonomous sectors of feminist movements (Álvarez 2014). Feminist movements are indeed seen

as now engaging with multiple international and transnational policy networks, as well as grassroots organizations, including popular women's organizations (Bohn and Levy 2021; Di Marco 2010a). Thus, binary assessments associating more institutionalized feminisms as bad/neoliberal and autonomous feminisms as good/progressist cannot do justice to the more complex networks of relations currently observed in the region.

Nonetheless, some scholars sustain that feminist movements still face what Merry and Levitt (2017) call a "resonance dilemma" since embracing dominant human rights frameworks can also contribute to deepening material and symbolic inequalities between women, increasing dependency to international organizations and states, and de-legitimizing certain struggles over others. How feminists approach this dilemma delimits the role of the state, and their engagement with it can have significant impacts on gender justice in Latin America (Mottier 2013; Vargas and Wieringa 2019). In all, through a multiscale set of discourses on rights, identities, and citizenship, new geographies of neoliberalism—and contestations to neoliberal orders—may have emerged in the region (Perreault and Martin 2005)—but more is needed to unpack the mechanisms through which these changes and continuities operate in practice.

While feminist theorizing of the state has been accused of over determinism, underdevelopment, and Western bias (MacKinnon 1989; Mutari 2006), it seems like the state as an analytical object and target of intervention still cannot be fully avoided, including among Latin American feminisms (see Gago 2020b; Segato 2021). Similarly, as seen in this chapter, neoliberalism has been accused of being a too all-encompassing and catch-all concept to hold any analytical power. However, by focusing on situated manifestations of actually existing neoliberalism through a grounded epistemological approach rather than some abstract theoretical

definition, I argue that neoliberalism retains explanatory power. Yet, whether the changes observed during the Left Turn were only a "rhetorical recalibration" of neoliberalism (Garrett 2019) or significantly altered gender citizenships in Latin America remains an open question and ultimately, an empirical one that this dissertation seeks to address.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the dissertation's conceptual framework and the key debates contained in the literature that this study contributes to. The first part of the chapter introduced the dissertation's main conceptual contribution, the concept of gender justice regime. As a hybrid concept, gender justice regime draws on, yet goes beyond relational and intersectional definitions of citizenship regimes. Second, focusing on Latin America, I unpacked how historically constructed institutions, such as maternalism and familialism, have posed important limits on the deepening of citizenship regimes in the region. I argued that these concepts are of relevance to understand the conflicted processes of institutionalization of reproductive health and rights and anti-gender-based violence legal instruments in the region since the 1990s.

Third, I turned to the concept of neoliberalism, proposing a gendered reading of the concept and arguing that they are key to theorizing the changing nature of states, feminist movements, and citizenship regimes since the 1990s. I unpacked the concept of neoliberalism through three dimensions, specifically applying to the Latin American context: (1) the growth of a women's rights agenda offering new forms of political recognition—including through reproductive rights and the recognition of gender-based violence as a human rights problem; (2) changes in women's modes of participation through the rise of civil society participatory mechanisms and decentralization, along social demobilization; (3) a gendered change in the logic

of redistribution, from truncated social welfare to targeted social policy-making women active participants in poverty-reduction efforts.

Throughout this chapter, I have argued that the major transformations experienced by states and societies since the neoliberal reforms in Latin America call for conceptual approaches that incorporate these news rights-based forms of recognition, institutional channels of participation of civil society into policymaking, and targeted social policy. The concept of the gender justice regime thus seeks to capture how rights and responsibilities are produced through negotiations that cut across the categories of state and society. In the following chapter, I describe the dissertation's main analytical and methodological approach,[67] grounded in critical feminist policy approaches, but again, drawing on some conceptual tools offered by feminist neo-institutionalisms.

***

---

[67] I consider analytical and methodological strategies as inherently related.

Chapter 2: The Methodological Framework

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the dissertation's epistemological grounds, methodological strategy, and methods. To start, this dissertation did not embrace *a priori* a feminist approach; it would be more accurate to claim that I learned the practice of feminist research by rethinking my research questions, methodology, theoretical approaches, and methods of data collection and analysis along the way. In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the role of my positionality as a researcher, and how a reflexive approach led me to integrate guiding principles of feminist research, importantly, in the research process during fieldwork and later, during the abductive process of analysis and writing.

In the second section of the chapter, which centers on the methodological approach, I begin by summarizing the analytical tools at the disposal of feminist political scientists in the study of gender and citizenship. This dissertation's analytical framework borrows from two distinct schools of thought that are rarely placed in conversation with one another, and often treated as ontologically incompatible in their understandings of power, the state, and discourse: feminist neo-institutionalisms and critical policy studies. I sustain that while feminist historical and sociological neo-institutionalist tools are useful to understand patterns of change and continuity in gender exclusions, their main weakness rests in considering women's rights as externally constituted, rather than socially constructed, through contentious meaning-making processes.

In the third section of this chapter, I introduce the dissertation's methodological framework, which approaches women's rights as social and political constructs that in practice,

may or may not address gender and other social inequalities. Based on Carol Bacchi's "What is the problem represented to be?" approach, this methodology combines a structural discursive approach with a consideration of agency in shaping, resisting, and transforming gendered exclusions contained in and reproduced by policies. Instead of conceptualizing the policy process as a linear series of steps, or understanding change through its formal aspects, I define the institutionalization of reproductive rights and gender-based violence as long-term, everyday processes of *problematization*. Finally, in the fourth and last section of the chapter, I describe the methods employed to operationalize the above-mentioned approach—and the data collected during a total of ten months of in-person and online fieldworks, spanning from 2020 to 2023.

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY, POSITIONALITY, AND REFLEXIVITY

If there is no consensus regarding what feminism is,[68] then feminist approaches in political science form a vast research field that reflect conflicting views over its definition and views over gender emancipation. In a nutshell, feminist approaches in political science seek to unveil how:

> Individual identities, images and symbols, and institutions are structured and concealed by gender norms and inequalities, and how these gender dimensions of society play out in informal and formal political realms and in the contestation over power – that is, over who controls authority and resources. (Ackerly and True 2018, 266)

In addition to these theoretical concerns and lenses, Ackerly and True (2018) argue that feminist epistemological and methodological approaches should embrace a normative commitment to gender justice and equality, by being attentive to the different social epistemologies involved in the political and social phenomena under study, including that of the

---

[68] It is now generally acknowledged that "feminisms" (in plural) constitutes, broadly defined, a set of political and social movements and theoretical lenses that are grounded in challenging patriarchal domination—along other systems of domination—and foreground gender equality, justice, and equity (Baehr 2004; Dhamoon 2013; Monte 2010).

researcher's. [69] Feminist epistemologies thus involve not only questioning gender power inequalities in the phenomenon under study, but it also involves reflecting on how gender shapes the research process itself, from data collection to communication of the results (Fonow and Cook 1991). This dissertation adopts a feminist epistemological approach that centers Latin American women's worldviews, concerns, and experiences in knowledge-production – and embraces reflexivity as a core feature of the research process (Haraway 1988; Code 2014; Alvarado et al. 2020).

POSITIONALITY AND REFLEXIVITY

Feminist and ethnographic approaches in political science generally place the researcher positionality as a starting point to critically assess knowledge-production (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2011; Bourke 2014; Darwin Holmes 2020). In this first section, I unveil how my positionality as a researcher impacted research and elaborate on my reflexive approach as a feminist praxis.

Researcher positionality is inherently relational and has different facets—including geographic, demographic, and theoretical—impacting the research process in important ways throughout, but particularly during data collection. Positionality can relate to the geographic positioning of the scholar—where the researcher is positioned in relation to their research topic (Pachirat 2011)—but often refers more to their socioeconomic and cultural positioning in a power latter, in relation to their research participants. Evaluating the role of positionality involves accounting for both the researcher and the research participants' class, education, gender, birthplace, upbringings, and so on. It —but also "invisible" features, such as what

---

[69] Ackerly and True (2018) identify nine building blocks of feminist research as a democratic, political, and pedagogical practice, applied since the definition of the research questions and goals, until the divulgation and availability of findings. Appendix I summarizes key components of these scholars' feminist approach, detailing how this dissertation incorporated and operationalized it in research design, practices, analysis, and writing.

Zirakzadeh (2013) describes as theoretical positionality, that is, the theoretical frame on which a scholar relies which may or may not clash with their participants' worldviews in the field.

As a cis woman, white, educated, young researcher from Quebec, Canada, my positionality shaped my relationship to the field, my theoretical assumptions as I approached it, as well as my interactions with participants. Overall, my institutional affiliation and country of origin played a favorable role in accessing research participants, particularly civil servants and politicians. These factors shaped how participants interacted with me, as well as the information they disclosed and the one they chose not to disclose. While I was born and raised in North America, my relationship with Argentina dates from 2014; I lived for a total of two years in the country in the past decade. Partnered with an Argentinean man since then, my familiarity with *rioplatense* Spanish and cultural references, as well as my family connections in the provinces of Santa Fe and Buenos Aires, facilitated my access to and connection with research participants, particularly middle-class participants and more institutionalized feminist activists.[70]

Beyond my positionality as a person and researcher, an important component of critical approaches in general, and feminist epistemologies in particular, is a concern for ongoing self-scrutiny, or "self-problematization"—also known as reflexivity (Bourke 2014; Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, 24). A reflexive process involves not only a declaration of one's positionality as a list of identities and how they position the researcher in relation to the research subjects, but a reflexive *practice* that is ongoing throughout the research process (Soerdigo and Glas 2020).[71]

---

[70] Through a one-year student exchange in 2014, attending Argentine history, political science, and law courses at the public university *Universidad Nacional de Litoral*, I familiarized myself with the local culture, language, and politics. The personal and academic relations I developed over the years shaped my approach to the field in important ways.

[71] Recent reflections have highlighted the colonial underpinnings of positionality statements, which can reify material and symbolic inequalities between researchers and research participants (Gani and Khan 2024).

Reflexivity is thus a self-conscious, critical evaluation of how positionality affects knowledge production (both positively and negatively) *throughout* the research process (Smith et al. 2020). During fieldworks conducted between 2020 and 2023, I practiced reflexivity by reflecting daily about interviews and observations in a fieldwork notebook. Treating my fieldwork notes as discourse on its own has allowed me to balance my normative commitments embraced during fieldwork, with a concern for maintaining sufficient distance for a critical scholarly analysis.

During interviews, my status as a foreigner, combined with my familiarity with Argentine society, language, and culture, granted me somehow an ambiguous outsider status. Whether by sharing *mates*[72] or by wearing the city's football team jersey when visiting an archive, my knowledge of codes and informal norms often played in my favor by facilitating a more informal setting for discussion and for example, allowing me to gain access to key archival documents. For my interlocutors, I was "the Canadian student," but as interviews unfolded, I would often witness their attitude change towards me, in a mix of curiosity and surprise. Yet, overall, I maintained a status of outsider perceived by my interlocutors as ignorant of most contextual information about Argentina. While I often benefited from additional explanations and from my interlocutors' account of their country's history, in some cases I received less detailed information that my interlocutors deemed too complex or idiosyncratic for me to fully grasp.

As a female researcher, gender played a key role in shaping my relationship to research participants but also, played a role in my epistemological and methodological decision-making process. Let me share an example of what Lee Ann Fujii (2015) would call an "accidental

---

[72] *Yerba mate* is a highly popular hot beverage in the Southern Cone of the Americas that people often drink in a wood, glass, or dry squash container (called *mate*) and through a metal straw (*bombilla*). Mate is a social drink, often shared amongst a group of people, with its own codes and rituals.

ethnography," that took place in a public hospital in San Miguel de Tucumán. For two days, I was invited by one of my key informants—Clara,[73] a healthcare professional part of the RPSDD—to visit the hospital's Sexual and Reproductive Health Counselling office, one of the few places with healthcare professionals committed to the abortion rights agenda in this conservative province. At the end of my second day observing, and informally chatting with patients and healthcare professionals in the waiting room, I recorded in my fieldnotes the following conversation with Clara, which took place at the end of the day. In this conversation, she revealed to me that a patient she had just attended for a post-abortion care, reported having been mistreated in the hospital when going through an abortion procedure with a gynecologist. In my field notes, I reflected the following:

> Fieldwork notes: Well, then [Clara] came out, came to see me, and asked, "Did you talk to the girl next to you?" It was the one who hadn't wanted to speak to me, so I told her, "No, no, I didn't talk to her because she didn't really seem like she wanted to." And she said to me, "Oh, because she told me she had experienced violence at the hospital. The doctor… the gynecologist who saw her when she wanted to have an abortion tried to perform a curettage without anesthesia, to make her suffer. I don't know how she got out of that situation, or even how she knew that anesthesia was required for it." And Clara then told me, "I thought maybe it was by talking to you that she realized it." So I told her, "No," but Clara said, "It was probably by watching you ask questions that she realized."

Here, Clara told me she believed that the reason why the patient had confessed to her having been mistreated by a medical doctor in the hospital, was because she had seen me, *as a woman and a researcher*, talking to other patients in the waiting room. As I recorded in my fieldnotes, I initially doubted that my presence had anything to do with the patient's confession—as I recalled, she did not seem to pay any attention to me while in the waiting room. But Clara's words made me reflect on my presence in the waiting room of the hospital that day.

---

[73] A pseudonym to preserve the research participant's anonymity. All the interviews conducted in this research project were anonymized.

For her, my presence as a researcher—and specifically, a woman interested in other women's experiences with abortion—played a different role for patients attending her service. As a healthcare professional and an abortion rights activist, Clara had understood my presence as having triggered her patient to speak up against institutional abuse. She introduced me to her colleagues for interviews, repeatedly invited me to spend the days in the hospital, invited me to a meeting with a colleague, shared a lot of information and experiences with me; in other words, I felt that she wanted to work *with me* in this research. Potentially, she saw collaborating with me and my research as another way through which she expressed her activism for abortion rights. As we discussed later during the day, I asked her why she did this for me, and if she ever planned of writing her experiences and analyses and theoretical work about what she was doing in the everyday. Her answer was: "I'd like to, but… but I don't have the time because I'm always working, always practicing. […] I theorize because I have no choice. It's my way of living, my way of making sense, of giving meaning to all of this" (Field notes).

This conversation with Clara sparked me to reflect on the potential intersections between feminist activism and my own research, in two ways. First, through the possibility of conducting social scientific research in a way that would be explicitly coherent with local feminist projects by contributing, although in a very limited way and mostly by researching *with* activists and healthcare professionals on the ground, to safe and non-violent abortion care. Already, developing a working relationship with Clara allowed me, as an outsider in Tucumán, not only to gain a much deeper understanding of the context I was observing but also to better understanding my research as a situated process of feminist knowledge-production (Fieldwork notes). Over time, the research became more "activist-informed," meaning that it incorporated a plurality of feminist and critical approaches (Ackerly and True 2018, 264).

Second, this exercise of reflectivity made me re-think the politics of knowledge-production in political science, and specifically, the epistemological tension between what, how, and why we know what we know in the discipline. Through this accidental ethnography, I became aware of the mechanisms through which patriarchal systems and oppressions operate, including through silencing, and the power of women's voices and experiences in unveiling those mechanisms. This epistemological shift through which I questioned what I thought I knew about the state, reproductive health policy, and women's rights, was, in many ways, an emotional process fueled by anger, indignation, and solidarity. For example, during that same day in the hospital in Tucumán I discussed above, I felt profoundly angry after hearing multiple testimonies of mistreatment from young women who sought to access a legal abortion. As I recorded my notes at the end of the two days I visited the hospital, I struggled with strong emotional responses—somehow feeling betrayed by my own theoretical and disciplinary background. For example, I wrote in my fieldnotes that:

> Fieldwork notes: I'm going to take a couple of minutes to try to understand what's happening. Just to try to be reflective about all the emotions I'm feeling right now. I'm just parked in front of the hospital, waiting. [...] I'm thinking about María, about what she told me yesterday about what happened to her, and then about Virginia. [...] What we have here are systems where women are tortured. Women are tortured. They are not considered citizens, not even considered human beings. It's... I don't know why it's hitting me so hard at this moment. [...] We talk about institutional violence, we talk about reproductive violence, but being there yesterday, seeing it, hearing it, in just four hours at the hospital and having heard two testimonies—how can we live in a so-called democratic system and have this kind of situation where women have no recourse whatsoever?

Having heard and witnessed the violence these women experienced when reaching healthcare institutions was a shocking realization that their daily experiences with citizenship and the state, as women from popular sectors, were strongly shaped by patriarchal, class, and racial

exclusions in ways that I do not think the discipline had prepared me for. In the field, I now felt this institutional violence in my body.

This process of reflexivity thus generated an epistemological opening in my research, and pushed me to move away from a deductive approach to one that is grounded in situated meanings associated with feminism, the state, patriarchal oppressions, and political action (Wilkinson 2014). Emotions, particularly discomfort, anger, and uneasiness with my own theoretical background and assumptions, therefore triggered a reflexive process in ways that made me incorporate a feminist approach to my research.[74] I slowly began to question the state as a "neutral" actor that is autonomous from politics and activism—but also to question it from an ontological perspective, as the main site to study and understand the politics of reproductive rights. In other words, I became aware of the other perspectives on the political world one could gain by grounding research in women's experiences and voices—instead of policy texts or official state discourse.

By questioning my state-centered normative assumptions, which stemmed from my upbringing in a society, particularly as a *Québécoise*, that tends to hold the state in high regard, I incorporated the perspectives of autonomous feminists operating outside what are generally understood as formal policy spaces (Lebovits 2023). I explicitly sought to incorporate the works, ideas, and vocabulary of local activists into my reflections and theoretical framework and avoid reproducing implicit notions of what constituted the "right form" of gender equality policy (Rönnblom 2016). For example, I visited feminist archives and libraries, including the *Libreria*

---

[74] Emotions are, as feminist scholars remind us, an important and perhaps inherent part of researching violence; rendering them invisible would obscure their unavoidable presence in the research process. Thus, making them visible through the reflexive process constitutes a practice of rigorous scientific knowledge-production (Hearn 2021).

de la Mujer (Women's Library)—an important historical site for feminist organizing in Buenos Aires—on multiple occasions in the past years, looking for academic and broad-audience journalistic books on feminisms, gender, and public policy. In some contexts where primary sources were more difficult to access, secondary literature became an important source of information.[75] Throughout this process, I came to question what is considered as "good research," and embraced a more inclusionary inquiry that incorporates "the political concerns of marginalised groups" (Ackerly and True 2018, 268), including, particularly, those of women.

TRACING CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Theorizing the gendered institutions and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion to citizenship has been a key concern for feminist scholars in political science; neo-institutionalists traditions[76] have since the 1980s provided key insights into *why* and *how* gendered social inequalities persist—or in which circumstances they can be challenged. Neo-institutionalism in political science usually comprises four different branches: sociological, historical, rational-choice, and discursive institutionalisms (Hall and Taylor 1996; Schmidt 2017). Feminist historical, sociological, rational-choice and more recently, discursive neo-institutionalists have indeed embraced different conceptualizations of gender, power, and institutions—emphasizing either structure or agency in processes of change and continuity.[77]

---

[75] In Tucumán, the use of secondary academic literature was particularly crucial and provided a lot of important contextual information on the province.

[76] Traditional approaches to institutions in political science define institutions as the "rules of the game" that constrain behavior exogenously but are enforced endogenously by political actors who abide by them (North 1990; Ostrom 1986). For March and Olsen (2008), the units of analysis of neo-institutionalism are the norms, identities, rules and routines of the institution.

[77] It is fair to note, however, that what I will introduce in the following section are ideal types of each approach, that seem to clearly fall on each end of a binary with rigid divides between structure and agency. In fact, many studies fall somewhere on the spectrum, incorporating some degree of structure and agency to their analyses.

In this section, I overview these different approaches, particularly with regards to reproductive rights and gender-based violence. I highlight the strengths and limitations of each approach—arguing that a focus on either descriptive or substantive representation *within* institutions does not fully capture the logics and mechanisms of the political construction of rights in practice. In other words, neo-institutionalist approaches, by centering the state as locus where citizenship rights are defined and "implemented," elude some of the more subtle ways through which rights are socially and politically constructed. As I argue, women negotiate not only their "access" to rights but also, their core meaning and definition—which reshapes the symbolic and material facets of their inclusion or exclusion from citizenship regimes (Cook 2014).

FEMINIST SOCIOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISMS

Historical institutionalism—and particularly its sociological approach[78]—broadly conceptualizes institutional formal and informal rules, norms, routines, and procedures as legacies of historical struggles between state and societal actors. When embracing sociological institutionalism, historical institutionalists develop culture-oriented organizational theories that consider a broad range of institutions, paying attention to noncodified, informal conventions and scripts that regulate human behavior. In this paradigm, institutions are considered as self-reproductive and path-dependent (Thelen 1999), have distributional effects, and are sustained through increasing returns to power; in other words, institutions are understood as inherently "sticky" and path-dependant (Hacker and Pierson 2019; Pierson 2000). Usually, institutions change on sudden and rare occasions, through exogenous critical junctures, followed by longer

---

[78] Historical institutionalism also includes a rational-choice approach—in this review, I focus mostly on its sociological branch, given the usual orientation of the feminist scholarship. Among the foundational scholars of rational-choice approaches are Pierson (1994) and Skocpol (1995).

periods of stability (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Collier et al. 2017; Hall and Taylor 1996; Mahoney 2000). But more recently, historical institutionalists have also incorporated longer-term, "slow-moving" institutional changes through continuous and gradual mechanisms of change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Pierson 2004). These slower-pace changes are usually theorized as taking place through a "logic of appropriateness" in which norms and cultural changes gain legitimacy and eventually, institutionalize (March and Olsen 1983).

With the rise of the social rights agenda in the post-second world war period in Europe and North America, feminist scholars have shed light on the gendered nature and effects of welfare states (Connell 2002; 1987; Jenson 1986; Lewis 1994; Orloff 1993; 2009). Building on a feminist materialist tradition, the comparative welfare state scholarship has emphasized the gendered distributional impacts of welfare states and its dismantlement since the 1980s, through the prism of family, state, and market relations. These scholars have looked, for example, into the sex division of labor regime generated through policies such as the family wage system or maternal and child welfare (see, among others, Jenson 1986; Koven and Michel 1993; Lewis 1992; 1997; Orloff 1996; Sainsbury 1999a; 1999b).

This body of feminist literature has shown that historical trajectories with colonialism, state formation, regime change, and different economic models in Latin America, have had long term consequences on welfare states and citizenship regimes in the region. Scholars have indeed investigated the gendered, classed, and racial exclusionary legacies contained in different welfare state arrangements in the region.[79] For scholars embracing this historical approach, maternalism

---

[79] These include including conditional cash transfers (Martínez Franzoni and Voorend 2012; Nagels 2013; 2016; 2018b; 2021), childhood care and parental leave policies (Blofield and Martínez Franzoni 2015b; Blofield and Touchton 2021; Debora Lopreite and Macdonald 2013b; Pautassi and Zibecchi 2010), social security systems (Arza

and familialism constitute legacies within institutions, that is, their lock-in effects and policy feedback provide enduring cognitive frames that regulate institutional actors' behaviors and uphold gender hierarchies. I now turn to the two issues of interest in this dissertation: reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence eradication policies in Latin America.

Existing research has shown that maternalistic legacies have constituted important institutional resistances to and shaped the incorporation of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Latin America (Álvarez Minte 2020; Goldsmith Weil 2020). In turn, these patriarchal legacies reproduced in institutions have interacted with colonial logics in reproductive health provision. In her study of the healthcare form in Peru, Christina Ewig argues that 19th century state formation, which in continuity with prior colonial systems institutionalized Indigenous women's bodies as instrumental to economic development, shaped family planning policies in the late 1990s (Ewig 2010). In an ethnographic study conducted in abortion clinics in Mexico City, Elyse Ona Singer (2022) shows how a strong religious backlash followed the liberal reform of abortion laws reflected ongoing moral and religious norms in institutions and society, shaping access to the right. Many abortion-seekers, as the anthropologist reports, are treated as irresponsible and morally dubious when accessing the practice; for political and religious elites, abortion still constitutes a threat to the traditional family, femininity, and the nation. Thus, research has shown that reproductive health and rights in the region have remained mediated by a complex set of historically rooted systems of reproductive governance and norms that have curtailed the full implementation of policies geared at gender equality (Gideon 2012; Gideon and Minte 2016; Morgan and Roberts 2012).

---

and Franzoni 2018; Blofield et al. 2021; Debora Lopreite 2015; Lopreite 2012; Mesa-Lago 2007; Pautassi 2000b; Staab 2012; 2017).

When it comes to gender-based violence, research has emphasized the role of colonial historical legacies in anti-gender-based violence laws, that continue to shape the policy in its formulation and implementation. Scholars have argued that dominant legal discourses on criminalization embedded in anti-violence against women laws do not reflect feminist human rights frameworks but rather, reproduce colonial assumptions about gender, race, class, and the family (Salomon 2021; Tapia Tapia 2016; 2022; Vetten 2014). When it comes to protection services for victims-survivors of GBV, ethnographic research has shown how institutional cultures also largely shape the behaviors of street-level bureaucrats (Pamplona 2023). Patriarchal social norms engrained to institutions such as the police lead to insensitive and prejudiced responses that create a context in which gendered violence is normalized and in which survivors who suffer from gender-based violence are not taken seriously (Keddie 2023; Prieto-Carrón, Thomson, and Macdonald 2007).

From a sociological perspective, Mala Htun and Francesca R. Jensenius (2020) have offered a sociological explanation for the weak enforcement of violence against women eradication laws. They indeed perceive the weak enforcement of legislation a result of both noncompliance from above—from politicians and bureaucrats in power—and from below—stemming from societal resistance to normative change that shape both state workers' and survivors' perception of violence and behavior. Those social representations, according to the authors, shape what is understood as violence and what behaviors that are justified, normalized, or ignored as "private issues." For example, sexual violence within heterosexual, married couples is often less acknowledged than other forms of gendered physical aggressions or rape committed by a stranger (Garcia-Moreno 2010). Indeed, underneath what scholars of street-level bureaucracy have conceptualized as "bureaucratic discretion" often rest deeply engrained norms

regarding gender, racial, and class that pervade police, health, and judicial systems and reproduce inequalities (Durose and Lowndes 2023). When promoting familialism rather than women's autonomy, gender-blind violence laws—particularly those labeled as "domestic violence" or "family violence" laws—can reinforce women's exclusion instead of addressing patriarchal violence (Berns 2001; Johnson 2015; Menjívar and Diossa-Jiménez 2023).

Other more systemic and macro-level approaches have centered on how gender-based violence laws may interact with other previously adopted laws or historical sociopolitical contexts. Delphine Lacombe (2018) indeed argues that criminalizing gender-based violence in Nicaragua, and particularly sexual violence, while limiting reproductive rights sought to preserve the sexual moral order rather than dismantle patriarchy. Moreover, the broader socio-legal context in which these laws are embedded matters for their implementation—including how anti-violence laws interact with other seemingly contradictory norms such as property rights or agricultural laws—leading to failures to reflect the policy's intentions on paper in certain communities where these laws restructure social relations in gendered ways (Adamson, Menjívar, and Walsh 2020; Beck 2021; Menjívar and Walsh 2016).

RATIONAL-CHOICE FEMINIST INSTITUTIONALISM (AND ITS VARIATIONS)

Following the 1979 CEDAW and the United Nations Decade for Women's Rights (1975-1985), global feminist movements have accelerated the incorporation of women's rights in the international human rights frameworks, reaching its peek with the 1995 Beijing UN Women's Conference. Amid important changes in international and domestic agendas on women's rights during the 1990s, interest grew among feminist scholars to unpack the processes and effects of these international-level transformations on states (Brysk 1993; Rudolf and Eriksson 2007; Jacquot and Mazur 2010). Proponents of "state feminism," inspired by Scandinavian states, have

since then tended to focus on interactions between welfare states and women's movements,[80] signalling that their influence on shaping "women-friendly" welfare regimes would offer them more options to choose from on equal foot with men (Hernes 1987).[81] By shaping the content of policies through political inclusion and feminizing of professionalized employment, "femocrats" could use the state to reduce women's economic dependency to man and improving their material conditions (Chappell 2002; Gouws 1996; Kamerman and Kahn 1989; Walby 2004).

With a focus on institutional change over stability, feminist institutionalisms focus on the role of the international women's right agenda, feminist movements, state feminism, and feminist ideas in *changing* laws and policies. Feminist institutionalists departed from what they saw as overly structural approaches to the state and gender, adopted by previous historical institutionalists. Usually, these approaches derive from rational choice institutionalism—though not in its purest form. For example, for discursive institutionalists, institutional change can take place through changing societal-level or micro-level, in the structuring of gender relations. Institutions change when discursive alliances successfully 'legitimate' those social norms, generating a "critical juncture."

Feminist institutionalists have in general, put forward women's agency, theorizing how women's and feminist movements can challenge and transform gender regimes of inclusion to citizenship. While feminist institutionalism now includes a diverge range of approaches, many assume that women's emancipation can take place through their descriptive and substantive

---

[80] See Borchost (2009) for a review.

[81] Hernes (1987, 5) argued that, "A woman-friendly state would not force harder choices on women than on men, or permit unjust treatment on the basis of sex. In a woman-friendly state, women will continue to have children, yet there will also be other roads to self-realization open to them. In such a state women will not have to choose futures that demand greater sacrifices from them than are expected of men. It would be, in short, a state where injustice on the basis of gender would be largely eliminated without an increase in other forms of inequality, such as among groups of women."

representation in the state (Goertz and Mazur 2008). Focusing on the power of actors, networks, movements (and their ideas[82]) to change institutions through individual and collective action, this approach usually seeks to assess when policy instruments are successful in terms of their symbolic and material effects on gender equality laws and policies (see Bishwakarma, Hunt, and Zajicek 2007; Hankivsky and Cormier 2011; Lowndes 2020; Mazur 2016; McBride and Mazur 2013; Vargas and Wieringa 2019). This approach also unpacks how apparently neutral institutions have gendered effects by bounding people's behaviors in gendered ways, or through norms, laws, or policies that produce or reduce gender inequalities between men and women (Chappell and Waylen 2013; Franceschet 2011; Mackay, Monro, and Waylen 2009). These scholars understand gender relations and norms as mechanisms through which power hierarchies are naturalized and institutionalised, resisted or discarded.

In Latin America, scholars have also shown how transnational advocacy networks between NGOs, academics, states, and activists together transform regional and international policy debates and outcomes (Keck and Sikkink 1999; 2014). This scholarship has identified patterns of international and regional international legal and normative diffusion (Friedman 2009b; Hunt and Gruszczynski 2019; Keck and Sikkink 1999; Roggeband 2016), and domestic women's and LGBTQI+ movements and inter-partisan alliances (Costain and Majstorovic 1994; Díez 2015; Htun 2003). They have explained regional heterogeneity in the adoption of domestic violence policies in the late 1990s in the region, followed by a second wave of reforms that

---

[82] In the 1980s, the field of discursive institutionalism has grown with the works of scholars such as Vivien Schmidt, Colin Hay, Daniel Béland, Campbell and Pederson, and others, through which ideas have acquired a more central role in mainstream political science. Feminist discursive institutionalism (FDI) investigates how social constructions of masculinity and femininity are built into gender-biased formal and informal political institutions, or institutionalized and transformed, rather than external to it and fixed (Béland 2009; Mackay, Kenny, and Chappell 2010). FDI is concerned with how gendered actors can drive institutional change, both endogenous and exogenously, through descriptive and substantive representation (Mazur 2009).

expand beyond the family unit, to prevent and eradicate violence against women in all spheres of their lives (Biroli 2018; Macaulay 2006), or the laws adopted to penalize femicide as a gendered crime (Carrigan 2016). Others have shown how the presence of Left-wing governments in power (Blofield and Ewig 2017; Díez 2020; Friedman 2009a) plays into the patterns of adoption or non-adoption of women's rights by states. When it comes to reproductive health and rights, the literature has typically focused on explaining legal changes in abortion laws, in this region with highly restrictive regimes and despite the strong opposition of Catholic norms and institutions (Htun 2003; Htun and Weldon 2015). Their trajectories and regional variations are often understood in terms of constant pushes from feminist and women's movements and resistances from powerful actors, including from conservative actors within the state and the Catholic Church (Blofield 2013; Htun 2003; Ruibal 2014).

Moreover, a research agenda on "multilevel governance" unpacks how the rearrangements of legal and political architectures have impacted gender policy adoption and feminist mobilizing at different levels (Bedford 2013; Vickers 2012; Vickers, Grace, and Collier 2020). These scholars have shed light on the role of federalism, of women's agencies and their interactions with women's movements, and women's legislative coalitions in the incorporation of international human rights agendas (Beer 2019; Bohn 2020; Franceschet 2010a; 2011; Lopreite 2020; Ruibal 2018b; 2018a).

Yet, in the recent years feminist institutionalists sympathetic to the sociological tradition have also shed light on the limitations of these supposed feminist policy instruments; they point towards an "implementation gap" between gender equality laws and practice in the region. They focus on how formal and informal institutions, as well as political actors, are gendered, and how

institutions impact gendered norms and social hierarchies (Lovenduski 1998; Mackay, Kenny, and Chappell 2010; Waylen 2014).

In Latin America, institutional weakness is generally thought of as operating so that when formal rules are in tension with dominant social norms and opposed by powerful actors, legal compliance becomes the site of political conflicts and negotiations (Brinks, Levitsky, and Murillo 2019). These informal institutions and societal norms would indeed limit women's substantive representation (Schwindt-Bayer 2006) or intervene in policy implementation in a counter-productive way (Bergallo 2014b; Helmke and Levitsky 2006; Htun and Jensenius 2020; Waylen 2014). Those patriarchal informal institutions, working counter to the established policy goals, would also make GBV laws and reproductive health policy instruments incomplete and "weak." These studies ultimately seek to understand how barriers to equality can be removed through informal and formal institutional change (see Bishwakarma, Hunt, and Zajicek 2007; Hankivsky and Cormier 2011; Mazur 2016).[83]

THE LIMITS OF EXISTING APPROACHES

Feminist neo-institutionalist approaches have contributed to deepening our understandings of the gendered politics of citizenship in Latin America. More structural-oriented approaches, such as sociological historical institutionalists, have studied institutions to capture how subtle continuities pervade in their norms and practices despite apparent changes. Gendered, raced, and class norms disguised within institutions or sociopolitical environments may directly impact the implementation of formal laws and policies, reproducing inequalities instead of

---

[83] For example, feminist institutionalists have measured success in different ways, including based on the descriptive representation of women in legislative and executive branches (Caminotti and Freidenberg 2016; Piscopo 2015), or the adoption and implementation of gender-sensitive laws (Chappell 2001; Htun and Weldon 2010).

reducing them. These more skeptical scholars therefore tend to embrace a "thicker" conceptualization of gender inequalities and patriarchy that is helpful to theorize gaps between the law and the practice. More agency-oriented scholars from the feminist institutionalist schools have in turn emphasized how informal and formal institutions can be transformed through individual and collective agency. Their optimism, however, might be due to a thinner understanding of institutional change, which sees real potential in policy change, over structural continuity.

In both cases, however, these approaches understand the state and its institutions as conceptually autonomous or separate from society; if "state" and "societies" are conceptualized as *interacting* in defining the latter's *access* to citizenship rights, states (or international organizations in the case of women's rights) still own the theoretical monopoly over the terms of the political discussion. "Society"—including women, families, and feminist movements— interact with the state in different ways by either adopting or accessing (or not) externally-defined rights and policies—in other words, women's agency is not entirely captured, and specifically, their ability to transform the meanings these rights acquire in practice.

To conclude, a focus on institutions as units of analysis should not obscure "the complex ways through which multiple and interlocking inequities are organized and resisted in the process, content, and outcomes of policy" (Hankivsky and Jordan-Zachery 2019, 2). Scholars should account for how institutional resistances impede change, limit it, or curtail it from within the state—and through which mechanisms (García-Del Moral 2020; Nazif-Munoz and Chabot 2022; Neumann 2022; O'Brien and Walsh 2020; Thomson 2018)—but also how women dispute the categories being discussed.

In the following section, I introduce the dissertation's main analytical-methodological strategy, that understands rights and policies not as externally determined, but as political *problems* and *solutions* whose nature, content, and instruments, are negotiated amongst different sectors of society. Critical policy studies offer key insights into the problematization of reproductive rights and gender-based violence—including by seeing these rights as objects of political disputes that take place on multiple levels and as they are transferred from the realm of the "intimate" to the realm of the political, as they institutionalize into policy instruments, and as they are contested, reinterpreted, and challenged in daily practices.

A CRITICAL FEMINIST POLICY APPROACH

Nancy Fraser (1987; 1989) sustained that politics and policies are interpretive struggles over who, what, and how to politicize certain needs, identities, and problems. By that, Fraser implied that policies are shaped by power struggles over determining what social problems ought to be addressed (or not) by the state and importantly, and that these struggles reflect gendered, classed, and racial assumptions about individuals and their needs. As Orloff and Palier (2009) remind us:

> in policy-making, there is puzzling, not only powering. But one should never forget that power relations—including but not limited to gender relations—are still central, even in the way ideas are incorporated and translated. (Orloff and Palier 2009, 410)

Feminist policy analyses "fond of poststructural critiques"[84] have been proliferating from a broad range of social science disciplines, particularly since the 1990s and early 2000s (Pierre 2000, 477) – to tackle these *puzzling* and *powering* aspects of policymaking. Emerging from

---

[84] Post-structuralist approaches in the social sciences have centered on nominalism, intersubjectivism, meaning creation, contingency, and the existence of a relationship between knowledge and the political (Larsson 2018). Post-structuralism as a philosophical current finds its roots in European sociology, through thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Chantal Mouffe, and Ernest Laclau.

critical policy studies,[85] the approach adopted in this dissertation has developed in conversation

and tension with neo-institutionalisms, mainly due to their diverging approaches to discourse,

power, and knowledge (Fairclough 2013; Fischer et al. 2015; Lövbrand and Stripple 2015).

While some consider institutionalist approaches irreconcilable with post-structural approaches

(Bacchi and Rönnblom 2014; Larsson 2018), others are more open to the possibility of bridging

them (Panizza and Miorelli 2013). If I do agree that there are fundamental ontological

differences between neo-institutional and post-structural approaches, in this dissertation, I

borrow and adapt some conceptual tools developed by neo-institutionalists to this approach.

In her analytical method known as "What's the Problem Represented to be?" (WPR),

feminist political scientist Carol Bacchi develops a dynamic, process-oriented framework for the

study of *problematizations* – that, is, the political and social construction of policy problems,

objects, subjects, and places (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016). In Bacchi and Goodwin's words,

governments rule by determining "how the 'problem' is *made* to be a particular kind of problem

within a specific policy, with all sorts of effects [italics are original]" (Bacchi and Goodwin

2016, 17). Through institutionalized representations in discourses and practices, policymakers

are thought of as agents shaping the world, by enforcing assumptions about people, categorizing

them, guiding their behaviors in certain ways, and producing authoritative forms of knowledge.[86]

---

[85] Critical policy studies (CPS) emerged the late 1970s in response to the rationalist, positivist public policy paradigm that had dominated the field since the 1960s in the United States (see Lasswell 1970; Wildavsky 1980). Since then, it has gone through many phases and philosophical influences, from the early works of Douglas Torgenson and Harold D. Lasswell, to the Habermasian work of Frank Fischer, to the more recent Foucauldian-inspired influences. In a nutshell, this approach recognizes the role of context and power relations in shaping the interests, values, and assumptions underlying policy processes (Fischer et al. 2015). What makes "critical policy studies", critical, is the acknowledgement that policies as non-neutral objects part of broader political projects and social processes—and a scientifically-informed commitment for social justice through research (Ball 1997).

[86] This approach also distances itself from "good governance" approaches to policy, who see problems as issues that are external to political actors, to be addressed through democratic governance and dialogue between members of society (deLeon et al. 2007; Hoppe 2011).

In the context of this dissertation, I rely on this approach to unpack how "reproductive rights" and "gender-based violence" came to be as social and policy issues (or objects) in Argentina— and what gendered social orders does their making reinforce, challenge, or transform.

One of the key goals of critical feminist policy analysis is to determine whether and how feminist policies *come to be* and whether or how they *come to mean*. This is an important distinction, as the first group usually nominally accepts feminist policies as gender transformative, while the second group questions such assumption (Paterson and Scala 2015). Feminist policy studies are indeed concerned with how policy structures gender inequality, while debunking taken-for-granted assumptions and questioning nominal uses of terms such as "women's empowerment" or "gender equality" (Parpart, Rai, and Staudt 2002; Paterson and Scala 2015).

Scholars have highlighted the importance of critically unpacking what underlying rationales and ideas are contained within policy agendas to determine, and how gender norms and relations are conceptualized once institutionalized, reflecting distinct meanings and political projects (Gustá 2008; Gusta and Caminotti 2010; Kennett and Payne 2014; Payne and Doyal 2012). Bacchi's approach challenges more traditional policy and institutionalist approaches that create strict boundaries between different phases of the policy process, from agenda-setting to policy formation and design, to adoption and implementation. This approach instead understands problematization and its effects on societies as continuously constructed through discourse (Foucault 1972). Before diving into this approach in practice, I briefly define what I mean by discourse, power, as well as practices as sites for the study of problematization.

Based on Michel Foucault's work in the 1980s, discourse can be defined as an overarching ideational power structure dictating what agents do, think, and speak (Foucault 1987; Lövbrand and Stripple 2015). In a purely Foucauldian school, discourse is equated to knowledge, materialized through text and talk, and constitutive of the political. These knowledges—*savoirs* and *connaissances*—acquire a status of "truth" through networks of relations and practices, which Foucault referred to as discursive practices that produce different sites (for example, "the psychiatric hospital," "the prison"), objects (for example, madness or sexuality), subject positions ("the mad," "the homosexual") (Foucault 1972; 1977; 1987). Thus, Foucauldian analyses are interested in problematizing, or questioning, the role of expertise and scientific disciplines and governmental authority in the enforcement of order (Nikolas Rose and Miller 1992).

Against rationalist assumptions, post structural policy scholars see policy problems not as "things out there" to be addressed, but as politically constructed objects, legitimized through knowledge claims, rendered intelligible through speech or text, and enforced through a myriad of governmental discourses and practices.[87] Yet, unlike purely Foucauldian approaches that consider problematization as the product of a diffuse, actor-less set of discourses and knowledges, I consider the provenance of discourses and analyze them as part of gendered power inequalities between women, feminist activists, the "expertise," and policymakers located at different levels.

---

[87] Governmentality—a contraction of *government* and *mentality*—is thus a form of state power and a process involving building knowledge, or truth claims, upon which government policy becomes authoritative (Foucault 1980). For Foucault, "government" as a feature of Western modernity is composed of multiple sites, agencies, knowledges, that interact and shape social rules—producing "codes of conduct" that are justified discursively through governmental reasons, or rationalities.

Foucauldian-oriented scholars also emphasize the *constitutive* nature of discourse—meaning, the ways in which discourses "make" the world. Discourses, for Ball (1997), are about what can be said and thought, as well as about who can speak, when, where and with what authority. In other words, though policy discourses are seen as contingent and constructed, the symbolic and material difference-based inequalities they produce have material effects on societies and mutually-reinforcing (Anthias 2013; Costa 2013; Jelin, Motta, and Costa 2017).[88] For Foucault, the power of discourse is thus both relational and productive. Power is relational, in that it does not "belong" to anyone, but rather unfolds through individuals' and groups' situation with regards to a particular society and in relation to it (Foucault 1980). Power is productive, in that it constitutes the world in a dynamic way by doing, practicing, performing, enacting, and becoming—unfolding partly but not only through explicitly repressive means.[89]

Thus, Foucauldian approaches are not particularly interested in discourse *as* language, but rather as *practice* and *knowledge*, something that is being "done."[90] In simple words, practices can be summarized as "what people do, and the way they do them"; this can include formal and informal rules imposed, justifications, controls, exclusions from which problematization emerge (Foucault and Rabinow 1984). In that sense, what policy actors understand as *political* (or policy) problems is primarily a contextualized process involving discourses and practices performed by multiple actors, usually but not only policymakers.

---

[88] Following a post humanistic tradition, the assumption that people are sovereign agents who can access their "true" meaning and act autonomously is questioned—contingent "subjects" are instead seen as the product of *problematization*.

[89] Biopower, for example, is a diffused form of power regulating bodies through scientific knowledge, state administration and regulation, or ''what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations'' (Foucault 1980, 143).

[90] In his later works, however, Foucault (1990) is also concerned with how political vocabulary, how things are named and conceptualized —such as "labor", "welfare dependency", "productivity"—constitutes a technology of governance that should be unpacked genealogically, along "family resemblances."

This dissertation seeks to unveil how gender justice regimes are constructed, sustained, negotiated, and transformed over time. I thus incorporate both structure and agency to assess the local construction of policy discourses and practices that have emerged from international human rights discourse and instruments, amid a period of major socioeconomic and political transformations. To do so, I incorporate a multiplicity of discourses articulated through "state" and "civil society" actors, institutions, and spaces working in and around policymaking primarily—but not exclusively—situated within three different provinces of Argentina.[91]

Focusing on policy discourses around two different policy *areas* implemented in different contexts, rather than bounding the analysis to provincial states or specific institutions, offers several advantages. A focus on issue-discourses allows me to capture interactions and tensions between discourses held by direct policy actors in the provincial states or to specific ministries, healthcare centers and hospitals, domestic violence offices and courts—but also to explore different "places" where policymaking discourses unfold, including in more formalized NGOs, grassroots feminist networks, and more diffused sources such as the media. By focusing on discourses rather than usual policy sites, I do not attempt to make broader claims on within-province representativity. Rather than implying that policymaking actors in urban settings are the "primary" policymakers, reproducing some of the criticisms formulated against methodological nationalism, I focus on the discourses that are articulated by different actors and that constitute policies in the everyday. This approach allows me to unpack practices and discourses situated in

---

[91] I return to the subnational comparative research design in Chapter 3. Over the course of my in-person and online fieldworks in the Province of Buenos Aires, I met with actors in La Plata, Mar del Plata, San Isidro, La Matanza, Lomas de Zamora, Quilmes, San Martín, and Villa Fiorito. In the Province of Santa Fe, I conducted interviews with actors situated in the cities of Santa Fe, Rosario, Santo Tomé, Reconquista, and a small village that remains unnamed to protect my interlocutor's confidentiality. In the province of Tucumán, I conducted interviews in the cities of San Miguel de Tucumán and small rural towns in the Andes cordillera.

a multiplicity of spaces and "moments" of the policy process, from the construction of issues as gendered (and gender*ing*) policy problems and subjects through the policy solutions that are being implemented.

In the following section, I provide a detailed method for the study of problematizations and their role in shaping gender justice regimes, through the analytical method "What is the problem to be represented" approach (thereafter, WPRA) (Bacchi 2000; 2009; Bacchi and Goodwin 2016; Bacchi 1999b; Bacchi and Rönnblom 2014). I operationalize this approach for the study of the reproductive rights and gender-based violence.

"WHAT'S THE PROBLEM REPRESENTED TO BE?" APPROACH IN PRACTICE

In practice, implementing WPRA broadly involves four main analytical tasks: (1) identifying conceptual assumptions underlying problem representations; (2) tracing their genealogy; (3) reflecting on the practices that sustain them; and (4) reflecting on their effects. The task of the researcher is to render hidden forms for power, visible—and identify how it becomes possible, in each context, to say or do certain things. Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) provide guiding steps and questions to address in any WPRA, summarized in Table 1 below.

To address Question 1, it is by first looking at proposed "policy solutions" or "answers" to problems and working "backwards" that researchers can trace how problematization unfolds in often subtle ways. To answer Question 2 and identify deep-seated assumptions, analysists must identify the meanings associated with given policy texts, the knowledges embedded in

them, the presuppositions, the silences, as well as the concepts and binaries it relies upon, for example, man/woman, public/private, citizen/foreigner.

Table 1: Bacchi and Goodwin's 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' approach (WPR)
Question 1: What's the problem (e.g., of "gender inequality", "drug use/abuse", "economic development", "global warming", "childhood obesity", "irregular migration", etc.) represented to be in a specific policy or policies? Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)? Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about? Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently? Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"? Question 6: How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced? Step 7: Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations. Source: Bacchi and Goodwin (2016, 20). Adapted from Bacchi, C. 2009. Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to be? Pearson Education, French's Forest.

In Question 3, researchers are invited to "map" the practices and actors that produce representations and identify power relations amongst them. This allows identifying the mechanisms and practices through which certain forms of knowledge acquire authority, through policy. Question 4 invites the researcher to question the unsaid of a problem, its silences or "taken-for-granted" components in a critical way, that is, by questioning the arbitrary social

categorizations that it implies and reproduces. It also invites for a more transformative approach to scholarship, in which other worlds, life scenarios, and alternatives are imagined and rendered possible.

Then, rather than being interested in "policy outputs" or "outcomes," Question 5 invites researchers to conduct an analysis of the *political effects* of problematization—such as discursive effects, subjectification, or lived effects—what Foucault would refer to as "dividing practices" that create social difference (Foucault 2004 [1986]). Discursive effects highlight how the terms of reference associated with a given problem representation has path dependent effects on future discussions. Bacchi suggests that maintaining social order involves the creation, through discourses and practices, of objects (ex.: "poverty", "health"), subjects (ex.: "citizens", "the poor"), and places (ex.: "the state", "Latin America"). But because of the dynamic and process-based understanding of problematiz*ing*, the production of subjects, objects should be understood as *objectification* and *subjectification,* and *the making of places*.[92]

Then, by opening the possibility for the displacement and replacement of problem representations, Question 6 suggests the possibility of resistance and agency. Incorporating both women's oppression and agency involves not only methodological decisions, but touches upon the epistemological considerations explicated previously, in the first section of this chapter (Collins 1990; Harding 1987). I detain myself slightly more on this last point. Despite Bacchi's structural tendency, efforts have been made to better theorize forms of resistance to authoritative discourses and representations. As Bacchi argues:

> We need attention both to the ways in which we are all in discourses, understood as institutionally supported and culturally influenced interpretive and conceptual

---

[92] I briefly go over each of these components of problematization and operationalize them to this research below.

schemas and signs, and to the active deployment of language, including concepts and categories, for political purposes. (Bacchi 2005, 207)

Coincidently, key to feminist approaches are the valuing and visibilization of women's experiential knowledge and perspectives on the world (Harding 1987; Potter 1992). In this dissertation, I thus consider both the power *in* discourse, and the power *of* discourse to mold gender justice regimes, at least to some extent. Policies may produce multiple identities and subjects; and researchers should look into "how agents negotiate these forms by partly embracing, adapting, or refusing them" (Inda 2005, 11). Ball (1997), for example, also acknowledges the existence of forms of resistance to policy discourses, through counter-discourse activities. In genealogical accounts, analysts are also tasked to recuperate the "subjugated knowledges" that have been silenced or masked—as a form of "counter-memory" to the official discourse (Foucault 1977; 1980).

Research has indeed shown how women cope with, resist to, and negotiate with "everyday patriarchy" in ways that combine more visible and invisible methods (Kandiyoti 1988).[93] This includes, for example, more traditional strategies such as protest, hunger strikes, sit-ins, and civil disobedience (Death 2010; Sutton 2010), but also more subtle or "invisible" forms of resistance such as the refusal to engage with the terms or dominant discourse (Khalid, Holmes, and Parpart 2023; Mohanty 1991).

In addition, feminist scholars have increasingly emphasized that "patriarchy" and "the state" are not monolithic nor deterministic of women's experiences; state discourses and institutions are on the contrary increasingly understood as heterogeneous, messy, conflictual, and

---

[93] This work certainly foregrounded James C. Scott's (1985) work on everyday peasant resistance as "weapons of the weak," relevant to conceptualize forms of individual and collective agency employed by oppressed groups.

contradictory (Brown 1995; Mitchell 1991). Scholars have recently paid more attention to the ways in which states' porous nature may provide different forms of openings for feminist interventions and resistance (Álvarez 1990; Larsson 2018; Puri 2014; Rai and Lievesley 2013). Even when being "part of the state," policymakers can challenge institutional narratives and frames shaping political issues and shift dominant moral representations embedded in policies. Forms of contestation (or sometimes also referred to as "discretion") amongst state officials or those who are ruled through policy can unfold through interrogation, criticism, or evaluation themselves, can also been seen as ways of making and re-making policy (Durose and Lowndes 2023; Huber and Shipan 2002; O'Malley and Shearing 1997). These discourses from "inside" policy can lead to a redrawing of the lines between target groups, for example, where a group previously understood as policy contender becomes deviant (Ingram and Schneider 2015).

Discourses about reproductive rights and gender-based violence come from multiple actors on a multilevel scale, from the international women's rights and development agencies to national NGOs, and from actors involved in their local implementation. Inquiring the contentious social mechanisms through which ideas and power inequalities institutionalize and challenge the meaning of certain rights and concepts, can thus only contribute to our understanding of problematization. For example, local actors have shown the capacity to re-interpret and challenge, at least to some extent, dominant human rights frameworks in the contexts where they are enacted. In her study on the implementation women's rights norms from the CEDAW in different contexts, Suzanne Zwingel argues that looking at policy *translation* rather than diffusion, "allows different avenues of cross-cultural encounters and transmissions of meaning, global to national, local to global", but also acknowledging power inequalities between local and

global actors: "the term also includes unevenness; mutual enrichment is possible as well as manipulation" (Zwingel 2013, 115).

When it comes to the reinterpretation of global norms, Engle Merry and Levitt (2017, 213) opened a rich field of study in what they call, "vernacularization," understood as: "the extraction of ideas and practices from the universal sphere of international organizations, and their translation into ideas and practices that resonate with the values and ways of doing things in local contexts."[94] When international norms are translated or "vernacularized" to the local levels, actors therefore have agency in re-defining, adapting, or rejecting their terms altogether; in a way, they can negotiate what "the center" institutionalizes based on their needs, worldviews, and capacities (Brinks, Gauri, and Shen 2015; Desai 2002; Machado, Peñas-Defago, and Malca 2022; Zwingel 2013). In that sense, policies, rights, and concepts are not simply "diffused" from a level to another, but actively "translated" and therefore, *transformed* by travelling across diverse institutional levels and localities (Álvarez et al. 2014).

To finish, the last step of the WPRA involves the reflexive exercise of applying the previously mentioned sets of questions to the researcher's own problem representations. This exercise of self-problematization places the analysts' own interpretations into critical scrutiny — acknowledging some of the gaps in the analysis, and the role of one's location, culture, the forms of knowledge that one values. As shown above, I incorporated this last step of the approach through practices of reflexivity during data collection, analysis, and writing. Next, I briefly

---

[94] Looking at how local-level NGOs in Baroda (India), Beijing (China), Lima (Peru) and New York (USA) reappropriate and make sense of universalistic human rights, Merry and Levitt (2017) find that local actors use the human rights language strategically, according to their power, organizational goals, environmental constraints, as well as their countries' historical trajectories with different social struggles. In that sense, their approach is still considered to be based, to some extent, on rational-choice institutionalism.

describe and operationalize three analytical components of problematization in this approach: objectification, subjectification, and the making of places.

Objectification

A focus on objectification allows unpacking the concepts commonly used and institutionalized into policy to uncover ideological agendas, norms, and representations. Objectification thus involves identifying what practices, repeated on a regular basis, produce the object of problematization—here, "reproductive rights" and "gender-based violence." What are the conceptual limits of each object, who delimits them, and how are these limits defined over time? In the case of gender-based violence and its subcategories, objectification is used to identify the naming and definition of violence, the absence or presence of certain groups' problematic practices, and the gendered locations and contexts in which violence is represented (Hearn and McKie 2008; 2009).[95] In the case of reproductive rights and abortion more specifically, the study of objectification can unveil which sexual and reproductive practices are contained in the policy object, and which ones are excluded (Miller 2000). Objects and their uses have effects, as they simultaneously determine which practices or experiences are regulated— thus legitimated and (re)produced—and which are rendered invisible and illegitimated.

Contextualizing specific human rights and the processes through which they institutionalize in laws and policies requires adopting a historical ontology that trace long-term chains of practices and discourses. This dissertation therefore understands present-day discourses and practices as rooted in narratives and causal stories situated back in time (Kockelmans 2017;

---

[95] For example, a study analyzes the ways in which "prostitution" and "sex trafficking" policy representations in Sweden and Australia incorporate different understandings of the problem of "gender equality", "harm reduction" grounded in gendered notions of vulnerability and responsibility (Carson and Edwards 2011).

Pouliot 2007). Indeed, as Vincent Pouliot (2007, 367) argues: "a constructivist methodology that is inductive, interpretive, and historical is able to develop both subjective knowledge (from the meanings that social agents attribute to their own reality) and objectified knowledge (which derives from ''standing back'' from a given situation by contextualizing and historicizing it)." Empirically grounded, this analytical approach usually involves the genealogical tracing observed practices and discourses to understand "how they came to be." The study of "events"— including practices and statements—indeed rise following a historical, non-linear, and contextual trajectory of events (Death 2010).

Subjectification

Subjectification involves the discursive process of "making subjects" by encouraging people, through formal and informal rules, to adopt certain behaviors, conducts, or relationships (Rose 2000). This subjectification can take place through the determination of target populations in policy, that are often grounded in stereotypical assessments, prior assumptions, and representations of social groups (Ingram and Schneider 2015). Social processes of subjectification form what post-structuralists often call the "subject-position," against Enlightenment-inspired rationalist and individual sovereignty claims (Golder 2010). Indeed, individuals are seen as constituted contingently and according to their institutional environments. Thus, "where" subjects are positioned in the power ladder shapes their discursive claims and their ability to change formal and informal institutions.

Moreover, subjectification usually involves dividing practices, wherein differentiation and subordination are based on normatively charged rationales (for example, the "drug addict," the "illegal migrant," or the "dangerous criminal"). Social groups are usually divided into advantaged, disadvantaged, contenders, and deviants, along which resources, power, and benefits

are unequally redistributed.[96] What constitutes "normal" and "pathological" or "abnormal" behavior is deeply social, and changes over time (Araneda-Urrutia 2022; Rose 2001). Those divisive representations, in turn, have real-world effects, both material and symbolic (Fraser 2008).[97]

In the context of GBV, subjectification involves asking *who* are considered the victims and the perpetrators of violence—and what gendered, classed, or racial assumptions rest behind the way they are constituted in the policy. Thus, analyzing subjectification allows unveiling who gets protection from violence and on what basis. In the context of reproductive rights, subjectification involves inquiring into who has bodily autonomy rights in policy—for example, who gets to abort in the context of the policy and who does not (see Cook 2014; Erdman 2023). In both cases, subjectification unpacks how subject-positions relate to the social construction of vulnerability (to violence or harm) and risk (of femicide, or health consequences)—on knowledges and truth claims through which these social categories are legitimated.

The Making of Places

In traditional policy and comparative politics approaches, places are often treated as fixed sites in which objectification and subjectification unfold (ex.: the state, civil society). Yet often, binary divisions between spaces are implicitly or explicitly inserted in policy problematization, such as "safe and unsafe environments," "public or private spaces," or "underdeveloped and

---

[96] In her study of welfare policy in the United States, Nancy Fraser (1987) argued that because women are the main recipients of welfare policies, their "needs" are at stake in the political battles on social spending. Thus, feminist analysis should focus on unveiling the politics of need interpretation, that is, how the discursive dimension of social welfare shapes the state's construction of "women's needs"—thus incorporate women to social citizenship as "dependent" subjects—also called "welfare mothers".

[97] Scholars in the United States, for example, have investigated how these representations unfold through race and class, by looking at differing patterns of accessibility and treatment to welfare and maternal health programs of African American women (Abramovitz 2021; Boris 1993; Gordon 1994).

developed nations."[98] Just like subjectification, the discursive construction of places also has real-world implications on societal organization, by fixing power relations, the limits of belonging, and the physical organization of social life. These representations of space can indeed reproduce and legitimize unequal economic, social, and political orders (Escobar 2012; Guano 2002; Razack 2002). In turn, categories socially assigned to spaces inform policies targeted at those seen as inhabiting them; for example, international aid policies are informed by representations of the "third world woman," represented in Western imaginaries as dependent on external aid for survival and holding little agency (Mohanty 2018).

In the context of gender-based violence, places are those that are imagined as sites for the deployment of violence against women, including "the home," "the workplace," or "the street." The gendering of places also relates to the construction of violence itself—where patriarchal violence is imagined in certain places but not others (ex.: sexual violence in the street more than in the home). For reproductive rights, places such as hospitals, marginalized neighborhoods, or women's bodies can become gendering sites of political struggles for inclusion (Brown 2016; de Souza 2019; Sutton 2021).

---

[98] Since Edward Saïd's (1978) work on orientalism, which largely shaped the field of postcolonial research, scholars in the field of critical International Relations have been interested in how racializing and gendering discourses articulate to legitimize oppressive policies from more powerful actors, including in the realm of international security (Puar 2017), peacekeeping (Pingeot 2018), or development (Baines 2010; Sondarjee 2020). In "The idea of Latin America", Walter D. Mignolo questions the assumed ontological divisions between geographic entities, and argues for a disassociation between "Latin America" as a label and a political unit (Mignolo 2005). He calls for a disruption and a critical interrogation of the units employed in social science research as political constructs as products of imperial modernity and colonization.

In all, this dissertation combines a structural approach to social exclusion by observing changes and continuities in policies across three historical periods,[99] with a focus on agency expressed through the challenges and negotiations that women, policymakers, and feminist activists pose to institutions. Through the analysis of problematizations, I unpack Argentina's gender justice regime since the 1990s. This approach is summarized in the Figure 1 below.

Subjectification	Objectification of "Reproductive Health and Rights" / "Gender-Based Violence"
Gender Justice Regime	
The Making of "Places"	Feminist and Women's Movements' Negotiations and Challenges to Problematizations
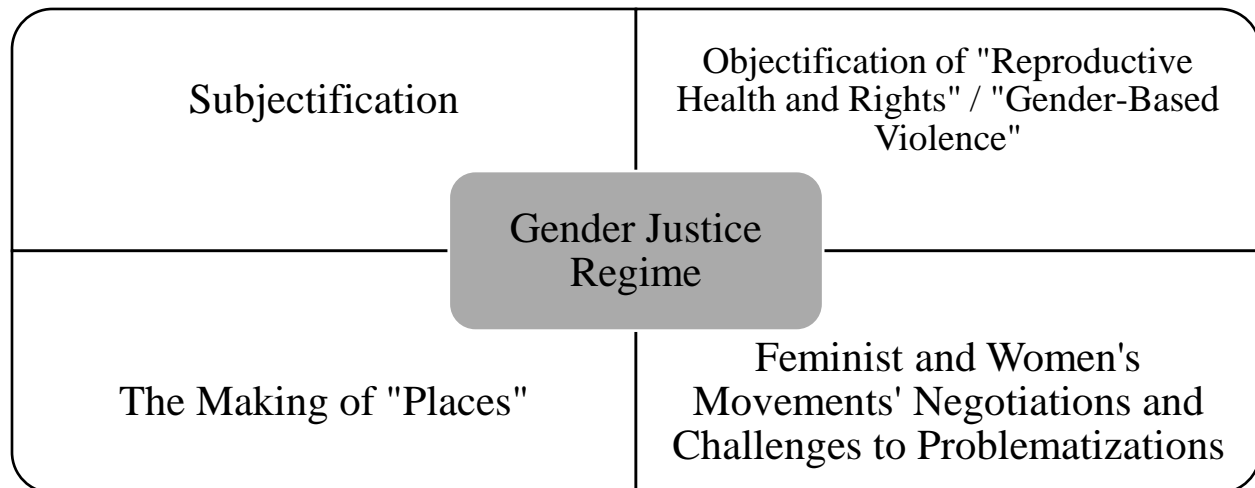
Figure 1: Summary of Carol Bacchi's "What is the problem represented to be" approach and adaptation by author.

METHODS

Between 2020 and 2023, amid the global pandemic of COVID-19, I conducted ten-months of in-person fieldwork in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Tucumán – as well as online interviews. [100] I relied on a "menu of ethnographic tools," based on negotiated access to three different research fields (Rhodes 2018). This dissertation thus relies on a large and diverse array of primary data that serves different functions, including that of unpacking

---

[99] I detail the temporal scope of the dissertation in Chapter 3.

[100] Throughout this dissertation, participants' names have been changed to protect confidentiality. However, locations and organizations were disclosed according to a contextualized assessment of the risks of re-identification. Protecting participant confidentiality remained my main priority throughout the empirical analysis (see Appendix IV, which contains my ethics certificate). I did not alter the content of the archival material used, since this information is public.

both the historical and contemporary discourses and practices that have politicized feminist

issues between 1990 and 2020. I rely on two main types of primary sources, archives and

interviews, which I complemented with ethnographic observations, when possible.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews constitute a core primary data employed in this dissertation. I conducted

94 semi-structured and open-ended interviews, both in-person and online, with a variety of actors

recruited online and through snowball sampling. [101] In each province, I conducted interviews[102]

with public servants, street-level bureaucrats (frontline healthcare and violence-assistance

workers, lawyers, prosecutors, and a judge), politicians, social activists,[103] NGO workers,[104]

journalists, and grassroot feminist activists.[105] My interlocutors identified as cis women (n = 89),

gender non-binary (n = 2), and cis men (n = 3)—and ranged from their early 20s to late 60s. If on

the one hand, the high number of cis women participants may be unsurprising given the research

topic, it could also point to a facilitated access to this group, as opposed to trans and non-binary

persons, often more marginalized.[106]

---

[101]Appendix II contains a list of all the interviews I conducted in this research project.

[102]Appendix III contains figures showing the interview distribution across issue area, type of participant, and province. I discuss my case selection strategy and justify my subnational approach in Chapter 3.

[103] I met with members of the political-partisan organizations Mumala and Marabunta/FOL. I also met with one member of the Sociedad Tucumana de Medicina General, and one interview was conducted with a workers' union representative from the Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina (CTA), working in the Gender Area.

[104] I met with members of the NGOs *Fundación para el Estudio y la Investigación de la Mujer* (FEIM), *Instituto de Estudios Jurídico-Sociales de la Mujer* (INDESO Mujer), *Mujeres X Mujeres, Abogadas y Abogados del NOA en Derechos Humanos y Estudios Sociales* (Andhes), *Casa del Encuentro, Casa de las Mujeres Norma Nassif,* and the NGO network *Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de las Mujeres* (CLADEM), *Asociación Civil Palabras, Casa Rosa Chazarreta, Agrupación Familiares Atravesados por el Femicidio Federal, Asociación Civil Generar,*and *Foro Feminista*, and well as the *Fundación María de los Angeles*.

[105] The grassroots feminist collectives include multiple groups from the feminist organization Socorristas en Red – Feministas que abortamos (Socorristas Network – feminists that abort, SenRed), the Colectiva de Mujeres Amaicha del Valle, Colectiva la Revuelta, and the Red de Mujeres Tafí del Valle.

[106] This points to a weakness of this research project, and the importance of including of non cis heterosexual gender and sexual identities and lived experiences in future projects.

As part of interpretive approaches to interviewing, Lee Ann Fujii introduces the method of "relational interviewing," that involves building *working relationships* instead of *rapport* with participants. This approach involves producing knowledge based on interaction and dialogue, through active "negotiation" of the interview process and content of the conversation with the research participants. Rather than *using* rapport to access information, working relationships involve some degree of *reciprocity* between researcher and interlocutor. Relational interviewing, which I adopted in this research, implies active listening, the acquisition and use of the interlocutors' lexicon and language, learning from missteps through reflexivity, as well as treating people with dignity and respect (Fujii 2017). Interviews were conducted and transcribed in Spanish, and subsequently translated to English by the author.

These interviews allowed observing how women's rights were problematized through reproductive health and rights policies, and anti-gender-based violence policies.[107] They also allowed observing how historical debates are reflected, contested, or reproduced in the subsequent implementation phase. Interviews were mostly centered on the implementation of "non-punishable" or "legal" abortions through the PNSSPR, from 2012-2020, as well as on the assistance and protection policies part of the 1994 and 2009 laws on family and gender-based violence, and their provincial equivalents. Given the exploratory and ethnographic nature of this study, sample size was not a major concern with regards to external validity. Yet, I was still concerned with developing an internally valid argument by capturing a variety of viewpoints in all three provinces under study (see Small 2009).

---

[107] Despite a concern for trans and non-binary persons, I am making no claim of representativity or of expression of LGBTQI+ communities. However, many grassroot organizations, NGOs, and activists interviewed for this research are in direct and constant interaction with these populations and this dissertation seeks to put light on their daily work and seeks to remain true to the plurality of approaches to equality and gender justice they propel.

Most contributions to interviewing as a research method in political science stem from a positivist paradigm (see Mosley 2013). While providing useful guidance on how to "talk to people" in a systematic, social scientific way, most methodological training does not guide interpretivist-oriented researchers into capturing how people make sense of their political world while acting upon it. To put it differently, while political scientists are often given tools to verify the "validity" or "reliability" of their interlocutors' claims, they are often less equipped to conduct interviews that will capture the narratives, stories, and explanations that people tell themselves and the researcher to make sense of the world.

The interviewing technique I adopted in this dissertation thus evolved as my epistemological shift discussed above was taking place. While I began with a more semi-structured model, I gradually became more interested in uncovering *why* my interlocutors told me what they told me and what their life trajectories and perspectives revealed about problematization. Slowly, interviews shifted from a logic of hypothesis testing to one of more horizontal exchanges between myself and my interlocutors that centered on uncovering meaning. This involved more open-ended interviewing techniques, in which I would first ask my interlocutors to tell me about their life trajectories with regards to the topic at hand. Open-ended questions would often follow, shifting the conversation in, at times, in unpredictable ways. As Joe Soss (2014) explains, open-ended interviews lead researchers to focus on the issues that are important and valuable for the participants, to avoid imposing fixed meanings to concepts and categories being discussed. This method, coherent with feminist approaches, is usually attentive to personal experiences with the issues being studied, and leaves space for more horizontal sharing, and even emotional connection.

Following an ethnographic approach to interviewing (Fujii 2017), I paid attention to the "meta-data" contained in each encounter and recorded them through notes and voice recordings: silences, reformulations, hesitations, tensions, interactions with others, or interruptions in the speech. These allowed me to capture illuminating contextual information about practices and discourses, whether in the noisy room of a Domestic Violence Office, the private cabinet of a local healthcare center, or a crowded women's organization full of informal discussions amongst women. Being "immersed" into the research participants' physical work environment, even for short but sometimes repeated periods of time, provided rich information on people's daily preoccupations, relations to others, and understandings of their environment. On many occasions, this immersion involved unexpected episodes of participant observation, that were incorporated in my research through fieldwork notes and later discussed in interviews. While participant observations were not employed systematically across cases, this method provided on many occasions the possibility of providing additional contextual background to the practices and discourses related during interviews. In other cases, however, for practical and confidentiality reasons or based on the participant's preference, interviews took place in cafés, public spaces, or homes. This was the case in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, where all interviews were conducted online.

Let me provide one example touching on the second aspect of relational interviewing: adopting the lexicon of my interlocutors. When I first conducted interviews with healthcare professionals that are members of the *Red de Profesionales de la Salud por el Derecho a Decidir* (Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide, RPSDD), I was confronted with an entirely new lexicon related to abortion care. I learned about the medical uses of misoprostol, mifepristone, *AMEU* ("*Aspiración Manual Endouterina*," which translates to "Manual

Endouterine Aspiration"), curettage, or the vocabulary employed around patients' clinical history records. I also learned about the inner workings of the healthcare system in Argentina: the role of private *obras sociales* (private health insurance), levels of complexity and assistance in healthcare, and professional medical orders. Overtime, I incorporated this vocabulary to my interviewing techniques, which allowed me to demonstrate interest and knowledge in my interlocutors' everyday practices.

While sharing my background and personal connection to Argentina became a common practice during my fieldwork, as Wuest (1995, 130) argues, there can be a fine line between "genuineness, self-disclosure, and manipulation in the interview process." (Wuest 1995, 130). Indeed, building relationships of trust with participants—whether in-person or online, formal or informal, ephemeral or long-term, friendly or confrontational—as feminist scholars remind us, does not eliminate unequal power dynamics between researcher and interlocutors but can on the contrary dissimulate them. But power dynamics do not always work in dichotomous ways nor are they always straightforward; they are relational, shaped by both the researcher and the participant's age, experience, cultural background, gender, or education. Identifying power imbalances in the interview process and mitigating it was a non-linear process that involved, through reflexivity, constant re-adjustments throughout the research process. For example, here, I provide an example of when I felt the power imbalance tilting my way, and how I readjusted my approach subsequently—and another example of the opposite situation, in which I felt my interlocutor's attempt to limit the scope of interviewing in what I considered to be a gendered interaction. During my 2020 fieldwork in the Province of Tucumán, following an interview with a well-known feminist activist in her association's office in the city center, my host asked if we could take a photograph as a souvenir to post on their social media. I immediately thought about

115

the negative consequences that this exposure with feminist activists could have on my recruitment, especially in the context of a conservative province. Moreover, what I then perceived as a "permanent affiliation" with the participant's sector of the feminist movement—associated with party politics—materialized through a photograph posted in the social media, would threaten my status of "neutrality" as a scholar and would, I then thought, affect my overall credibility. Following my uncomfortable refusal, my interlocutor clearly looked disappointed and puzzled given that while she had shared information and time with me and I was not reciprocating in the way she was asking for, my lack of reciprocity seemed awkward.

Here, I do not mean that scholars need not *always* expose themselves on the social media with their research participants as an act of reciprocity. My point in relating this experience is that it made me reflect on the boundaries of my ethical and political positioning as a feminist scholar and also on what constitutes "equal" and reciprocal exchanges during fieldwork. By refusing my interlocutor's request, I might have inevitably reproduced some of the extractive tendencies of academia towards communities in the Global South, in which my interlocutors' time and trust would remain uncompensated, including financially. In subsequent interviews, I would make conscious efforts to adopt a reciprocal approach and collaborate, accordingly and when possible, with the research participants. While I did not receive any other demands for public exposure, I paid specific attention to the ways in which I could compensate my interlocutors for their time and testimonies—my approach involved maintaining professional or academic ties, sharing information, data, and opportunities, and building communities with some of them, when possible and desired.

Yet, it also occurred that power inequalities existed the other way around—often, my interlocutors would be older, men, more experienced, and sometimes pertaining to more elite sectors, including medical doctors, lawyers, or top-level public servants or politicians. An example relates to an interview with a male judge with a longstanding trajectory in family law. At one point in the interview, my interlocutor, who had been quite critical of feminist movements throughout the interview, told me: "The thing is, we have a situation here... and don't you dare saying or writing this..." (Interview with Family Court Judge, March 31st, 2022).

I understood throughout the interview that my interlocutor, even as a judge considered by feminist lawyers I talked to, on the more "progressive" end of the spectrum, felt increasingly threatened by what he considered to be more "radical" or "combative" feminist movement, that scrutinized the judicial system's response to GBV complaints. The use of the phrasing "don't you dare write this"[108] pointed toward a fear of affecting his reputation by saying publicly a controversial claim. On one hand, it could mean that he perceived that feminist movements held increasingly threatening power over his career and reputation. But on the other hand, at this moment of the interview, his social status as a well-known, prestigious judge in the field felt like and exercise of power. If the expression "*ni se te ocurra*" is commonly used in Argentina, in the context of this interview, I experienced it as a light threat to ensure the protection of his professional and social reputation. The ethical concern for informed consent emerged in tension with unequal power dynamics between me and the participant—but one where the researcher holds less power than the interviewee.

---

[108] "*ni se te ocurra escribir esto.*"

In addition, as the interview unfolded, which played out as a discussion between the judge, a feminist lawyer who had introduced me to him, and myself, was punctuated with constant interruptions on this lawyer, who happened to also be a woman, by the judge. Throughout the interview, I felt that the judge's constant interruptions to the other participants' comments and observations resembled a demonstration of his authoritative knowledge claims and expertise, as a gendered form of epistemic power exercised on both of us.

ARCHIVES

Another main data source used in this research is archives. Archival work allowed me to contextualize the recent subnational historical debates taking place around the major legislative and judicial changes in the two policy areas between 1990 and 2012. I indeed focused on the discursive environment in which the National Law of Protection Against Intrafamily Violence (Law 24.417, 1994), the National Law for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation (2003), the National Law of Integral Protection (Law 26.485, 2009), the Supreme Court F.A.L Ruling (2012), and the incorporation of the typification of femicide as aggravated homicide to the criminal code (2012) were designed and adopted. I used archives to dive more specifically into the subnational debates and to better understand how these differed from or resonated with national-level debates. Most of the archival work was completed during my second fieldwork – spanning from February to June 2022 – but also continued throughout the research and writing process through ongoing online searches for documents and news outlets when possible. Through these archives, I was interested in exploring the historical evolution of social debates surrounding reproductive rights, gender-based violence, abortion, to capture how political subjects, policy problems and solutions as they are discussed in the subnational public spheres.

During my fieldworks, I collected documents from provincial and national states, the

media, and civil society organizations. To capture the debates taking place amongst women's

and feminist movements, at the *Centro de Documentación e Investigación de la Cultura de*

Izquierdas (Center of Documentation and Research of Left-Wing Cultures, CedInCI) in Buenos

Aires, I collected archives and written conclusions from the *Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres*

(National Women's Encounter, ENM).[109] The CeDInCI's archive contains booklets, pamphlets,

photos, letters, videos, and written conclusions from the ENMs, that have allowed tracing both

national and local debates across the country, amongst feminist and women's movements.[110] To

get an overview of NGOs and civil associations' discourses, I also gathered publicly available

reports and studies on the issues of concern,[111] and also collected archival material from the

national government, including laws, public policies, legislative sessions' minutes from the

provincial legislatures,[112] and archives from the National Women's Council (CNM).

---

[109] ENMs constitute the most important gatherings of women's and feminist movements organized annually in Argentina since 1986. I discuss the importance of these encounters in Chapter 3. Since the year 2019, the ENMs have been called *Encuentro Plurinacional de Mujeres, Lesbianas, Travestis, Trans, Bisexuales, Intersexuales y No Binaries* (Plurinational Encounter of Women, Lesbians, Travestites, Trans, Bisexuals, Intersex, and Non-binaries, EPMLTTBIN). However, very few archives covered the recent Encounters. For this reason, I focused mostly on the ENMs that spanned from 1990 to 2015.

[110] I focused my archival work on the ENMs that took place in the provinces of Buenos Aires (1991; 2001; 2005; 2015; 2019), Santa Fe (2003; 2016), and Tucumán (1993; 2009)—as well as the City of Buenos Aires (1996). In the province of Santa Fe, I relied on archival material on the Regional Women's Encounters of 1994, 1995, and 1998—preserved and digitalized by the *Archivo de memorias sexo-disidentes de Santa Fe* (Sexo-Dissident Memories Archive of Santa Fe). This complementary data was unfortunately impossible to gather in the provinces of Buenos Aires and Tucumán.

[111] I gathered documents from the following NGOs, networks, and civil associations: *Equipo Latinoamericano de Justicia y Género* (Latin American Team for Justice and Gender, ELA), *Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales* (Center for Legal and Social Studies, CELS), *Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer* (Foundation for Women's Study and Investigation, FEIM), the Casa del Encuentro, Mujeres X Mujeres, *Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir* (Catholics for the Right to Decide, CDD), *Comité de América Latina y el Caribe para la Defensa de los Derechos de la Mujer* (Latin American and the Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights, CLADEM), and the networks *Red de Profesionales de la Salud por el Derecho a Decidir* (Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide, RPSDD) and the *Socorristas en Red—Feministas que abortamos* (Socorristas Network – feminists who abort, thereafter Socorristas). Many of these documents were offered to me during interviews, and others were collected online.

[112] In Tucumán, given the low transparency of the provincial government and inaccessibility of the legislature's archive to the public, I was only able to access a list of records of bills treated in both Chambers.

Then, to capture how the national and the provincial states institutionalized these social debates, I relied on documents from the legislative and executive branches. First, I collected the legislative sessions' minutes (*diarios de sessiones*) from the provincial Legislatures (Chambers of Deputies and Senate) in the provinces of Santa Fe and Buenos Aires—as well as other archival documents in the library of the Legislature in Santa Fe. In Tucumán, given the low transparency of the provincial government and inaccessibility of the legislature's archive to the public, I was only able to access a list of records of bills treated in both Chambers (*expedientes)*.

Lastly, I relied on provincial major newspapers to acquire more contextual information, as well as to capture social and political debates taking place since the 1990s until 2020 (when available) regarding the two issues. I consulted approximately 1,200 archival documents in total. I did in-person archival work in the major provincial news outlets: *La Gaceta* in San Miguel de Tucumán (Province of Tucumán), *El Litoral* in Santa Fe and *La Capital* in Rosario (Province of Santa Fe), and *El Día* in La Plata (Province of Buenos Aires).[113] While these provincial news outlets are often labeled as more conservative and aligned with political and economic powers in the province, I used them to analyse the key discourses adopted by powerful actors, including the state, the Church, and the "experts."[114]

Both the interviews and archives were analyzed in two rounds of thematic analysis using MAXQDA software. The first round employed an inductive approach, allowing themes and

---

[113] For the newspaper El Día in La Plata, I hired Paloma Duarte as a research assistant and she visited the newspaper archive of the Dardo Rocha library of the National University of La Plata, in the city of La Plata, Province of Buenos Aires, which I had not been able to go to in my previous stays in Argentina. I provided her with detailed instructions on the news I was interested in, and she identified and digitalized the archival materials used in Chapter 4. I am deeply thankful for her work.

[114] I did in-person archival work in the major provincial news outlets: *La Gaceta* in San Miguel de Tucumán (Province of Tucumán), *El Litoral* in Santa Fe and *La Capital* in Rosario (Province of Santa Fe). I hired Paloma Duarte as a research assistant who collected and digitalized archives at the newspaper *El Día* in La Plata (Province of Buenos Aires).

categories to emerge directly from the data. Both archives and interviews were initially used to trace the instruments, events, and actors over time, to gather and triangulate contextual information for each province, not always contained in the secondary literature. The second round of analysis applied Carol Bacchi's methodology, focusing on identifying policy objects, problems, and subjects within the previously identified themes.

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the dissertation's epistemological and methodological approaches, drawing on and adapting tools from various feminist schools of thought within political science. After examining feminist sociological, historical, and rational-choice institutionalism, I argued for a post-structural approach to studying gender justice regimes, one that extends the analysis of women's rights beyond the confines of the state. Using Carol Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to Be" framework, I contended that critically examining the problematization of assumed "feminist policies," such as laws to eradicate violence against women and those addressing reproductive health and rights, provides valuable insights into the politics of gender justice. This is particularly relevant in a region like Latin America, where class, racial, and gender inequalities remain deeply entrenched.

In this dissertation, overall, I seek to unpack the processes and mechanisms through which gender justice regimes are constructed, debated, and transformed. I broadly argue that neoliberalism plays an important role in the perpetuation of social exclusions, but also in the ways through which women mobilize to contest them. As Peck (2013) argues with regards to all-encompassing explanatory stories about neoliberalism's impacts:

> The indiscriminate cry that 'Neoliberalism did it' belongs in the same family as the 'blame Thatcher' denunciations. Who did what, to whom, where, and how must be

specified in social, economic, and institutional terms. In the global or extra-local realm, this means teasing out neoliberalizing tendencies (again, among their others) in particular settings, circuits, and fields. (Peck 2013, 150)

In this chapter, I presented an analytical-methodological approach that offers a productive way to engage with Peck's proposition through three key tasks: (1) unpacking the state by examining specific practices and discourses become institutionalized in policies, highlighting their role in reinforcing symbolic and material exclusions from citizenship; (2) avoiding the reification of "reproductive rights" and "gender-based violence" by situating these concepts within the local contexts and meanings where they are implemented; and (3) acknowledging and illuminating women's situated agency as they challenge and negotiate gender justice regimes in their daily lives.

This dissertation adopts a feminist approach, paying particular attention to how problematizations are shaped by gendered, racialized, and class-based inclusions in and exclusions from citizenship regimes—and how these exclusions might also be reproduced within the research process itself. This chapter demonstrated my commitment to a feminist research ethic, reflected in a genealogical and ethnographic exploration of feminist politicization through archives, interviews, and ethnographic observations. Additionally, it translated the dissertation's fieldwork-based and grounded approach into a coherent set of ethnographic methods. In the next chapter, I argue that applying a subnational comparative lens to problematization offers valuable analytical insights for studying political contention surrounding women's rights.

***

Chapter 3: Re-Mapping the Politics of Intimacy in Argentina

A Subnational Comparative Research Design

INTRODUCTION

This chapter's purpose is two-fold; first, it serves as a contextual chapter on Argentina's patriarchal institutional resistances, political actors, and women's rights incorporation, and second, as a methodological overview of the dissertation's subnational comparative research design. Since the 1990s and particularly during the Left Turn, legal changes responding to international women's rights agendas have undeniably challenged maternalism and familialism, expanding Argentine women's formal inclusion to citizenship. These transformations of the country's gender regime have thus placed it as a leader in progressive politics in Latin America – a "successful case" of feminist policymaking. However, despite undeniable progress, I argue that by predominantly adopting the national government as a unit of analysis, some of the territorialized social and political inequalities and logics of feminist political action have remained undertheorized. I show in this chapter that due to neoliberal reforms implemented in the 1990s, historical, territorialized structural inequalities and their social effects have resurfaced as central in the politics of women's rights, in ways that have not been fully explored; by rejecting methodological nationalism, a subnational interpretive comparative research design addresses this concern.

The chapter unfolds in three parts. First, I show how Argentina's maternalistic and familialist gender regimes have evolved since the 19th century until the last democratization process in 1983, building on colonial arrangements but adapting to the central state's political and economic projects. Second, I introduce the major debates, actors, and policies that have marked the incorporation of reproductive rights and gender-based violence eradication laws

across three periods: the neoliberal decade (1990-2003), the Left Turn (2003-2015), and the post

Left Turn (2015-2020). Third, relying on fieldwork data, I unpack the chapter's central claim

that subnational social, political, and economic contexts matter for present-day feminist

policymaking and movements in Argentina, thereby introducing and justifying the dissertation's

research design. Last, I unveil the subnational case selection strategy through its three sites: the

provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Tucumán – selected based on their varying political

economies, women's rights and policy framework, women's and feminist movements,

conservative and religious sectors, position within the federation, and social inequalities. These

sites, I argue, offer three windows illuminating different facets of women's rights'

problematization in different parts of the interior of the country. Together, they begin a re-

mapping of the study of the politics of intimacy in Argentina.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MATERNALIST AND FAMILIALIST REGIMES

Since the early days of the Republic in 1816, Argentina's state formation is characterized

by a maternalistic and familialist gender regime, rooted in the colonial racial order and the

country's deeply-engrained conception of nationhood since Independence wars (Nari 2004).[115]

Indeed, it is only one year prior to the Constitutional abolition of slavery that one of Argentina's

early ideologue, Juan Bautista Alberdi, famously declared in 1852 that "To govern is to

populate."[116] Unlike its neighbours, slavery had been abolished in 1813 for each new Argentine

---

[115] The study of African-descent presence and contributions to the Argentine society is a recent but growing field of study that emerged in recognition of the active erasure of Black Argentines from the society, polity, and historiography (see, for example, Edwards 2020; Geler, Yannone, and Egido 2023). This erasure has been attributed to Argentina's national foundational myth as a white European society founded on the genocidal eradication of Indigenous populations (the "Conquest of the Desert" from 1878-1885), the supposed absence or relative insignificance of African people (mostly through slavery) compared to the neighbouring Brazil, and the large-scale waves of European immigration (mostly Caucasian) in the first half of the 20th century (Biernat 2005; Tesio 2013; Loango 2010).

[116] "*Gobernar es Poblar.*"

on the territory through the Free womb act, but forced labor of mostly Indigenous and African-descent people was only completely eradicated in 1853.[117] Thus, with a significant amount of liberated racialized populations on a vast, mostly unpopulated territory, since the late 19th and throughout the 20th century, state interests for both population growth and racial control led to large-scale European immigration policy. Between 1880 and 1914, massive waves of immigrants mostly from Spain, Italy, Swiss, and France, reached the port of Buenos Aires—making Argentina the most important recipient of European immigration in Latin America (Biernat 2005).

Early democracy in this country has been characterized by the limited and controlled inclusion of the poor, mostly racialized masses. While liberal ideals were incorporated into a Republican constitution, liberalism in Argentina has historically contained important conservative traits to preserve the unequal social order. As Dora Barrancos (2006, 123) argues, "[liberalism] viewed the participation of large popular sectors in politics with distrust—a perception that restricted the democratic system; second, it did not strictly abide by republican forms of government; and third, it encouraged moral standards and social conventions that were quite similar to those of its opponents—the conservatives." Despite a formal process of liberalization, formally granting equal civil and political rights to all citizens, much like in the rest of Latin America, social inequities based on class and race have remained key features of the Argentine society.

---

[117] Between 1813 and 1860, newborn children from enslaved women pertained to the legal category of freed people ("*libertos*") were placed under the *patria potestas* of their mothers' patrons. Therefore, forced child labor for girls would continue until they married, at around 16 years old, and until 20 years old for boys (Candioti 2021).

The control of poor, racialized sectors of society through the law has thus been a major concern for political, economic, and religious elites since early state formation – a control that has manifested in gendered ways. To start, civil law generally followed Spanish colonial traditions of female subordination in the traditional family, through the granting of rights and powers to male family heads. *Patria potestas*, or the Roman-originated right of male heads of households to control family members, was enforced since colonial times to regulate marriage, inheritance, and race relations. In 1869, *patria potestas* was incorporated into the first civil and commercial code, and class status (specifically, poverty) replaced race and caste as a core delimitation of the state's power over male heads of households and their families. This gendered control of the poor indeed responded to economic development and state building necessities. If the then weak Argentine state only rarely intervened in family affairs, two exceptions existed, related to the control of labor: to conscript vagrant men and to force poor women and their children to work for the state, as domestic servants in upper-class families, or, later, in licensed prostitution (Guy 1985). In that sense, the lower-class family was not defined as a "private sphere," and historians have widely documented how the state has actively intervened in poor families according to economic necessities and elite demands.[118]

With an ethnically diversified population composed of a growing number of European immigrants, Indigenous, and persons of African descent, during the first quarter of the 20th century legislators also found imperative to address the "racial quality" of the Argentine population – initiating the construction of a national myth around a "White Nation" (Brumatti

---

[118] Parents were also sometimes deprived of their parental rights in cases of child abandonment or abuse, a decision exercised by civil courts with greater reluctance for men than women, more often challenged for their moral incorrectness than fathers.

2022; Edwards 2020).[119] It is therefore between 1830 and 1930 that the fertility policy gradually transitioned from a "natural" to "controlled" regime (Torrado 1993).

Control over sexual and reproductive practices indeed became a key component of early welfare state formation, along with the sanitary protection of the population. Despite the secularization of the state in the early 20th century, the influence of the Catholic Church endured —shaping the moral underpinnings of the political economy of family and sexuality in Argentina (Blancarte 2008; Vaggione and Morán Faúndes 2017). In the first 1921 criminal code, abortion, adultery,[120] homosexuality, and divorce were criminalized, and the traditional family was institutionalized as a key component of the preservation of social order.

Pro-natalism dominated the state's prohibitive reproductive policy,[121] but eugenic, moral, and public health principles also underpinned criminal exemptions to abortion which was decriminalized under two kinds of circumstances: in the case of danger for the health or life of the woman (therapeutic abortion), or in case of rape or incest of an "idiotic or demential" woman (eugenic-ethical abortion). Maternal-infantile health, especially regarding working mothers, was also a rising concern and in 1936 under the *Unión Cívica Radical* (Radical Civil Union, UCR)

---

[119] In Argentina the term "*negro*" ("Black") is frequently used in slang language and has acquired multiple meanings, not always explicitly related to race: the term "*negro*" can be used to refer disdainfully to popular sectors – generally through not always darker-skinned persons, but also as an affectionate nickname for a friend or family member – usually but not necessarily darker-skinned. In the recent years, the term "*marrón*" ("brown") has been used by a collective called Colectivo Marrón to describe (and make visible) racialized persons against a common myth of a white nation (Brumatti 2022).

[120] Criminal sanctions for adultery were gendered: women were subject to between one month to a year of prison if they engaged in extra-marital affairs, while men were punished only if they left their household indefinitely. This law placed women's sexual promiscuity as the locus of the penal logic, while men's extra-marital sexuality was permitted unless it led to the abandonment of their household, leaving women to become heads of their households.

[121] The 1921 criminal code included prison sentence of 3 to 10 years for physical harm causing an incapacity to procreate (1921 Criminal Code, article 91).

President Irigoyen, a mother's and children's bureau and a maternity fund were created (Guy 2000).

In addition, around that time of growing urbanisation and industrialization, women's massive incursion into the labor force would change the gendered logic of state intervention in families and regarding reproduction. When the national government adopted a national homework law protecting workers from abuses and exploitation in 1918, domestic services – employments largely occupied by women – remained excluded. Households thus remained institutionalized as places where different forms of abuses against women and children would be legally tolerated. Yet, in the 1920s, socialist-inspired reforms gave women, especially single and working women, slightly more power then they had; in 1926, under the Radical government of Torcuato de Alvear, high rates of child abandonment by single mothers had led the government to grant them *patria potestas*, but this right was subject to vigilance by the state, especially for "illegitimate" children conceived outside marriage (Guy 1981).[122]

Following an authoritarian episode in the 1930s and early 1940s, the election of General Juan Domingo Perón in 1946 through the Justicialist Party (*Partido Justicialista*, PJ) marked the emergence of a welfare state in Argentina, replacing dispersed social policy and religious volunteerism by a state-led social security system.[123] Through state-led developmentalism and Import-Substitution Industrialization (ISI), increasing the domestic labor force for the nation's economic development was seen as key to the nationalist project led by the populist government

---

[122] With the 1926 civil code reform, married women were granted to right to choose their own occupations and keep their salaries.

[123] Until the 1950s, conflicts between female philanthropic religious groups advocating for child welfare on one hand, and feminists for family law, political, civil, and economic rights reforms on the other, forged the early welfare state in Argentina (Guy 2009).

of Perón. By centralizing workers' unions under the PJ, Peronism in Argentina would lead to the "controlled inclusion" of working-class sectors into the political and social fabrics of the nation (Oxhorn 1995). Yet, despite the development of a relatively strong, yet stratified social security system, social policies continued being both pro-natalist and maternalistic. Welfare was indeed designed to incentivize large traditional families, and incorporated women to citizenship through motherhood (Bessone 2017).[124] In that context, medical and public health sectors played an important role in entrenching, biologizing, and naturalizing maternalism to safeguard the Nation's collective health (Felitti 2011; Nari 2004; Soledad Yañez 2013). The Secretary of Health was indeed created in 1949, along public maternal-infantile health and women's maternity hospitals.

During the first Perón administration (1946-1955), changing legal framework adapted to a diversity of family structures found in the Argentine society: children, including "illegitimate children," were granted inheritance rights, and divorce and adoption were both legalized. Those changes were perceived by conservative political opposition as weakening fathers' authority, control, and governance rights over their children and wives. Yet, these changes did not fully challenge the traditional family model; Juan Domingo Perón and his wife, Eva "Evita" Duarte de Perón, embodied traditional figures of paternal and maternal protective figures, where the mother's figure would be constructed as "spiritual guardians of the household" – even as Evita herself did not have children (Guy 2000, 189).

---

[124] During the "golden era" of social policy of Perón's presidential mandates (1946-1951; 1951-1955), Argentina is thought to have institutionalized "stratified universalism" characterized by extended social policies yet segmented along occupations (Martínez Franzoni 2008).

Reaching the 1960s, the world's international organizations and private funders worried about the negative effects of population growth for economic and social development—leading to the first family planning and fertility control policies in the Global South, targeted at impoverished and racialized populations (Morgan and Roberts 2009). Yet, despite international pressures, Argentina was experiencing a decline in its fertility rate, and maintained its pro-natalist policies firmly in place (Felitti 2012). In 1974, during Isabel Perón's mandate, birth control and family planning were prohibited, and pro-natalism remained a key component of Argentina's maternalistic state.

By the 1960s, the promises of modernization theory, which premised a turn to liberal democratic rule and secularism following capitalist development and urbanization, was not bearing fruits (O'Donnell 1993a; Oxhorn 1995). During the second half of the twentieth century, economic and political elite backlash against a growing and organized working class indeed led to repeated military interventions that ousted democratically elected leaders and banned any form of political participation. As the state-led development ISI model was reaching exhaustion, the enforcement of neoliberal reforms became a key component of the last military dictatorships (especially the 1966-1973 regime of Juan Carlos Onganía ("Argentine Revolution" and the 1976-1983 ("The National Reorganization Process")). These reforms involved the closure of unproductive industries throughout the country, the retrenchment of the welfare state and the state's involvement in the economy, the flexibilization of labor, and an opening to foreign direct investments.

The last military dictatorship – the *Proceso de reorganización nacional* (National Reorganization Process, PRN) (1976-1983), also known as the "Dirty War" – is generally

recognized as having more drastically affected Argentine politics and society than the previous ones. The regime was characterized by informal and formal alliances between the military armed forces, upper-level Ecclesiastic powers of the Catholic Church, and some sectors of the agro-industrial business. With its major macroeconomic and regulatory changes that moved away from state-led developmentalism towards neoliberalism,[125] the dictatorship's political project involved severe repression of "subversive" social forces. This repression targeted people associated with Peronism, socialism, and communist movements and ideologies through political organizations, union, and community leaders, but also the general population suspected of sympathizing or collaborating with Left-wing militancy. Between 1976 and 1983, Peronist and Left-wing political, religious, artistic, journalistic, union, and community leaders, as well as guerilla members, became targets of a systematic plan of forced disappearances, tortures, and killings through a region-wide intelligence system known as the Condor Plan (López 2016).[126] The military forces kidnapped and incarcerated people in clandestine concentration camps and detention centers, both in military and civilian infrastructure.[127]

Alongside an economic and political re-structuring, the authoritarian project implemented by the military regime also involved a "culture of morality" based on Catholic values and traditions. In 1977, any action directly or indirectly related to family planning were prohibited, including the commercialization and sale of contraceptive methods.[128] In addition, the military

---

[125] Those reforms were implemented by the economist José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz.
[126] The *Comisión nacional sobre desaparición de personas* (National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, CONADEP) identified 8,960 disappeared victims of the regime in 1984, among which one third are women (CONADEP 1984). Yet, human rights organizations, including the Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of the May Square), have used the number 30,000 as a political signifier of the magnitude and genocidal nature of the Dirty War.
[127] These include military buildings from the navy, air force, and army, but also federal and provincial police stations, private companies and civilian public institutions. Some public hospitals and schools also hosted illegal detention centers in which torture and murders were perpetrated.
[128] Decree N659.

regime led forward active interventions on women's bodies through strengthened criminalization

of sexual practices qualified as "unhygienic," "amoral," and associated with the Left, such as

adultery, prostitution, pornography, and homosexuality. The enforcement of such a gendered-

sexed moral regime also manifested through systematic sexual violence committed by military

officers, including sexualized forms of tortures and rape of women and men in detention.[129]

Alongside the glorification of motherhood and traditional Catholic values, the dictatorship

indeed put in place a system of ideological cleansing through the systematic kidnapping of

activists' children born in detention (CONADEP 1984). Testimonies reveal that pregnant women

suffered extreme punishments in detention, for deviating from traditional gender roles of

domesticity and "proper motherhood" (Álvarez et al. 2020; Regueiro 2015; Urosevich 2020).[130]

Thus, during the last military regime, maternalism and familialism were also remodeled and

reinforced to serve the social, economic, and political military project.

The third wave of democratization occured in 1983 with the downfall of the military

regime, following the humiliating defeat of the Malvinas war (April-June 1982). Pressing

demands for democratization coming from civil society, including from human rights

movements, included establishing the truth and justice for the illegal tortures, kidnapping, and

disappearances committed during the dictatorship (O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986). The newly

elected President Raúl Alfonsín, from the *Unión Cívica Radical* (Civic Radical Union, UCR),

rallied popular support and in 1985, top military generals faced civilian investigation and trial for

---

[129] Forms of sexual tortures perpetrated against female detainees reported in the Nunca Más report included intra-vaginal electric chocs, forced hysterectomy, and sexual harassment. Those repeated acts of torture engendered frequent miscarriages in extremely unsafe and unhygienic conditions, as well as irregularities in women's menstrual cycles (CONADEP 1984, 147). See CONADEP (1984, 21; 38; 40; 41; 42; 56; 104; 105; 129; 147, among other testimonies).

[130] According to the CONADEP report *Nunca Más* (Never Again), 3% of women targeted by the regime as "subversives" were pregnant when arrested, often gave birth in illegal detention centers or hospitals (civilian and military).

crimes against humanity. Yet, throughout the 1980s, democratic institutions were being constantly threatened by increasing pressures from different sectors of the military, and President Alfonsín put an end to the human rights trials, through the laws of final stop (1986) and due obedience (1987).[131]

As many politicians and social activists returned from exile and re-organized, Argentine women, many of which were involved in human rights and traditional political organizations, faced a double challenge: on the one hand, they actively supported popular struggles for democratization and on the other they sought to dismantle patriarchal norms and institutions within the state, their families, and political organizations (Jelin 1990).[132] Additionally, the women's rights agenda became an increasingly important component of the "resurgence of civil society" and democratic transition period, as the feminist and women's movements reorganized to discuss their own agendas during the *Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres* (National Women's Encounters, ENMs). The ENMs represent to this day the most important annual events gathering women and sexual and gender minorities to discuss and debate multiple issues, articulate the women's and feminist movements, and exchange practices in a horizontal way in Argentina (Alma and Lorenzo 2009).

---

[131] Despite those concessions to the military, three coup attempts by radical right factions of the military (Carapintadas) in 1987, 1988, and the left-wing faction (La Tablada, 1989) increased political instability and threatened the still newly transitioned democracy.

[132] In December 1983, in preparation of the International Women's Day on March 8, organizations created the *Multisectorial de Mujeres* (Women's Multisectorial), grouping women members of the *Unión Cívica Radical* (Radical Civic Union, UCR), the women's branches of the *Partido Justicialista* (Justicialist Party, PJ), the *Partido Socialista Popular* (Popular Socialist Party, PSP). The Multisectorial also included capital-city based NGOs *Movimiento por la Vida y por la Paz* (Movement for Life and Peace, MOVIP), *Fundación para el estudio de la interrelación mujer-sociedad* (Foundation for the study of the woman-society relationship, FEIMUS), *Reunión de Mujeres, Centro de servicios y participación de la mujer* (Center for woman services and participation), *Asociación Trabajo y Estudio de la Mujer: Atem 25 de noviembre, Alternativa Feminista* (Feminist Alternative, ALFE), and independent women.

During the 1980s, women made key gains in terms of family law reform, through shared parental authority in 1985 and the legalization of divorce in 1988. In 1986, the decree prohibiting family planning and birth control was repelled under pressure from President Alfonsín's newly created Secretary of Women, Health, and Development within the Ministry of Health, yet not incorporated to the public healthcare system.[133] Reaching the late 1980s, as the UCR government struggled with 4-digit inflation rate, debt crisis, social unrest, and political instability, Carlos Saúl Menem won the Presidency under the banner of the *Partido Justicialista* (Justicialist Party, PJ). I now turn to the main temporal scope of analysis in this dissertation, from the neoliberal decade to the year 2020.

THE PROGRESSIVE DISMANTLING OF A PATRIARCHAL STATE?

Over the past three decades, political scientists have theorized the incorporation of international women's rights in Argentina as the outcome of power-ridden struggles between feminist movements, religious actors (mostly, the Catholic Church), and states. Therefore, it is often claimed that reproductive rights in Argentina were historically more resisted than violence against women laws, due to the former's particularly strong moral opposition to the Catholic Church doctrine (Htun 2003; Montoya 2019). Yet, when looking at their incorporation as human rights issues in Argentina's legal and policy frameworks, one generally sees an expansion in state regulations and policy efforts tackling these rights – particularly during the Left Turn. This section provides an overview of three historical periods covered in this dissertation, summarized in the Figure 2 below: the neoliberal decade (1990-2003), the Left Turn (2003-2015), and the post Left Turn (2015-2020).

---

[133] Decree N 2274.

It is during the neoliberal decade that Argentina incorporated international women's rights instruments, along a socially conservative, neoliberal economic project. In 1994, the constitutionalizing of the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), signalled women's inclusion as subjects of rights to the Argentina's citizenship regime (Grugel and Peruzzotti 2007). "State feminism" was marking its first steps, with the creation in 1991 of the *Consejo Nacional de la Mujer* (National Women's Council, CNM), the first autonomous national-level institution to articulate a gender equality agenda in the country. With the adoption of gender quotas in 1992, women were also guaranteed greater

1) The Neoliberal Decade and the Crisis of Neoliberalism (1990-2003)

2) The "Left Turn" (2003-2015)

3) The "Post-Left Turn" and Feminist Uprisals (2015-2019; 2019-2020)

Right Peronist Governance

Formal Incorporation of a Women's Rights Agenda

Early State Feminism (National Women's Council, 1994)

Center-Left Peronist Governance

Deepening of the Women's Rights Agenda
- Progressive expansion of reproductive rights
- Progressive regulation of gender-based violence

Mainstreaming of the "Gender Perspective"

Progressive expansion and diversification of feminist Movements

Center-Right non-Peronist Governance (2015-2019), followed by Center-Left Peronist Governance (2019-2020)

Massive Expansion of Feminist Movements (Ni Una Menos, 2015)

Green Tide (2018)

Legalization of abortion on-demand (2020)

Figure 2: Summary chart of the historical periods considered in the dissertation.

descriptive representation in the National Congress, significantly increasing their presence in the legislative branch (Piscopo 2015).[134]

Yet, the decade was also marked by major challenges for the women's and feminist movements and for the deepening of Argentine democracy. Following the due obedience and final stop laws adopted in the 1980s, amnesty decrees for military generals were granted in 1990. Consequently, many ex-officers responsible for human rights violations returned to holding positions of power in the military and the state, while others returned to the political realm and entered electoral politics through political parties.[135] Moreover, President Menem maintained a tight connection with the Catholic Church, which significantly shaped Argentina's international stances on women's issues in the 1994 Cairo and 1995 Beijing Conferences. In this context, the CNM remained underfunded and under the direct control of the President, suffered repeated issues of legitimacy and downgrading, and is not usually thought of as a strong "insider activist" for the adoption of gender equality policies (Franceschet 2010).

For the first half of the 1990s, the decentralization and privatization of state services and an opposition to abortion were important points of convergence between the Catholic Church and the Menem government.[136] Initially with the support of the working class and Peronist unions, labor flexibilization reforms were implemented, along with a decentralizing constitutional reform with significant cuts in state spending which also pegged the Argentine peso to the US dollar to control inflation. In 1994, powers to legislate on and administer

---

[134] The gender-discriminatory adultery law was removed in 1995.
[135] This is indeed the case in the Province of Tucumán and the Province of Buenos Aires, which I respectively explore in greater details in Chapters 4 and 6.
[136] Those friendly relations between the highest Catholic authorities and the governments of Carlos Saúl Menem nonetheless eroded towards the end of the 1990s, as a result of divisions within the Catholic Church regarding Menem's economic model and its social consequences (Urquiza 2010).

healthcare,[137] education, or security[138] were transferred to the provinces and partly privatized—

without increasing provincial fiscal capacities for adequate implementation (Bernal 2015; Leiras

2013; Oxhorn, Selee, and Tulchin 2004).

In this context, state retrenchment generated a rising involvement of popular-sector

women in mitigating the effects of economic crisis, notably, through grassroots community

associations linked to the Catholic Church. Meanwhile, Argentina's feminist movements did not

remain isolated from the regional trend of 'NGOization' (Álvarez 1999). In the 1990s also took

place the rise of an organized gay, lesbian and bisexual community, as well as transvestite and

transgender organizations, increasingly shedding light on issues affecting their communities and

pushing forward a sexual rights agenda, both in conversation and in parallel with feminists'

women's rights agenda (Busaniche, Kreig, and Rodríguez 2023).[139]

THE EMERGENCE OF "RESPONSIBLE PROCREATION"

After failed legislative attempts to improve access to contraception towards the end of the

1980s, the creation in 1991 of the CNM strengthened a network of experts that would advocate

for policy change in national and subnational levels: the "Women Together for the Right to

Freely Decide." Yet, the network's legislative initiatives were being constantly undercut, as the

---

[137] Argentina implemented a "piecemeal-moderate" healthcare system, leading to a fragmented, weakly-coordinated, and complex healthcare systems, through the coexistence of trade-union managed social insurances and a decline in public coverage, especially for informal workers and pensioners (Mesa-Lago 2007).

[138] Important reforms in the criminal justice system took place, such as the creation of an independent Public Prosecutor's Office, and the adoption of an accusatorial system. Specialized Attorney General's Offices (Narcotics, Human Trafficking, Crimes Against Humanity, Money Laundering, Corruption, Institutional Violence—Change in Criminal Prosecution Policy).

[139] Lesbian organizations in Buenos Aires, such as those part of the *Frente Sáfico*, included *Lilith, Las lunas y las otras, Autogestivo de lesbianas*, and *Cuadernos de existencia lesbiana*. The travestite and transexual collective included organizations such as the *Asociacion para la Lucha por la Identidad Travesti Transexual* (ALITT).

Menem government allied with the Catholic Church to oppose family planning, birth control, and abortion-related initiatives (Piscopo 2014).[140]

The 1994 Constitution explicitly embraced the Catholic faith, and attempts were made by the Menem government, though unsuccessful, to permanently block a reproductive rights agenda through a clause protecting the life of the unborn from the moment of conception. Even as these efforts were unsuccessful, they demonstrated the government's general opposition to the reproductive rights agenda, which it perceived as a threatening to the traditional family model and as a way to open the door to abortion (Lopreite 2013). Menem's threat to incorporate the right to life since from the moment of conception into the new constitution was a central concern for feminists, but the proposal was finally abandoned. Still, throughout the 1990s, Menem pursued an anti-abortion agenda by adopting by decree the Vatican's Day for the Unborn Child, set on the 25th of March. Meanwhile, feminist organizations continued mobilizing in Buenos Aires, presenting a first bill for the legalization of pregnancy interruption to Congress, but the bill was quickly rejected and soon forgotten.[141]

During his second mandate and amid the rise of New Social Policy approaches, Menem led forward an agenda for children's rights as attached to maternal health. In absence of reproductive rights, this agenda reinforced maternalism in national health and social policy. Indeed, the adoption and ratification in 1990 of the International Convention of the Rights of Children and its incorporation to the 1994 Constitutional Reform placed children's wellbeing,

---

[140] The Comission for the right to abortion (*Comisión por el derecho al aborto*) was created in 1988. In La Plata, *Las Azucenas* was also active since 1989.
[141] Patricia Bullrich, then a member of the Alianza, elaborated the bill, also signed by Graciela Fernandez Mejide. Bullrich, ex-guerilla member (Montonera) and Peronist, is now Minister of Security in the current radical-right government of Javier Milei.

health, and security at the forefront of Menem's agenda. The constitutional reform also incorporated the creation of a "special and integral regime of social security for the protection of any vulnerable child, since pregnancy until the end of elementary school, and for the mother during pregnancy and breast-feeding."[142]

By the mid-1990s, international and domestic public health sectors saw "uncontrolled pregnancies" and the lack of health checks during the pregnancy as major issues driving infant mortality in the country.[143] The National Action Plan and Federal Pact in Favor of the Mother and the Child was thus put in place, committing both the national and provincial governments to implementing programs of "responsible procreation." [144] This national plan included several public policies geared at reducing infant mortality, particularly through health interventions amongst poor mothers to be implemented mostly by the Ministry of Health, with a weak participation of the National Women's Council in both their design and implementation.[145]

Throughout the 1990s, the World Bank (WB), the United Nations (UN), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) became important actors in developing, funding, and at times, co-implementing social development and health policies in the country geared at children and mothers. The World-Bank funded Maternal-Infantile Plan, implemented between 1990 and 1993 in Argentina, targeted the poorest sectors in providing for child nutrition programs and

---

[142] National Constitution 1994, art.23.
[143] *Página/12*. "Aborto: Primera Encuesta Médica." May 14, 2001, sec. Society, p.8.
[144] *Plan Nacional de Acción y Pacto Federal en Favor de la Madre y el Niño*.
[145] In 1998, after publishing a report called "Mother and children's health: a postponed challenge," the Ministry of Health puts in place the National Plan against Infant Mortality ("*Plan Nacional Contra la Mortalidad Infantil*") and the Programa Unidos (Ministry of Social Action (under Graciela Fernandez Mejide) and the Ministry of Education). The National Plan, partly financed by the World Bank, aimed primarily at reducing infant mortality, affecting the most vulnerable sectors of society. Unidos targeted families whose Heads of Households had incomplete primary education, numerous children, children under 6, and elderly over 60—a program in which women were the main beneficiaries.

obstetric care for mothers. Interest groups, NGOs, public health, and research centers on children's health and rights had also emerged, supporting this agenda (Risley 2019).[146]

Yet, by the late 1990s, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) started putting additional pressure on the Argentine government to address the country's high maternal mortality rate, associated with the high rate of unsafe abortions in the country.[147] Abortions were also increasingly visible in the Argentine media, and debates over the constitutional reform had begun unleashing the issue in the public sphere.[148] Still, facing increasing reports of off-label uses of the "abortion pill"—Misoprostol[149]—the Department of Pharmacovigilance of the National Administration of Drugs, Foods, and Medical Technology,[150] instead began controlling and prohibiting the drug's use without medical prescription.[151]

In all, during the 1990s, reproductive rights remained overall blocked, as the socially conservative government of Carlos Saul Menem allied with the high authorities of the Catholic Church to oppose this feminist agenda. However, feminist movements, along the CNM, successfully pushed for the adoption of some provincial laws – in a context where

---

[146] Organizations include the Infantile-juvenile Psychiatric Association, the Argentine Pediatrics Society, the Center for Legal Studies of Children and Youth, the Integrated Center for Social Rehabilitation, the Center for Political and Social Studies for Human Development, the Women's Studies Center, but also the CONIN Foundation, which became an influential voice opposed to the legalization of abortion during the 2018 debates in the National Congress.

[147] In Argentina, in the early 2000s it was estimated that around 37% of pregnancies ended in induced abortion, based on national health statistics (Steele and Chiarotti 2004, 40).

[148] In 1999, Zulema Yoma, Carlos Menem's ex-wife, publicly declares that she had an abortion, triggering debates on abortion.

[149] Misoprostol can be safely used for (1) voluntary pregnancy interruption; (2) labor induction; (3) prevention of post-partum hemorrhage. When combined with Mifepristone, the drug is considered 92-95% percent efficient for voluntary pregnancy interruptions and with very little health risks when taken appropriately. The drug was approved in the United States in 2000.

[150] *Departamento de Farmacovigilancia de la Administracion Nacional de Medicamentos, Alimentos y Tecnologia Medica* (ANMAT).

[151] Disposition N3646/98. *El Litoral*. "Cavallo no ayudará a las provincias desprolijas." February 7, 2001.

decentralization reforms granted provincial governments power over healthcare legislation and implementation.

FAMILY VIOLENCE

During the first half of the 1990s, early efforts to legislate domestic violence were mostly ignored in the National Congress.[152] Since democratization, women's organizations and NGOs were actively taking part in regional and international discussions on violence against women and increasingly offered early assistance services for victims. In response, they developed small-scale initiatives to tackle domestic violence at the provincial and municipal level, leading to a patchwork of protection services throughout the territory (Franceschet 2010a).[153] Yet, they also pushed for the adoption of a national legislation[154] and in 1994, the Congress finally adopted the first national Law 24.417 (1994) on Protection against Family Violence, the first civil law addressing violence committed in the private sphere (Franceschet 2010a; Htun and Jensenius 2020). At the time, the Convention of Belém do Para had not yet been signed and ratified by the Argentine government, and the Menem administration only incorporated it to domestic laws in 1996.

The 1994 law on family violence thus included a thinner definition of violence than the one proposed by the Convention of Belém do Para, focusing only on physical and psychological harm committed between family members. This gender-blind legislation indeed focused on

---

[152] The first bill on domestic violence that was presented and voted unanimously in the National Senate in 1988 by Senator Luis Agustin J. Brasesco (S.-311), had not been voted in the Chamber of Deputies and lost parliamentary status. On March 8th, 1993, the women's movement introduced a first bill on the International day for women's rights, a bill which also lost parliamentary status. In "Taller Autoconvocado 'Prevención de La Violencia.'" In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993.

[153] The provinces of Buenos Aires, Neuquén, Chubut, Santa Fe, and the City of Buenos Aires had already adopted provincial and municipal legislations on family violence, often adopting similar scopes and definitions than the national law.

[154] The Fundación Alicia Moreau de Justo, for example, provided legal and psychological services in the capital. The *Casa Rosa Chazaretta*, was also active since 1988 in the southern outskirts of the capital, in La Matanza.

violence committed against any members of the family by any member—considering only heterosexual family units originating in marriage or common-law unions.[155] The law involved a combination of protective measures (exclusion from the household) and family-preserving measures (including mandatory family therapy).[156]

Menem's domestic violence law, embedded in the civil code, was criticized by many feminists as elusive of the patriarchal roots of most violence committed in families. They criticized the law's instruments for their intention to protect the integrity of the family, rather than addressing patriarchal violence against women and girls.[157] Instead of seeking to protect the victims and survivors, measures of exclusion explicitly aimed at temporarily removing the perpetrator to facilitate conflict resolution in the family.[158] The women's movement in Argentina thus demanded a more encompassing law based on the framework of the Convention of Belém do Para. If many found the domestic violence law unsatisfying, they continued pressuring for its implementation (Rodigou et al. 2012).

THE 2001 CRISIS: A FAREWELL TO NEOLIBERALISM?

---

[155] Note that at the time, same-sex marriage was not legal in Argentina (legalized in 2010 through Law 26.618); the law on family violence therefore only applied to heterosexual couples formalized through legal unions.

[156] Regulated two years later in 1996, the law only planned the adoption of assistance services in the city of Buenos Aires, the Council of Minors and Families (Consejo del Menor y de la Familia), and CNM offices, leaving to the Ministry of Interior the task of incentivising provinces to adopt their own services.

[157] As the Center for Information and Counselling of the Council of the Minor and the Family in the Secretary of Social Development started operating in Buenos Aires, the secretary stated that "This [program] reinforces our commitment to work in social policy around the family because, what good can everything we do if it doesn't serve to strengthen the family?" in Diario Popular. "Violencia. Se Reciben 90 Denuncias Telefónicas Diarias," May 5, 1996, p.12.

[158] Juan P. Cafiero, main deputy signatory of the bill, mentioned on the day of the adoption, that: "In addition to physical protection, these regulations aim to restore family harmony, allowing the aggressor to reflect and understand that violence only brings inconvenience and, on the contrary, distances them from home. It also enables the initiation of a dialogue with their family, seeking full reintegration, through appropriate psychological and medical assistance" (Cafiero, PJ, 01-12-1993).

Following Menem's defeat in the 1999 national election, the opposition grouped under a coalition known as the Alliance, took power with President Fernando De la Rúa from the UCR.[159] In a context of post-2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, the economic strangulation generated by Menem's monetary policy, high debt, and the retrenchment of US monetary loans, an unprecedented period of social and political instability unleashed in Argentina. What is now known as the 2001 crisis, which continued throughout 2002 and had the capital city of Buenos Aires and its Metropolitan area as its epicenter, was a peak moment of social unrest, economic hardship, and political instability since democratization.

In the weeks following the imposition of restrictions on cash withdrawals, violent repression of social protests and lootings led to the police killing of more than 30 people throughout the country (Fiszbein, Giovagnoli, and Adúriz 2003). As some analysts observed, lootings and violent protests reflected a rupture of democratic norms of *convivence* (Muñoz 2009).[160] In all, the crisis provoked a profound reorganization of the party system, and the rise of extra-institutional mechanisms of political participation, through a plurality of workers' cooperatives and large protest movements of unemployed and underemployed (the *piquetero* movement),[161] grassroots associations, and unorganized citizens (Auyero 2007). Women's large participation in these protests and community organizing before and during the crisis is often understated, as much as the nature of some of their demands. Women *piqueteras*, women-led

---

[159] De la Rúa was then leading a coalition government between members of the UCR and progressive Peronists opposed to Menem's neoliberal agenda, called *Frente País Solidario* (Solidarity Country Front, FREPASO).

[160] For Javier Auyero, lootings operated under a logic of routinized, informal networks formed by the Peronist movement-party through clientelist relations between grassroots militants, union leaders, political brokers, political elites, and police forces (Auyero 2007).

[161] The *piquetero* movement is mostly composed of grassroots civil associations and citizens from the most impoverished sectors—mostly unemployment or underemployment—who organize since the late 1990s and particularly since 2001, to demand work opportunities and direct social assistance. Forming mostly urban and suburban social movements, they usually protest through road blocking ("*piquetero*" as picket lines), but also *ollas populares* (soup kitchens) and hunger strikes (Rauber 2002).

community and grassroots organizations were during this time of crisis, politicizing popular

sector women's living conditions and oppression, demanding inclusion as plain subjects of

rights—including through access to contraceptive methods, abortion, economic inclusion, and

protection from violence (Barrancos 2013; Green Rioja 2024; Rauber 2002; Sutton 2010).

In the aftermath of the 2001-2002 crisis, unemployment and poverty reached

unprecedented levels, jumping from 38.8% in 2001 to 53% in 2002 (Fiszbein, Giovagnoli, and

Adúriz 2003, 144). Many workers, mostly men, became unemployed and both men and women

turned to the informal labor sector to survive.[162] This climate of economic and social crisis paved

the way for the exhaustion of the political consensus around the neoliberal model, the downfall

of the historical center party of the UCR,[163] and the rise of the center-left faction amongst

Peronism, the *Frente para la Victoria* (Front for Victory) (Levitsky and Roberts 2011). Elected

with 22% of popular votes, President Nestor Kirchner's led one presidential mandate (2003-

2007), followed by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2011; 2011-2015), who would

continue leading forward a political project centered on human rights, as well as the political and

social inclusion of popular sectors. The "2001 crisis" would then become a powerful rhetorical

device during the Left Turn, as a collective blame attributed to neoliberalism and to reinforce a

political discourse centered on social inclusion, recognition, and redistribution (Muñoz 2009).

---

[162] Based on a World Bank study, 60% of Argentines lost all their private health coverage in 2001-2002 (*prepaga* and *obra social*)—and this rate jumps to 76% for individuals in the first income quintile (Fiszbein, Giovagnoli, and Adúriz 2003, 153).

[163] In the context of social, economic, and institutional instability where the major political parties (FREPASO, UCR, and PJ) retract their support to President De la Rúa, the Catholic Church seeks to play a role as mediator of a *concertación* between political parties and important economic and social players. In *El Litoral*. "El gobierno intenta sumar al acuerdo a gobernadores del PJ." August 12, 2001; *El Litoral*. "Diálogo por la crisis." December 19, 2001.

Following a decade of a socially conservative national government, an agenda centered

on the social and political inclusion of historically excluded sectors of society seemed to have

opened a new chapter for democratic citizenship in Argentina. Between 2003 and 2015, the

central state renewed relationship with social movements, including human rights, unions, and

class-based social organizations—but also, to some extent, feminist and LGBTQI+ movements.

Laws in the realm of reproductive health and rights adopted during this period have included the

state provision of contraceptive methods and family planning (2003),[164] sex education in public

schools (2006), the legalization of same-sex civil unions and adoption (2010), and the passing of

a gender identity law (2012), granting trans persons rights over their civil identification, as well

as public health coverage of hormonal treatments. During this same period, the national

government also shifted its policy approach to address gender-based violence more

comprehensively than the previous family violence law, by incorporating a gender perspective in

its policy approach (2009) and sanctioning femicides through the criminal code (2012).

Starting in 2009, during Fernández de Kirchner's first government, the expansion of the

social policy net targeted at poor women and their families marked another step towards the

incorporation of this historically excluded sector (Pautassi 2007).[165] Yet, along what seemed like

important challenges to maternalism and familialism, poverty-reduction social policy efforts on

the contrary, tended to reinforce them – particularly amongst popular sectors. In the first

Kirchner government, fueled by a commodity boom driving more generous redistribution, social

---

[164] In 2013, assisted reproduction was added to the menu of public options in terms of reproductive services.
[165] These included conditional cash transfers (CCT) for mothers (*Asignación Universal por Hijo para la Protección Social* (AUH)) and maternal health coverage *Plan Nacer* (Plan Birth) in 2009. An important CCT adopted in 2009 was the *Programa Ingreso Social con trabajo - Argentina Trabaja* (Social Income Program – Argentina Works), a program built for the incorporation of unemployed and informal workers to the formal labor market.

policies indeed encouraged low-income mothers to stay at home, care for their children, and

work in the informal sector (Lopreite and Macdonald 2013b).[166] Favoring a poverty-reduction

agenda over a gender equality agenda, the CNM is known to have shifted its agenda away from

gender mainstreaming towards social assistance delivery to poor women during this period

(Lopreite 2013).

Between 2003 and 2015 in Argentina, feminist and women's movement expanded in a

broad array of ideological currents and social sectors. This phenomenon labelled by Graciela Di

Marco (2010b, 17) as "the feminist people,"[167] constituted "a new articulation of popular

identities that holds alternative potential for reflecting on contemporary social

transformations."[168] Those diverse and multiclass movements strongly opposed Catholic

fundamentalism, demanding real *laicidad* (secularity)*,* and women's and LGBTQI+'s substantive

inclusion to citizenship. Forming an increasingly diverse set of networks and organizations,

popular women's movements, LGBTQI+, and feminist movements now pushed together popular

feminist agendas on reproductive rights and gender-based violence with increasing

determination. Indeed, the ENMs went from being attended by 4,000 women in 1990 to 15,000-

30,000 following 2000 (see Figure 3 below).

---

[166] To help alleviate basic material needs of the most socioeconomically deprived sectors, adopts the first *Plan Jefas y Jefas de Hogar* (Plan Heads of Households) in 2002—mostly targeting poor women. Other policies (*Plan Familias* (Family Plan)) from 2005 did not include conditionality from women except health and educational requirements for their children, granting a basic income to poor women while reinforcing their maternal roles as caretakers.
[167] "*el pueblo feminista*"
[168] Translation from Spanish by the author.

In this context of growing multiclass feminist alliances, abortion legalization became a key priority during the Left Turn. In 2003, the ENM in Rosario (Province of Santa Fe) marked the first step in the creation of the National Campaign for the Right to Free, Safe, and Legal abortions (thereafter, National Campaign).[169] From 2005 to 2020, the National Campaign engaged in a variety of institutional and street strategies to legalize abortions on demand,[170] including crafting bills, forming legislative coalitions, street protests, scientific publishing, and media visibility. Facing constant vetoes from the President Fernández de Kirchner, who was then
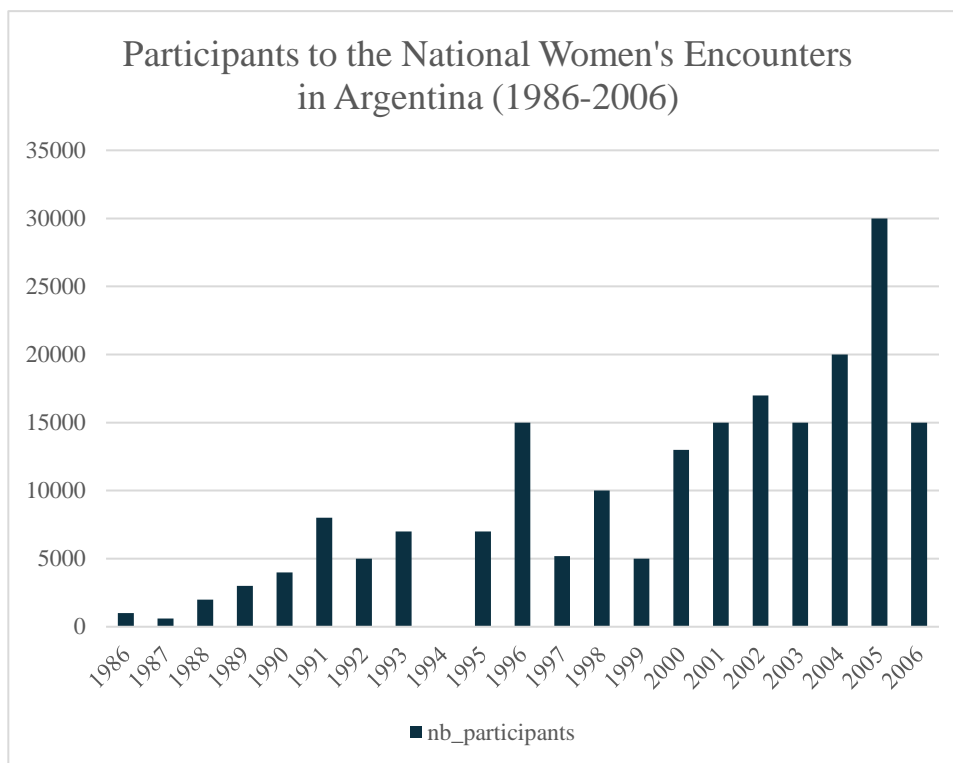
Figure 3. Participants to the National Women's Encounters in Argentina (1986-2006). Source: Assembled by author, using data from Alma and Lorenzo (2009) and additional archives from CedInci.

---

[169] *Campaña Nacional por el Derecho al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito.*
[170] That same year, in 2005, the National Campaign had collected signatures from all around the country of people supporting the legalization of abortion—and in 2007, the National Campaign reaches out to deputies, crafts a bill, and in 2008, obtain the signatures of 22 deputies who endorsed the bill (Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020).

opposed to abortion, the National Campaign continued its legislative work.[171] Next, I turn to

detailing the policy changes in reproductive health and rights (specifically, contraception and

abortion), and gender-based violence (specifically violence against women) during the Left Turn.

TOWARDS REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

       With the 2001 crisis, human rights and public health NGOs had been working actively to

expose the dramatic rates of maternal mortality, emphasizing the public health consequences of

clandestine abortions, particularly in the country's poorest provinces and amongst teens. NGO

reports and studies based on statistics and survey data sought to bring in the medical community

as a new ally, despite the strong anti-abortion stances taken by major medical associations,

including the Argentine Federation of Obstetrics and Gynecology Societies.[172]

       After a long legislative journey, in 2002, the National Program for Sexual Health and

Responsible Procreation[173] (PNSSPR) is adopted at the national level, granting men and women

publicly accessible sexual and reproductive health counselling and contraceptive methods

(Gogna and Zamberlin 2004). The adoption of the PNSSPR and its implementation established

contraception as a right—making reversible, non-abortive, and temporary birth control state-

---

[171] In 2011, the National Campaign introduces once more, a bill for the legalization of abortion on-demand—then until week 12 of pregnancy—to the National Congress, signed by 58 deputies from all the political blocks. After the approval of a dictamen from the commission of Penal Affairs, the bill was not treated in Congress. In Iglesias, Mariana. "Hoy Se Cumple Un Año de La Sentencia. Aborto No Punible. La Mayoría de Las Provincias No Cumple El Fallo de La Corte." *Clarín*, March 13, 2013, p.23.

[172] In a report published in 2003 titled "Los médicos frente a la anticoncepción y el aborto" conducted in hospitals of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area, CEDES and other NGOs reported a 48% increase in hospitalizations due to complications from abortion between 1995 and 2000, which overall occupied 45% of the hospital beds in obstetrics. The first survey showed that 65.3% medical doctors surveyed perceived abortion to be the most important public health problem amongst women, followed by contraception (51.2%). Based on the report presented, more than 80% of the surveyed medical doctors were in favor of decriminalizing abortion in specific circumstances beyond those accepted in the criminal code—and a somewhat lower proportion (38.5%) based on women's autonomous decision Navarra, Gabriela. "Usan Un Analgésico Para Producir Abortos." *La Nación*, May 19, 2003, p.2.

[173] *Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Procreación Responsable*.

funded and accessible through public healthcare.[174] Through the sexual and reproductive health counseling offices, usually composed of a multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals, patients could receive information, discuss their reproductive decisions, as well as receive a contraceptive method covered through the public or insurance system. These Counselling offices, overtime, became important sites for the implementation of legal, medical abortions and starting in 2020, abortions on-demand.

Facing strong opposition from the Catholic Church, the PNSSPR was presented as a public health measure, aiming to prevent unwanted pregnancies and above all, abortions—seen as particularly problematic amongst teenagers. The program thus emphasized the importance of "responsible procreation" more than framing access to birth control as part of women's bodily autonomy rights.[175] A major compromise with conservative opposition included the incorporation of the right to conscientious objection, granting healthcare professionals the legal right to refuse being medically involved in the PNSSPR, for moral, personal, or religious convictions.[176] Despite these caveats, the PNSSPR has nonetheless undeniably involved major challenges to the maternalistic regime in Argentina.

At the time, the National Campaign was emerging as a network of actors pushing for the legalization of abortion on demand, along with access to birth control and sex education. Meanwhile, therapeutic and ethical abortions were increasingly regulated by the Ministry of

---

[174] In 2004, private ("*obras sociales*") and pre-paid ("*prepagas*") medical insurances became obligated to cover for contraceptive methods as well (Resolution N310).

[175] As per the Minister of Health, "There will be fewer abortions, as this program focuses on prevention rather than promoting abortion," cited in Navarra, Gabriela. "Usan Un Analgésico Para Producir Abortos." *La Nación*, May 19, 2003, p.2.

[176] As an ex-National Deputy involved in the adoption of the law told me in an interview, conscientious objection would become one of the major obstacles to sexual and reproductive rights and a major tool used by anti-abortion sectors (Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020).

Health, through protocols and guidelines—at first, following a harm-reduction approach, but increasingly, recognizing the existence of unpunishable abortions in the criminal code.[177] The Ministry of Health went even further by publishing in 2007, the first national *Guide for the implementation of non punishable abortions*.[178] This change of vocabulary between "post-abortion care" and "non punishable abortions" signalled the beginning of a shift from harm reduction based on gendered individual responsibility, to human rights approaches in abortion care policy. Following legal mobilization led by feminist NGOs, in 2012, the Supreme Court's decision in the case known as the "F.A.L.s" ruling, [179] reaffirmed the existence of three circumstances of exception to the criminalization of abortion: abortions realized when the woman's health or life is in danger, in case of rape, or for pregnant women with a disability. The Supreme Court indeed recalled the state's obligation to provide unpenalized abortions to the population, leading to the creation of the second Technical Guide for the Integral Attention of Non-Punishable Abortions in 2012.[180]

The F.A.L.s ruling signaled an important degree of institutional support for lawful abortion access and care – as grassroots feminist organizations were starting to provide access to

---

[177] In 2005, the Ministry of Health adopts a Guide for the Improvement of Post-Abortion Care (*Guía para el mejoramiento de la atención post aborto,* Resolution N989/05), supported by medical professional associations, human rights and women's rights NGOs. If the 2005 protocol did not yet reinforce the legality of certain abortions, it nonetheless provided clear instructions to healthcare professionals regarding post-abortion care through humanized treatment, emphasized the right of patients to confidentiality, and reaffirmed women's right to take decisions over their fertility. Organizations that supported the protocole included the *Sociedad de Obstetricia y Ginecología de Buenos Aires* (SOGIBA), the *Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad* (CEDES), the *Asociación Argentina de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva* (ASSER), the *Centro Latinoamericano de Salud y Mujer* (CELSAM), the *Asociación de Médicos Generalistas*, the *Sociedad de Obstetricia Psicosomática*, and the *Departamento Materno Infantil del Hospital Nacional "Prof. Alejandro Posadas."*

[178] Román, Valeria. "Abortos: Sólo 3 Provincias y Capital Aplican La Guía Oficial. Rige Desde 2007 y Dicen Que No Tiene Difusión." *Clarín*, July 24, 2010.

[179] Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina (2012).

[180] *Guía Técnica para la Atención Integral de Abortos No Punibles*.

abortions as well in different parts of the country.[181] The *Socorristas en Red – feministas que abortamos* (Network of Caregivers – Feminists Who Abort, SenRed), grew as a federal network of grassroots feminist organizations and hotlines, applying a common method and relying on World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines to insure safe abortion access. The F.A.L.s ruling provided autonomous feminists additional institutional support to reach out to "friendly" healthcare professionals and workers, who would collaborate and assist women in their pre- and post-abortion care, if they needed and desired so.

Over time, these informal networks between autonomous feminists and healthcare workers transformed into the *Red de profesionales de la salud por el derecho a decidir* (Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide, RPDD), which begun operating more officially in 2014 approximately, to increase access to legal abortions in the public healthcare system (Burton 2017a; 2017b; Keefe-Oates 2021).

FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

During the Left Turn, at the national level took place the incorporation of a gender-perspective to and a broadening of the previous family violence agenda, and more emphasis was placed on increasing women's access to justice and assistance services. This process occurred in response to NGOs and feminist movements' demands for a change in policy approach through the CNM, to acknowledge the gendered nature of violence committed in families and beyond.[182]

---

[181] In fact, it is important to mention that grassroots feminist organizations have been for a long time accompanying clandestinely women in their abortions, despite a criminalizing legal framework. For example, *Lesbianas y Feministas por la Descriminalización del Aborto* and *Socorro Rosa* both emerged in 2009. The latter was created by the feminist collective La Revuelta, in the province of Neuquén. Both accompanied women experiencing gender-based violence and later, inspired by Italian feminists in the 1970s, provided information and accompaniment to women seeking to abort through medication (Grosso, Trpin, and Zurbriggen 2019; Szwarc 2024).

[182] In 2005, the numbers collected by the Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo were astonishing: between 30 and 40% of women were considered victims of domestic violence in Latin America. In Argentina, aggressions occurred in 1 couple in 5, and 42% of femicides were committed by women's intimate partners. In Sousa Dias, Gisele. "Buscan Frenar La Violencia de Género Con El Monitoreo Electrónico de Los Agresores." *Clarín*, July 27, 2006,

In 2004, the Supreme Court of Argentina, particularly through the leadership of the Vice-President Elena Highton de Nolasco, created the Women's Office and the Domestic Violence Office (*Oficina de Violencia Doméstica* OVD) in the city of Buenos Aires, which would become an important institutional actor shaping the state feminist agenda on violence against women.[183]

In 2009, the Front for Victory government led by Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, adopted the Women's Integral Protection Law to Prevent, Sanction, and Eradicate Violence against Women in the Areas where they Develop their Interpersonal Relations (LPIM) (Law 26.485).[184] Law 26.485 adopted a conceptualization of violence against women as a socio-cultural problem embedded in gender inequalities. The law incorporated violence committed in both the public and private spheres (including the workplace, the media, the state, and since 2015, the street), and recognized its multiple manifestations (psychological, sexual, reproductive, symbolic, economic). Beyond married and common-law spouses, the new law now addressed violence against women in all interpersonal relations. It involved new emergency judicial measures imposed on perpetrators following complaints and its conceptualization of violence against women was now firmly grounded in unequal power relations between men and women.

The LPIM remained primarily embedded in the civil rather than the penal code,[185] and emphasized assistance and protection measures, public awareness campaigns, and transversality

---

sec. Información general. Newspaper Archives La Capital, Rosario, p.14. In 2007, the CNM publishes a report that groups data from 50 civil society organizations specialized in family violence, concluding that between 80-90% of aggressors are male spouses, cohabitees or former partners. In Ferreyra, Pilar. "Una de Cada Tres Mujeres Dice Que Padece Violencia Familiar." *Clarín*, February 20, 2007.

[183] In 2009, a report published by the Supreme Court showed that psychological violence was greatest form of violence amongst the 4,643 complaints the OVD in Buenos Aires had received—and that a third of the victims were children or adolescents (Calvo 2009).

[184] *Ley de Protección Integral para Prevenir, Sancionar y Erradicar la Violencia contra las Mujeres en los Ámbitos en que Desarrollen sus Relaciones Interpersonales*. The law was amended in 2015 to include street harassment (Law 26.486).

[185] Criminal offences in the penal code in Argentina include threats, injuries, and physical violence.

across ministries. Its implementation involved a complex set of municipal, provincial authorities in health, social services, police, judicial, and women's offices, coordinated by the CNM. Yet, it is also around that time that the concept of femicide was adopted by NGOs working on GBV in Argentina. Starting in 2008, the NGO Casa del Encuentro in Buenos Aires creates the first register of femicides[186]—pressuring the state to begin collecting official data on violence against women and femicide, from a gender perspective.[187] In 2012, the national state incorporates "aggravated homicide" any homicide committed by a man against a woman, motivated by gender violence. Criminal sanctions for gender-based murders of women—or femicides—were increased through Law 26.738, with the goal of sending a stronger message to the judicial system and society regarding the gravity of violence against women.

Soon, however, feminist movements and NGOs became increasingly vocal about the LPIM's implementation problems, and specifically, the lack of gender perspective amongst public servants and judges.[188] The President of the NGO Casa del Encuentro indeed argued: "It is a social and cultural phenomenon. The lack of training among some judges leads to horrifying sentences being handed down."[189]

In addition, demands were made to turn to more preventive approaches, to tackle women's empowerment and capacity to emancipate themselves from violence. In the 2010s,

---

[186] *Observatorio de Feminicidios Adriana Marisol Sembrano*.

[187] For Haydée Birgin, president of the Equipo Interameciano de Justicia y Género, the lack of state statistics on the problem itself constituted the first problem to tackle. In Schamun, Candelaria. "Datos Oficiales. En Dos Años Crecieron Un 35% Las Denuncias de La Violencia." *Clarín*, November 10, 2011, sec. Información general. Newspaper Archives La Capital, Rosario, p.3.

[188] Including ELA, Amnistía Internacional Argentina, Mumalá, FEIM, MEI, CEDES, and Casa del Encuentro, also demanded the implementation of public policies as part of the obligations formulated in Law 24.485.

[189] Schamun, Candelaria. "Datos Oficiales. En Dos Años Crecieron Un 35% Las Denuncias de La Violencia." *Clarín*, November 10, 2011, sec. Información general. Newspaper Archives La Capital, Rosario, p.3.

different programs for victims of violence specifically targeted at women from extremely socioeconomically marginalized groups started emerging, as preventive and assistance measures. These preventive programs included employment and entrepreneurship initiatives, such as the Program *Ellas Hacen* (Program "Women Make"), adopted in 2013. As a sub-branch of the employment social policy *Argentina Trabaja* (Program "Argentina Works"), Women Make aimed at providing victims of violence living in economic precarity a 6-months financial support, as well as to increase their social and human capital through formal labor in state-recognized workers' cooperatives, many of which had emerged following the 2001 crisis. In 2015, the program reached 92,420 women, distributed across 2,897 workers cooperatives (Arcidiácono and Bermúdez 2018, 4).[190]

In all, during the Left Turn, at the national-level, feminist movements successfully incorporated a gender perspective into the previous family violence policy agenda. Additional policy efforts materialized through the slow growth of networks of assistance and assistance policies for women as victims – as well as a new concern for the sanctioning of the most extreme form of violence against women committed by men in the context of unequal gender relations: femicide. In addition, contraception, family planning counseling, and since 2012, slow access to legal abortions, seemed to have challenged Argentina's pro-natalist and maternalistic paradigm, by providing individuals, and women and persons with reproductive capacities, with more opportunities to take autonomous reproductive decisions.

---

[190] In practice, the program remained centered on "pre-cooperative work," including only training and developing women's human capital, rather than providing employment (Arcidiácono and Bermúdez 2018).

THE POST LEFT TURN FEMINIST UPRISALS (2015-2020)

After two decades of Center-Left Peronist rule, the Center-Right coalition of *Cambiemos* entered the national government in 2015, and President Mauricio Macri remained in power until 2019. Despite relative continuity in most pre-existing national-level gender equality policies, some of them suffered institutional and social delegitimating, as well as budgetary retrenchments. Under a climate of austerity, gender equality was not promoted as a government priority; both the CNM, main coordinating agent of GBV policies and the National Ministry of Health were downgraded to the status of Secretaries of State (Coenga-Oliveira and Chabot 2024).

By the end of the Left Turn, defenders of a more preventive approach had been arguing for better-funded public policies, through victim-centered approaches to assistance, particularly amongst impoverished sectors, but also for real normative changes in society.[191] It is only in 2016 that the National Supreme Court published its first National Registry of Femicides,[192] which tracked an increase in femicidal violence in the country. For Supreme Court Justice Highton de Nolasco, this trend indicated that "the policies have not been sufficient, and more and more policies need to be designed" to prevent and eradicate violence against women.[193] Still, civil society organizations had harshly criticized the 2014-2016 violence eradication plan launched by the CNM, for the policy was limited to domestic violence, lacked precision regarding the financial resources to be attributed, and did not include a "proper diagnostic" of the situation.[194]

---

[191] Gilberti, Eva. "Violencia de Género. Superar La Desinformación y Los Prejuicios." *La Capital*, June 3, 2011, p.8.
[192] *Registro Nacional de Femicidios*.
[193] *El Día*. "La Plata también marchó contra el machismo y la violencia de género." November 20, 2016.
[194] Iglesias (2016).

On June 3rd, 2015, following the femicide of Chiara Páez in Rufino (Province of Santa Fe), more than 250,000 people protested in the National Congress square chanting "Not one Less,"[195] denouncing ongoing violence against women and state impunity regarding the sanction of gendered crimes. In the face of the massive feminist mobilizations and growing concern over femicide rates, in 2016, the National Government launched the National Action Plan for the Prevention, Assistance, and Eradication of Violence against Women,[196] to be executed by the CNM in collaboration with the Ministry of Modernization. With a budget of 750 million pesos, the plan included the construction of refuges and microcredit initiatives, but its novelty rested on the incorporation of new technological devices aiming to improve compliance and control over emergency measures imposed by the Courts on perpetrators of violence, especially for cases evaluated as being of high risk of femicide: the anti-panic button[197] and the electronic ankle monitor.[198]

With the Ni Una Menos movement highly mobilized, femicides were increasingly made visible in the public and mediatic spheres. On April 2017, Micaela García, 21-years old, was raped and assassinated by Sebastián José Luis Wagner in a small town of the Province of Entre Ríos. Wagner had been liberated from prison following a judicial order, despite two negative evaluations of behavior.[199] Again, marches were organized throughout the country to denounce

---

[195] *"Ni Una Menos."*

[196] *Plan Nacional de Acción para la Prevención, Asistencia y Erradicación de la Violencia contra las Mujeres.*

[197] Resolution 12/2015. Interestingly, anti-panic buttons were made mandatory in private neighborhoods and country clubs' alarm systems since 2010 (Disposition 2/2010)—that is, 5 years before they were employed as measures of protection for women.

[198] Resolution 5/2018. The devise consists of a geo-localized electronic ankle monitor for perpetrators that is linked to both police centers and a cellphone app for the victims. Through the app, both the police and the victim receive an alarm if the perpetrator violates a judicial order of distance and emergency services are activated for his detention. Other countries in the region adopted this type of measures, including Uruguay, Brazil, and Chile.

[199] The young woman was politically involved in the *Movimiento Evita*—a Peronist student movement—and the Ni Una Menos movement. The murderer had only a few days before the attack, received conditional liberation from the prison of Entre Ríos, where he was purging a 9-year sentence for sexual assault on two women in 2010. In *La*

the leniency of the judicial system in granting anticipated releases from prison in cases of condemnations for sexual assault. Like never before, social outrage placed the judicial system under the spotlight for its role in reproducing a system of impunity. From this event were made increasingly visible different positions on the role of the criminal justice system in tackling and stopping patriarchal violence.[200] As a result of Micaela's family mobilization and pressure from the women's movement, the Law "Micaela" (Law 27.499) was adopted in 2018, imposing mandatory gender perspective trainings throughout the public service.

In 2018, as the National Congress debated abortion legalization for the first time, feminist movements against GBV and for abortion rights converged into massive mobilizations known as the Green Tide. If the bill to legalize abortion on demand was rejected in the Senate, feminist movements all around the country continued, if not intensified, their efforts to legalize it—and conservative resistance also intensified under the anti-abortion movement *Salvemos las dos vidas* (Save the two lives). Between 2018 and 2020, the National Campaign also worked on increasing access to safe abortions, lobbying legislators, producing scientific knowledge and information on abortion, transforming political organizations from the inside by tackling gender-based and sexual violence within them, and denouncing state impunity. Together, the Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide and the Socorristas en Red would make legal abortions increasingly accessible, both inside and outside the public healthcare system.

Then, in 2019, Argentines would vote back to power center-left Peronism, in a Kirschnerist coalition called *Frente de Todos* (Front of All), led by President Alberto Fernández.

Capital. "Micaela Murió Estrangulada El Día Que Desapareció: Resta Establecer Si Fue Violada." November 4, 2017. Newspaper Archives Biblioteca Argentina, Rosario.
[200] For example, the NGO *Mamá en Línea*, pushed for a modification of Law 24.486 to remove the possibility of conditional freedom for those condemned of sexual assault.

To distance himself and his party from their Center-Right predecessors, Fernández created the Ministry of Women, Gender, and Diversity and in 2020, introduced a government bill on the legalization of abortion. In the middle of the covid-19 pandemic and strict sanitary restrictions, the National Congress finally adopted the Law 27.610 on Voluntary Pregnancy Interruption[201] on December 30th, 2020, effectively legalizing abortion on-demand until week 14 of pregnancy and maintaining ethical and therapeutic abortions decriminalized in subsequent weeks.

To conclude this second section of the chapter, the adoption of different policy instruments reflects a general expansion of the Argentine state's involvement and implementation of international women's rights, particularly during the Left Turn. Between 1994 and 2012, Argentina adopted anti-family violence, anti-violence against women, and femicide laws to tackle gender-based violence committed in both the private and public spheres. The changes between the 1994 and 2009 national policies reflect a turn towards a gender perspective, with the 2009 law more aligned with the 1994 Convention of Belém do Para. In turn, the 2012 amendment of the criminal code, which typified the gender-based murder of women as an aggravated homicide, constituted a step towards the eradication of multiple and extreme forms of violence against women. When it comes to reproductive rights, the adoption of the PNSSPR in 2003, granted all men and women free birth control and counseling in reproductive health through the public healthcare system, sex education law (2006), as well as the increasing regulation of lawful abortions to increase access to the practice – all demonstrate an expansion of bodily autonomy rights.

---

[201] *Ley de Interrupción Voluntaria del Embarazo (IVE)*.

Still, the rise of the Ni Una Menos in 2015 and the Green Tide in 2018 reflected an incomplete fulfillment of this agenda during the Left Turn. Regarding gender-based violence, the 1994 and 2009 laws are considered as relatively inefficient in addressing violence against women, as the new law "fails to address the most critical shortcomings of the original law, and there is no evidence that it will be more effectively implemented, given the absence of resources for the CNM to coordinate the implementation" (Franceschet 2010, 3). Regarding reproductive rights, feminist movements perceived the refusal to legalize abortion until the year 2020, and the weak enforcement of the laws on sex education and contraception, as impediments to their full inclusion to citizenship (Lopreite 2022; Montoya 2019).

In the next and last section of this chapter, I show that part of this puzzle can be explained by an element that has been, although with important exceptions (see Franceschet 2010b; Lopreite 2020; Ruibal 2018b), partly understated in the literature in political science: the role of subnational context in shaping the incorporation of international women's rights agendas.

"DIOS ESTÁ EN TODAS PARTES, PERO ATIENDE EN BUENOS AIRES"[202]

The second interview I conducted in the beginning of my fieldwork in early 2020 was with a feminist lawyer who volunteered for one of the most well-known organizations working on violence against women in the capital city of Buenos Aires. As we were discussing in a downtown coffee shop, my interlocutor mentioned: "There is a phrase that you might have heard, "God is everywhere, but he attends in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires."[203] She continued: "Unfortunately, it is like that. I mean, people from the provinces come here, for the healthcare

---

[202] "God is everywhere but he attends in Buenos Aires."
[203] Interview with member of NGO working on violence against women. In person, in Buenos Aires, January 22, 2020.

system and for everything." As she later clarified, my interlocutor referred to what she saw as major institutional and material inequalities between the capital city and the rest of the country, affecting people, and in this case, women, in their access to basic state services.

In this last section, I show that the historical territorial heterogeneity in familialist and maternalistic arrangements – and its impacts on contemporary feminist policymaking and movements – has been understudied in the study of feminist politics in Argentina. Indeed, national-level perspectives and research designs still predominate, despite the historical involvement of subnational governments, including provincial and local, in the gendered regulation of families, reproduction, and labor markets. This last section argues that territorialized features of the Argentine state and society, shape to a greater extent than acknowledged, the feminist politics of gender-based violence eradication and reproductive rights. I thus introduce a subnational research design to the study of gender justice regimes, to account for these intersecting and territorialized mechanisms of social exclusion.

Tensions and inequalities between the provinces and the national government in Argentina can be traced back to Spanish colonialism and have marked 19th century state formation (López-Alves 2020; Soifer 2015). Historical divisions between "*federales*" (provincial political elites and *caudillos*) and "*unitarios*" (centralizing political elites in Buenos Aires) were resolved through internal wars in the early 19th century in which unitary forces have prevailed, leading to a seemingly highly centralized federal institutional arrangement (López-Alves 2020; Soifer 2015). Yet, the expansion and modernization of the Argentine state (1880-1930) has also institutionalized territorialized racial, class, and gender inequalities between the "center" largely

populated by White criollo elites and "peripheries," especially the northern regions inhabited by a greater proportion of Indigenous, African descent, or darker-skinned persons (Helg 1990).

Since the early state formation period, however, provincial governments have had some administrative power over the regulation of their labor force, affecting their inhabitants' lives – including through the regulation of their intimate and family relations and reproductive behaviors. In some provinces, such as the Province of Buenos Aires, forced labor and slavery remained legal until 1861, while in the northern regions of the country, it remained a common practice until the 1890s (Edwards 2017; Guy 1985). In turn, these social cleavages and institutional arrangements have provided a context for the institutionalization of various, territorialized forms of maternalism and familialism throughout the country, enforced through provincial civil and administrative codes and state institutions. As historian Donna Guy (1985) shows in her illuminating study based on different provinces' civil court archives:

> A poor woman in Córdoba in the 1830s could be forced to build roads or make candles. In Jujuy at the same time she would have been put out to work by police or judges, a possibility that existed in Tucumán until 1896. In contrast in the coastal region where women were not considered an important element in the major economic activity of cattle raising, poor females were rarely arrested for vagrancy and put to work only if convicted of crimes other than poverty. These regional differences, added to class considerations, formed the basis for distinctive treatment of women's work by Argentine provincial governments until the passage of the national civil and commercial codes. (Guy 1985, 319)

Local and provincial civil courts and police in Argentina were thus historically important institutional arbiters of family relations and sexuality in post-independence Argentina, mostly in relation to the Nation's economic necessities. As Guy (1985) argued, in the northern regions of Argentina, throughout the 19th century lower-class families were not understood as "private spheres," and provincial states' breaching of *patria potestas* for forced labor attribution of

women and children – often as domestic servants – were frequent. The different gendered,
classed, and racialized regulations of the labor force thus varied across the territory.

Although generally centralized, Argentine federalism has experienced important
transformations since the last democratization process in 1983, deepening territorialized social
inequalities. Throughout the 1990s, Argentina's turn to a "water-tight compartment" federalism
model has allowed provinces to either adopt, partially adopt, or disregard a national law, and has
determined shared competencies in many policy areas. These decentralizing reforms resulted in
the provincial adoption of social and health policies with a wide variation in their depths and
coverage scopes (Lopreite 2020; Smulovitz 2015). In turn, these neoliberal reforms have granted
more administrative powers to the provincial governments and private actors, in education,
social, and health policy, while generating high provincial fiscal imbalance and inequalities in
the province's capacity to autonomously implement them.[204] With a growing burden in public
service provision, most saw significant increases in their public deficits and debts, poorer
provinces have remained highly fiscally dependent on Buenos Aires (Gervasoni 2010a, 2018).
While being a federal state, Argentina thus remains highly fiscally centralized, shaping power
inequalities between "center" and "peripheral" provinces and the latter's capacity to lead their
own policy agendas (Leiras 2010, 2013).

The literature has shown how decentralized and asymmetric federalism have shaped early
feminist efforts to legislate on women's rights. In the 1990s, given the impossibility of advancing
a reproductive rights agenda at the national level, feminist movements turned to provincial

---

[204] During the crisis, deeply indebted provinces delt with pressure from the Minister of Economy Domingo Cavallo
to reduce spending and deficit, increasing political tensions between provinces—particularly the Peronist
governors—with the De la Rua government. In *El Litoral*. "Cavallo no ayudará a las provincias desprolijas."
February 7, 2001.

governments, and between 1991 and 2001, 15 provinces out of 23 provinces adopted sexual and reproductive health programs, centered on family planning and access to contraceptive methods (Chabot 2021; Lopreite 2013).[205] The implementation of the PNSSPR by provincial authorities often suffers from varying degrees of strong political and social opposition within provinces (Brown 2008; Piscopo 2014). Yet, if provinces hold no jurisdiction over the legality of abortion – due to its embeddedness in the criminal code, since the 2012 Supreme Court Ruling F.A.L (Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina 2012), the national government and some provinces started adopting regulatory protocols to ensure the implementation of then legal, therapeutic abortions. Even following the 2012 F.A.L ruling, only a minority of provinces had fully complied with the Supreme Court's instructions to adopt a protocol for the implementation of lawful abortions (Ruibal 2018b). Moreover, conservative NGOs have been successful in using litigation, especially by targeting local and provincial courts, in blocking women's access to reproductive health services in different provinces (Peñas Defago and Morán Faúndes 2014). Moreover, provincial electoral competition and different levels of women's organizational capacities have during the 1990s generated significant variation in the content of domestic violence laws across jurisdictions (Smulovitz 2015). During the 1990s and following the 2009 law, as detailed earlier, many new judicial services were concentrated in the City of Buenos Aires, leaving important policy gaps in the interior of the country.

Consistently with these insights, during my fieldwork, territorial inequalities in policy implementation were seen by many participants interviewed as a crucial problem to address. For Mabel Bianco, president of NGO FEIM in Buenos Aires, the Federal Health Council should play

---

[205] Since the decriminalization of family planning and contraception in 1985, only small-scale provincial and municipal initiatives had put in place publicly funded programs to access those services.

a role in ensuring a uniform implementation of national health policies and specifically, the

Supreme Court Ruling throughout the country: "The right to health cannot be understood in each

province in a different way."[206] During another interview in Buenos Aires, an ex-President of the

National Women's Council described the judicial system in Argentina's provinces of the interior

as infused with greater patriarchal conservativism, revealing what she perceived as a clear

influence of the Catholic religious dogma on the judiciary's law enforcement. When I asked her

how this conservatism manifested specifically, she marked a distinction between the capital city

and the interior of the country:

> When you travel to the provinces, in every office there is a cross. I am deeply religious, but my religion affects me, and in any case, my dialogue with God. And that cross being there, when there is a family 'thing' telling you, 'Do not separate [from your partner],' or that cross being there judging you when it's a person imposing whether you killed someone or not, based on the evidence provided, it is impossible to separate religious from the judicial. And here it is pronounced, but in the provinces, it is a hundred times stronger.[207]

For my interlocutor, if religious conservatism was present everywhere in the country, it

was worse in the interior. In relation to Tucumán specifically, another participant understood the

province as a "feminist battlefield" against deep conservatism in provincial elites.[208] A similar

remark was formulated by another participant, from Santa Fe: "A girl who is vulnerable at 11

years old in the province of Santa Fe is one thing, but in Tucumán, she is extremely more

victimized."[209] Going back to the common expression "God attends in Buenos Aires," I noticed

how territorial inequalities between "the center" and "the interior" were not only framed as

material, but also *cultural*. Who were my interlocutors referring to, when speaking of "people

---

[206] Iglesias, Mariana. "Hoy Se Cumple Un Año de La Sentencia. Aborto No Punible. La Mayoría de Las Provincias No Cumple El Fallo de La Corte." *Clarín*, March 13, 2013, p.23.

[207] Interview with member of NGO working on violence against women. In person, in Buenos Aires, January 22, 2020.

[208] Interview with ex-President of the CNM. In person, in Buenos Aires, February 25, 2020.

[209] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

from the interior"? What subject-positions did this expression produce, when pronounced from Buenos Aires—and which assumptions did it contain regarding territorialized power inequalities in Argentine feminist movements and policymaking? This division between people from the provinces and people from the capital revealed processes of subjectification, but also reflected unequal state reach and the territorial structuring of social inequalities in Argentina.

The symbolic making of the interior, or *interiorizing*, in the Argentine context and particularly when it comes to the northern, poorer provinces and to some extent, the southern parts of the Greater Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, also known as *Conurbano*,[210] overlaps with discursive processes of racialization. As a psychologist from La Plata, the capital city of the Province of Buenos Aires who long served in the public service, unions, and feminist organizations on gender-based violence recalled:

> Tucumán is outrageous. Well, Santiago del Estero was like that too when we went. […] Women talking about having children with their fathers, and one of our colleagues had a pressure drop. We had to take her to the hospital. What do we do with this? […] And these 200 women, there were a lot of them. So that was the problem in that place, nothing else. Child trafficking. Right? [Inaudible]. But well, it was part of the culture of that place. We got trained after, because incest prevention was a symbolic job.[211]

What had struck my interlocutor, as she recalled an event she experienced twenty years ago, was not only the scale of violence experienced within households in these Northern provinces, but also the types of particularly morally repulsive violence that they were confronted to, including incest and child trafficking. My interlocutor indeed underlined how these expressions of violence were "part of a culture of the place"—thus marking a distance between what she perceived as hers and her colleague's culture and another culture—that of the North.

---

[210] I provide a more detailed description of the *Conurbano bonaerense* in Chapter 4.
[211] Interview with member of Foro Feminista. In person, in La Plata, February 3, 2020.

The cultural argument formulated to discuss patriarchal oppressions in the northern provinces of Tucumán and Santiago del Estero shed light on the construction of these populations as culturally distinct, rather than a focus on the structural, historically constructed conditions underlying social problems.

However, if interiorization can be analyzed from the perspective of actors in Buenos Aires as processes of subjectification and otherization of women from the interior of the country, feminist activists and state workers from the interior I spoke with during fieldwork often contested and challenged those representations. How people from the interior referred to themselves and their political environments revealed how they re-problematized feminist concepts and struggles from their context. These discursive challenges unveiled different meanings and logics of individual and collective mobilization around feminist issues than the ones observed in "the center." These challenges also reflected how actors from the interior understand power inequalities in their own country as territorialized, contributing to feminist problematization of reproductive rights and gender-based violence from a different perspective.

How my interlocutors from the interior felt and perceived Buenos Aires' relationship to the provinces was also visible through a perception that public policies implemented in their province were sometimes inadequately imposed from above. In Tucumán, members of a well-known human rights NGO critiqued the imposition of categories and approaches from Buenos Aires, and a lack of inclusion and participation of local actors in their design and implementation:

> Our perspective is that policies are designed over there in Buenos Aires, without consultation, without looking at other realities, without taking federalism into account, and without a clear budget either. So, they are conceived there, and when

they arrive here, they come without filters. And here they are applied in a... complicated way. No one really understands what that public policy is for, who is coming, who finances it, or what needs to be done.[212]

Feminist activists in different parts of the interior often reaffirmed their difference from Buenos Aires, and the importance of context-sensitive approaches to public policy – or as was often related, a *territorial approach* to gender equality.

By paying attention to the ways in which discourses on gender inequalities and oppressions interact with discourses *from* and *about* places, we can thus observe how policy actors' worldviews are shaped by their territorial positioning and specifically, how they build policy problems and solutions in a federal country with overlapping jurisdictions and heterogeneous socioeconomic realities. For example, this member of *Agrupación Familiares Atravesados por el Femicidio Federal* (Federal Group of Families Affected by Femicide), an organization grouping family members of femicide victims to demand justice and accountability, mentions how the organization chose to establish their main office in the capital city to get closer to political power, while insuring local appropriation and translation of their struggle throughout the country.[213]

As López Sandoval et al. (2017) argue, the *territorio* (territory) has become a commonly used concept by Latin American social groups to formulate demands or lead political action,

---

[212] Interview with member of a feminist and human rights NGO. In-person, in San Miguel de Tucumán. June 3, 2020.

[213] One participant mentions, for example, that: "We chose that our headquarters be in [the City of Buenos Aires], because we say that 'God attends in Buenos Aires.' So you go out to coordinate in Buenos Aires, but also ensure that each family member we have in Mendoza, Córdoba, and other places, appropriates what we carry and works in each province. Because if you don't go out to see what things are like in Tucumán, what things are like in Salta, what things are like in San Juan, we won't be able to, at least, sow the seed of doubt that not everything is so great, that it's not all Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires is not the center of the universe; we need to look far and wide and make sure it's federal so that it can be fulfilled, at least" (Interview with member of Agrupación Familiares Atravesados por el Femicidio Federal (Federal Group of Families Affected by Femicide). Online, April 15, 2021).

confronting global forces against territorial anchored, place-based realities. As Tina Hilgers and

Laura Macdonald (2017a, 2) put it, in Latin America "identity and place matter to the structure

and experience of violence." In other words, who people are—their class, gender, race, age—and

where they are physically located shape both their experience with violence as well as the

structural and institutional resources that they can access to be safe. In fact, feminist indigenous

women in the region have also theorized the female body as a site of colonial and capitalist

oppression, as well as resistance through the notion of "*cuerpo territorio*" (body-territory)

(Trentini and Pérez 2021; Hartviksen 2021).

Importantly, for the women organized in marginalized neighborhoods that I talked to, it is

the crisis of neoliberalism that generated a recentering and repositioning of the locus of their

political action back to their local communities and territories. As this women's rights activist

from the Province of Buenos Aires tells me:

> When 2001 came, we lost full employment, but we also lost many of the things we
> had achieved. There was a paradigm shift in Argentina in 2001, and we left the
> nation, we left the national and continental stage to focus on the territory.[214]

Thus, the territory, as an ontological device to redefine politics from the grassroots, also

intersected with class and race divisions within feminist movements. In this interview conducted

with a member of a civil association in the Southern Conurbano of Buenos Aires, my interlocutor

highlights how geographic and political location fundamentally shapes her worldview and that of

those who live in the capital, particularly since the 2001 crisis:

> I have very good relationships with the feminists. You understand? But I know of
> feminism in the provinces. I was shaped by feminism in the provinces. I have great
> friends in the Capital. But I have differences with the Capital. It's not a difference
> with the feminists themselves, but rather about how the Capital looks at the suburbs,

---

[214] Interview with activist from Socorrista en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 15, 2021.

meaning, that crossing the General Paz [circumventing road surrounding Buenos Aires], you don't exist, you understand? We, generally in La Matanza, are personal, quite genuine, quite organized, and we have been shaped by feminism, by feminists from the Capital and feminism from the provinces. We are daughters of a network of convergence. Fortunately, I came from the base ecclesial communities, so I come with a certain imprint, and we are privileged, we were born in that era, we have feminism and we are feminists, but we have a job. First, we were faithful to the community. I think we were among those who started and wanted to differentiate ourselves from the Capital. The Capital is very academic. It's very white and very bourgeois.[215]

As this excerpt shows, my interlocutor's context largely shaped her sense of belonging to popular feminist movements, as an ambiguous space between Catholic women's movements from the interior and "bourgeois feminisms" from the Capital. If geographic proximity with the capital city is important in the *Conurbano*, for my interlocutor, her upbringing and early sense of community with feminists from the interior, has deeply shaped her sense of belonging. This sense of belonging is primarily attached to a strong connection to the place and her community in La Matanza, but also more broadly with popular-sector, often racialized women – either of Indigenous, African, or mixed descent.

In all, differentiation from Buenos Aires is rooted in historical trajectories and how subnational actors build their local identities and mobilize collectively. Women's territorial and social positioning constitutes feminist issues differently, from the margins (see hooks 2015[1984]). In that sense, by decentering analysis of policymaking to the "interior," we get to understand how context shapes the way policy subjects, objects, and places are socially and politically constructed. Moreover, because women's rights are inserted in global phenomena and frames—such as global political economy, regional and international human rights frameworks, and transnational social movements—they cannot be analytically confined to the boundaries of

---

[215] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

nation-states (see Schwedler 2021).[216] As detailed previously, women's rights are inserted in a web of international and regional social networks and legal frameworks; their local manifestations, interpretations, and enactments are thus embedded in multilevel legal documents, norms, and meanings that reach beyond the Westphalian national state. For the past two decades, the incorporation of multiple scales of analysis, from the global, national, to the local has broadened our analytical lenses over the political (de)construction of the "intimate" (Yuval-Davis 1999; Fraser 2009). Accounting for discourses and practices at different scales allows incorporating the web of actors that contribute to the problematization of women's rights. This approach can indeed capture and distinguish how context-specific discourses relate to, interact with, and challenge those that actors adopt at other "levels"— contributing to the problematization of the two issues of interest. This dissertation illustrates that women's rights are not simply transferred from the top-down, but actively constituted locally – in other words, that local, provincial, national, and international discourses are co-constitutive.

A focus on subnational gender justice regimes constitutes both a theoretical and methodological approach that unveils the everyday practices and discourses emerging within, across, and against a web of policy institutions, feminist movements, conservative sectors, and citizens that negotiate social recognition and power redistribution between members of society. As I show throughout this dissertation, this approach accounts for how gender-based violence and reproductive rights become political and policy problems, and the extent to which they can eliminate gendered exclusions, particularly for socioeconomically marginalized women. The

---

[216] For example, focusing on refugee camps in Lebanon to understand patterns of violence, Sarah E. Parkinson (2021)'s doctoral research involved "casing" social networks across changing territorial units. In her research, the configuration of relations changed over time according to the evolution of the conflict; it is those ties and networks that constituted her "cases"—and not the refugee camps themselves.

next and final part of this chapter dives in greater details, into the dissertation's subnational interpretive comparative research design.

A SUBNATIONAL INTERPRETIVE COMPARISON

Over the recent years, political scientists have started to embrace methods of comparison that move beyond the traditional positivist, John Stuart Mill-inspired comparative framework that dominates our discipline. Through what has been labelled as "comparisons with an ethnographic sensibility" (Simmons and Rush Smith 2017, 2021), interpretive comparison in political science challenges a dichotomic understanding of particularistic and universalistic approaches, and by the same token, reflects on the combined potential of interpretation and comparison. For example, a comparative attention to meaning invites us to pay attention to the reasons why policies successfully implemented in a given context fail dramatically in another due to different cultural references and practices (Yanow 2003) , or how different uses of "democracy" changes the logic of political participation and accountability in different areas of the world (see Auyero 1999; Schaffer and Schedler 2007; Wedeen 2007; Simmons 2016). Therefore, paying attention to the role of meaning, relations, and cultural contexts in which political phenomena unfold, has contributed to the study of major phenomena of interest in the discipline, such as political decision-making, collective mobilisation and political violence, or policymaking.

Given that context becomes key when deploying an ethnographic sensibility, choosing what and how to compare is a crucial component of the research design. Studying meaning in sociopolitical phenomena indeed poses questions on *how* political scientists should select their empirical focus – and for which scientific purpose they use comparison. Thea Riofrancos (2021) suggests that in interpretive approaches to political science, "cases" should be considered as

"sites" of analysis – studied as composed of multiple, crosscutting, co-constitutive political dynamics occurring at the global, regional, national, and subnational levels. In that sense, unlike "cases" as understood in Millean comparative methodologies, sites offer a view of the general not as per a logic of representativeness with regards to the issues that are being studied, but because they are *constitutive* of it. In this dissertation, comparison contributes to understanding how contextualized manifestations of neoliberalism shape social and policy constructions of reproductive rights and gender-based violence eradication – and in the ways through which different discursive universes situated in the interior of Argentina produce or challenge gender norms and inequalities.

The three provinces analyzed in this dissertation, the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Tucumán, offer an overview of overlapping policies of varying scope and content, reflecting the territorial discrepancies of gender regimes in the country (Chabot 2021; Franceschet 2010; Franceschet and Piscopo 2012). As Table 3 below shows, these three provinces offer a variety of legal settings and historical trajectories to explore the problematization of women's rights. The unit of analysis here is therefore not a policy or a law, but the human rights as political and policy problems. This approach allows understanding policies as a component among others (such as civil society organizations and the media), within the political construction of reproductive rights and the right to live without violence.[217]

In 2009, when the national law on integral protection for violence against women in all their interpersonal relations (Law 24.486) was adopted, most provinces adhered to the law, and it became the main legal reference superseding the previous framework on intrafamily violence.

---

[217] I discussed this earlier, in Chapter 2.

When it comes to reproductive rights, the policy landscape unsurprisingly reflects delays in their provincial incorporation. When the national policy was adopted, provinces who adhered to the national law began opening Counselling in Sexual and Reproductive Health offices in healthcare centers. Some provinces developed their own provincial programs of public access to family planning, contraceptive methods, and lawful abortion (prior to 2020), complementing national-level efforts. Other provinces never adopted the 2003 PNSSPR nor developed their own program, and many provinces also never adhered to national protocols for the implementation of unpunishable abortion (Chabot 2021; Schuster and Jurado 2006).[218]

The three chosen provinces were initially selected based on their adherence to national laws (when they have), as well as their own provincial legal frameworks on either or both issue areas. The three provinces indeed appear to have responded differently to the national incorporation of women's rights: either as pioneers, by developing their own policy instruments (province of Buenos Aires on violence against women), as close followers of the national agenda (provinces of Buenos Aires and Santa Fe on reproductive rights), as late adopters (provinces of Santa Fe and Tucumán on violence against women), or as non-adopters (province of Tucumán on reproductive rights) (see Table 3 below). These puzzling differences in the provincial incorporation of women's rights make them interesting sites to explore how feminist movements, states, and other actors have problematized these rights – sometimes obtaining key policy gains in one area but not in the other – and leading to the presence of different issue trajectories.

---

[218] Until today (2023), Tucumán's legislature has blocked the adherence to national laws or the adoption of provincial laws and programs on sexual and reproductive health, sex education, and gender identity—thus significantly limiting the reach of national level policies in the territory.

Despite an interest for exploring the reasons behind and the effects of those differences between issue trajectories for gender justice, I collected archival data and conducted interviews related to both issues in all three provinces. I did so to allow for the possibility of observing intersecting problematization processes. During data analysis, I chose to center on single issues in the provinces of Buenos Aires (gender-based violence) and Santa Fe (reproductive rights), given the richer data I had collected respectively around these issues, and because they illuminated different aspects of neoliberal legacies present in very different policy institutions. However, in the province of Tucumán, data analysis quickly revealed the institutional and social interconnectivity between anti gender-based violence and reproductive health policy, in reinforcing a regime of exclusion based on familialism and maternalism. I therefore decided to center Chapter 6 on these interlocked and interdependent problematization processes.

In addition to their distinct legal and policy frameworks, the three provinces have had different historical trajectories with familialism and maternalism, women's and feminist movements, left-wing activism, and social conservatism—which makes them insightful sites to analyze how subnational context, embedded in multilevel political dynamics, constitute gender inequalities in daily practices and discourses. I now turn to a brief historical overview of each empirical context, to further justify the site-selection strategy embraced in this interpretive comparative research design.

Laws and Public Policies (1990-2019) Province, Issue Area, and Year of Adoption				
Province	**Gender-Based Violence**		**Reproductive Rights**	
	Provincial	**National**	**Provincial**	**National**
Buenos Aires	Civilian measures of protection—exclusion from household (1998) Law 12.569 on Family Violence (2000) – amended in 2012; 2014. Law 14.509 on violence against women (amendment of Law 12.569) (2012)	Adherence to the National Integral Protection law on Violence Against Women (2016)	Provincial Program: Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation (2003) Provincial Protocol of Legal Pregnancy Interruption #1 (2015)	Adherence to law 25.673 "Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Procreación Responsable" (2003) Protocole #2 – Adherence to the national Technical Guide for Comprehensive Care in Cases of Non-Punishable Abortions (2016—repealed in 2017)
Santa Fe	Law 11.529 on Family Violence (2001)	Adherence to the National Integral Protection Law on Violence Against Women (2013)	Provincial Law 11.888 and Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation Program, (2003)	Adherence to law 25.673 "Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Procreación Responsable" (2005) Protocole #1 – Adherence to the national Technical Guide for Comprehensive Care in Cases of Non-Punishable

				Abortions (2009; 2012)
Tucumán	Laws 7.029 and 7.044 on Family Violence (2000) – amended in 2002; 2003; 2004; 2015; 2016.	Adherence to the National Integral Protection law on Violence Against Women (2009)	NA	NA

Table 3: Legal and policy framework in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and Tucumán (1990-2019).

Source: made by author using the Atlas Federal de Legislación Sanitaria de la República Argentina (2019).

The Province of Buenos Aires

Buenos Aires is Argentina's biggest province—geographically, economically, and demographically. Ranging from the industrial factory workers around the metropolitan area of the capital city of Buenos Aires, to the large agricultural landowners of the humid pampa, to the southern balneary city of Mar del Plata, the province hosts some of the richest as well as some of the poorest areas of the country. While the provincial capital, the city of La Plata, is situated at 55 km southeast of the city of Buenos Aires, the bulk of the province's population lives in the suburban areas of the country capital, the abovementioned *Conurbano bonaerense* (see Figure 4 below).[219]

---

[219] This metropolitan area is composed of 24 districts containing 40 municipalities that hosted, in 2010, around 35% of the country's total population which accounted for approximately 48% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) (Mariana Tallarico 2020, 4). The large socioeconomic disparities between the richer north and the poorer south as well as between the three "belts" of the Conurbano, can be traced back to the late 19th century. The northern city of San Isidro, from example, was historically a semi-rural for political and economic elites' vacation houses and remained one of the province's richest areas. Less than 30km south and south-west are some of the country's poorest areas, including the large municipality of La Matanza. The district of La Matanza, whose name could be translated to "The slaughter", has historically hosted the bulk of the country's working class—just like other municipalities, particularly in the South-West Conurbano.

The municipalities of the Conurbano have been, since the 1940s, strongholds of the Peronist party (the Justicialist Party, PJ), as well as Peronisms' affiliated unions and movements. Since the 1990s, the province has been consistently politically aligned with the national government: governed by a Center-Right Peronist governor in the 1990s (Antonio Cafiero (PJ), from 1987-1991; Eduardo Duhalde (PJ), from 1991-1999; and Carlos Ruckauf (PJ) from 1999-2002), during the Left Turn, its governors aligned with the Center-Left Peronist Kirchnerist agenda at the national level (Felipe Solá (PJ), from 2002-2007; Daniel Scioli (PJ), from 2007-2015)—or the center-right government of Cambiemos (María Eugenia Vidal (PRO), from 2015-2019). The government of María Eugenia Vidal, part of the governing coalition Cambiemos (2015-2019), is therefore the only non-Peronist government to have ruled in the province since the 1990s.

Receptor of large waves of immigrants in the early 20th century, mostly from Spain and Italy, but also internally-displaced Indigenous peoples and Black Africans descendant of enslaved populations, the South Conurbano area urbanized rapidly through a diversified economy, including beef slaughterhouses and refrigerators, textiles and automobiles, bricks manufacturing, as well as fruits and vegetable productions.[220] By the 1980s, with the exhaustion of the ISI model and the rise of neoliberalism, the internal migration accelerated, with a growing number of unemployed rural workers from the northern, poorer provinces of the country, as well as the neighbouring countries of Paraguay, Bolivia, and later, Peru, installed in the province

---

[220] At the heart of the Industrialization per Import Substitution (ISI) implemented by most classic populist leaders in the region between the 1940s-1960s, the development of a large working class went hand in hand with the growth of Peronist workers' unions as one of the major institutions and channels of social organizing and popular struggles (Kaufman and Stallings 1991). Ciudad Evita, for example, created in 1947 by the Eva Perón Foundation led by the first lady Eva Duarte de Perón, is a planned settlement for popular sectors, illustrating the first Peronist government's (1946-1952) strong emphasis on housing and labor rights. Interestingly, Ciudad Evita's urban planning seen from above reproduces Eva Perón's facial profile, illustrating the PJ's strong personalistic and populist appeal, particularly to working class sectors.

(Agostino 2014). Throughout the neoliberal decade, the degrading socioeconomic condition of working-class and poor sectors, has affected gender relations and family structures in important ways.[221] As the Conurbano reached 18.7% unemployment and subemployment in 2001,[222] the context of economic hardship and high unemployment forced many women to find employment in the more precarious informal sector.

Early on in the 1990s, through the leadership of Hilda "Chiche" González de Duhalde, the governor's wife, the province of Buenos Aires counted with a Consejo Provincial de la Mujer (Women's Provincial Council), a network of women politicians (and spouses of elected politicians) involved in the implementation of social policies in many municipalities of the province – articulating with base and community organizations. With a strong presence of Catholic grassroots organizations in popular-sector areas embracing Liberation Theology, women's movements often formulated class-based and human rights demands more than "feminist" agendas – usually associated with more urban, middle-class sectors. Throughout the 1990s, women's political and community organizing was reflected in community base organizing, as well as through state social policy, particularly, unpaid labor in community health and social service implementation (Masson 2004).[223] Additionally, the erosion of unions as vehicles of popular and working-class representation during the neoliberal decade would lead to the growth of highly mobilized social organizations, many of which affiliated with the PJ or

---

[221] By the late 1990s, the permanent household survey led by the National Institute of Statistics and Census of Argentina (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos de la República Argentina,* INDEC) identified 838,000 households under the poverty line in the Greater Buenos Aires (or 23.5% of the population)—among which 264,000 (7.4%) households, approximately 10.3% of the population, were in situation of extreme poverty (Alma and Lorenzo 2009, 121).

[222] *El Litoral*. "Más de 4 millones de personas tienen problemas con el empleo. En el país, totalizan 2.283.000 millones los desocupados." July 20, 2001.

[223] The figure of *Manzaneras* characterized unpaid, voluntary state workers – almost exclusively women – who worked for social and community health plans implemented in the province, such as the Plan Vida (Plan Life), providing alimentary goods and health services to pregnant women and mothers of young children.

different sectors of the Left (Garay 2007; 2010; Kasparian 2020; K. M. Roberts and Levitsky 2011). The "popular feminism" that has emerged in the province since 2001 thus involves a confluence of popular-sector women's organizations that challenge patriarchal oppressions as they mobilize, often as mothers, to improve their communities' living conditions (Di Marco 2010).

In all, the Province of Buenos Aires is a vast and heterogeneous territory with great degree of institutional and political complexity but with a solid trajectory of working-class and women-led, popular-sector grassroots mobilization with strong ties to Peronist governing elites, including but not only through Peronist vehicles of mobilization and Catholic grassroots organizations.
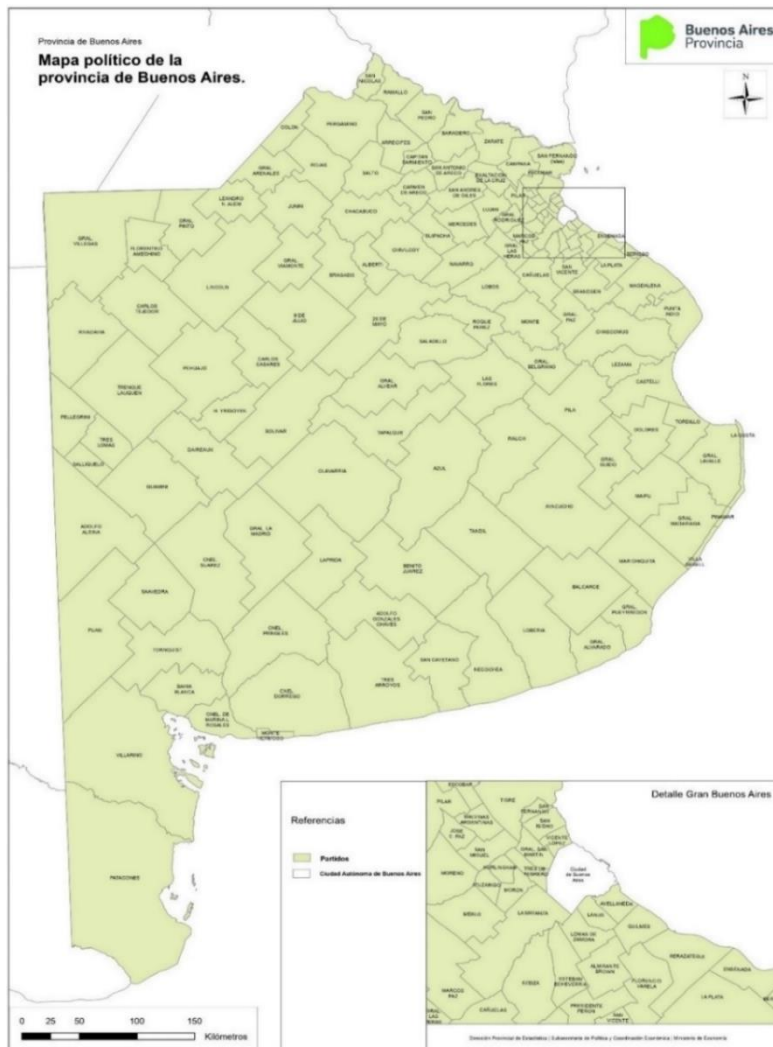
Figure 4: Administrative map of the Province of Buenos Aires. Dirección provincial de estadísticas. Mapa político de la provincia de Buenos Aires. [http://www.estadistica.ec.gba.gov.ar/dpe/Estadistica/ANU%202018/Mapas/1.%20Generalid ades/1.1.M.2.Division%20Politica.pdf]. Retrieved on: 2023-11-29.

The Province of Santa Fe

The Province of Santa Fe, whose capital Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz (thereafter, city of Santa Fe) is situated at 600 km north from Buenos Aires and is considered as one of the country's richest and core agricultural and industrial centers, following its southern neighbour of Buenos Aires. The core of the province's economic and social life is concentrated in the agro-industrial south, where the metropole of Rosario is situated. Traversed by the Paraná River, its

major cities—Rosario and Santa Fe—are where the bulk of the province's 3,3 million inhabitants

are nowadays concentrated (See Figure 7 below).[224] Connected with the port of Buenos Aires,

Rosario in particular has maintained important cultural, social, and commercial ties with the

federal capital.
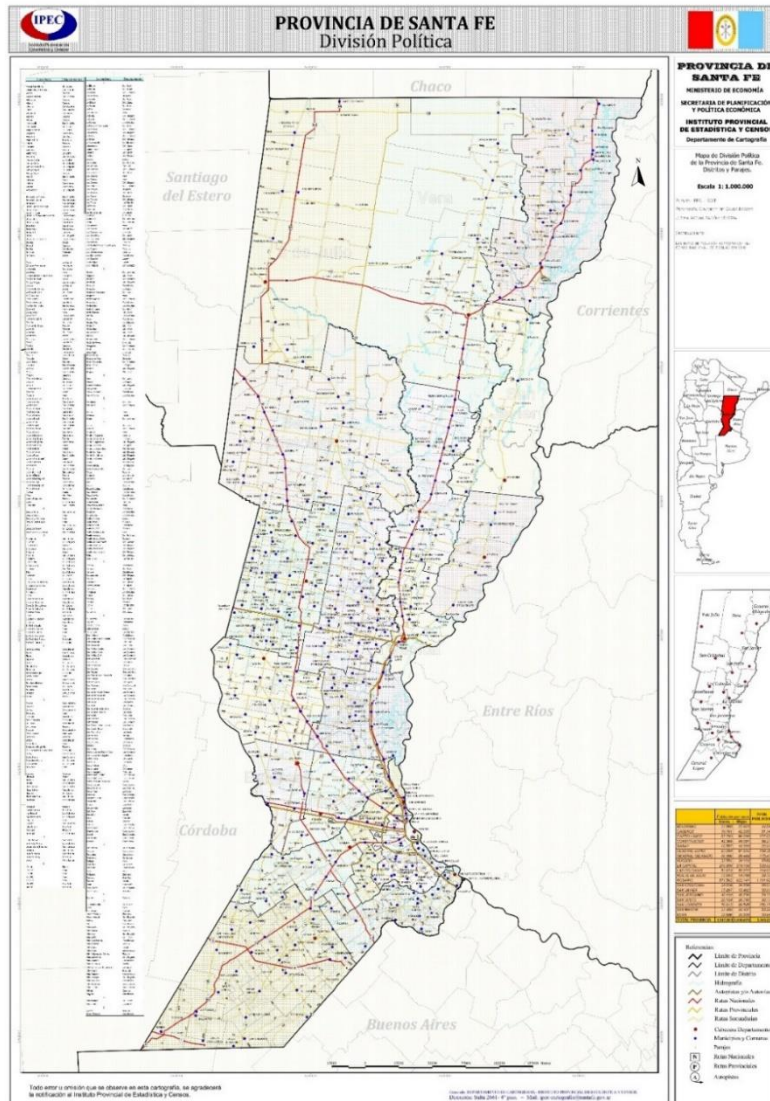
Figure 7: Administrative map of the Province of Santa Fe.
Source: Gobierno de Santa Fe. Mapa político de la provincia de Santa Fe. [https://www.santafe.gov.ar/index.php/web/content/view/full/185027/(subtema)/93664]. Retrieved on: 2023-12-01.

---

[224] Based on the 2014 census.

In Santa Fe, rural areas of the center and south developed in the late 19th century and have since been composed of mostly of European immigrant colonies, where Italian, Spanish, British, Swiss, and French immigrants populated the fertile agricultural lands. Yet, during the early 19th century, it was estimated that more than 50% of the city of Santa Fe's inhabitants were "*pardos y morenos,*" or darker-skinned African descent or mixed African European—and around 10% were enslaved (Candioti 2021, 58). Through the process of rural colonization in the late 19th century, Indigenous communities were either exterminated or displaced to the north of the province—where historically, cotton, sugar, and wood plantations were established. Since the late 20th century, many African and Indigenous-descent populations live in the outskirts of the province's major cities, in poor living conditions.

Since democratization, the *santafesino* party system has evolved in relative autonomy from national-level politics. Peronism in Santa Fe has had its own localistic tradition – embodied by Jorge Obeid in the 1990s—as well as one branch led by the personalistic leader and ex car-racer Carlos Reutemann, who embraced a socially and economically conservative agenda close to Menemism. During the 1990s and the early 2000s, Santa Fe these two figures alternated power, with Carlos Reutemann governing the province between 1991-1994 and 1999-2003, interrupted briefly by Jorge Obeid between 1995-1999. Yet, with the 2001 crisis and the national re-arrangement of partisan alliances, as well as a major flood in 2003 in the city of Santa Fe unleashing a major corruption scandal linked to Peronist authorities.[225] When the center left Peronist coalition Front for Victory came to power at the national level, Obeid returned as governor of Santa Fe from 2003 to 2007 as part of the governing national coalition led by Nestor

---

[225] Staring in the early 2000s, the dominance of local Peronism would erode. With the derogation of the List-based electoral law in 2004 (Ley de Lemas), which granted electoral advantage to Peronism, the PJ would get eclipsed from political power for one full decade (Rulli 2006).

Kirchner (Ramos and Vaschetto 2022). In 2007, however, the center-left coalition *Frente Progresista, Cívico y Social* (Progressive, Civic, and Social Front, FPCS), integrated by the *Partido Socialista Popular* (Popular Socialist Party, PSP) and members of the UCR, won the provincial elections and remained in power until 2018. This was a unique case in Argentine politics where the PJ (or factions of Peronism) and the UCR tend to alternate.[226]

Women's and feminist movements, particularly in the city of Rosario, have had a longstanding trajectory in the province since the return to democracy in 1983 (Bortolotti, Figueroa, and Viano 2018).[227] The growth of feminist movements in the province was reflected in the organization of multiple National Women's Encounters (ENM) and Regional Women's Encounters in different cities.[228] In the city of Santa Fe, the 1994 constitutional reform debates revived articulations and forged new networks of women's organizations opposed to the controversial inclusion of a clause on the right to life since the moment of conception.[229] In 1999, the *Multisectorial de la Mujer para la Accion* (Women's Multisectoral for Action) was created, connecting women from different social and political organizations.[230]

---

[226] The strength of the PSP in the province is largely due to its historical presence in the city of Rosario, who had been governed by socialist mayors since 1989. Héctor Cavallero governed the municipality during the periods 1989-1991 and 1991-1995; Hermes Binner during the periods of 1995-1999 and 1999-2003; Miguel Lifschitz between 2003-2007 and 2007-2011 (all under the PSP); Mónica Fein during the periods 2011-2015 and 2015-2019 and Pablo Javkin (2019-2023) under the FPCS. The party's growth to the provincial level, however, is largely due to strategic alliances with progressives within the UCR.

[227] Groups in the capital city such as *Acción Educativa*, *Grupo de Estudios de la Mujer*, AMSAFE, *Sindicato de Amas de Casa* were active, while in Rosario, March 8th provided an opportunity to form a *Coordinadora de Argupaciones* and gather women who are active in political social organizations and unions in the city.

[228] These encounters took place in 1994, 1995, and 1998, in the cities of Rosario, Santa Fe, San Javier, and Paraná, in the neighbouring province of Entre Ríos. In 1996 in Rosario also took place the first Encuentro Nacional Gay, Lésbico, Travesti, Transexual y Bisexual (National Meeting of Gay, Lesbian, Transvestite, Transsexual, and Bisexual People), as sexual and gender identities sought to create spaces to discuss the needs and experiences of their communities in a separate space than the ENMs.

[229] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.

[230] These organizations initially included *Acción Educativa*, *Sindicato de Amas de Casa*, *Organización Argentina de Mujeres Empresarias*, and *Mujeres de UPCN* (Busaniche, Kreig, and Rodríguez 2023). More conservative rural areas and cities, such as Reconquista and to a lesser extent, in the agro-industrial city of Rafaela, for example, also contain small feminist movements (Busaniche, Kreig, and Rodríguez 2023).

In sum, the Province of Santa Fe is a richer, central province and yet with a strong tradition of political and social autonomy from Buenos Aires —including in the political positioning of its governing elites during the Left Turn. Its strong local feminist movement, particularly in the city of Rosario, and the recent governance of a non-Peronist Center-Left coalition between 2007 and 2018 with strong influence of the PSP, provided *a priori*, a favorable environment for gender equality policy.

The Province of Tucumán

Tucumán is the smallest province of all three, both geographically and demographically. Situated in the North-West region, its total population in the 2010 census was of 1,448,188 inhabitants, among with 38% are concentrated in the capital city of San Miguel (see Figure 8 below). From the late 19th century to the 1960s, Tucumán was the country's most intensive sugar producing province. Initiated by a Catholic religious missionary in the 1820s,[231] sugar plantations and mills, known as *Ingenios*, have historically operated under a semi-feudal arrangement employing seasonal workers, including men, women, and children—in which only men heads of households were legally entitled to sign contract with their employers (Gutiérrez 2023).[232] *Zafreros* and *zafreras*, often of Afro-descendent or Indigenous descent, mostly came

---

[231] Bishop Juan Antonio de la Vega Colombres.
[232] Those workers in the North-West of Argentina have been historically known as *zafreros* and *zafreras*..

from the Andes' pre-cordillera area or the neighbouring provinces of Santiago del Estero and Catamarca, to harvest sugar canes in extremely poor labor conditions and with often a symbolic salary for a 6-months duration, before returning to their communities. In this context, women would, work as *zafreras* in sugar plantations, as domestic servants in owners' homes, or as professors in schools.

Figure 8: Administrative map of the Province of Tucumán.
Source: Educ.ar. Mapa político de la provincia de Tucumán.
[https://www.educ.ar/recursos/fullscreen/show/45260]. Retrieved on: 2023-12-01.

In the first quarter of the 20th century and up until the 1960s, rural workers would mobilize through anarchist and communities workers' unions at first, and Peronist unions starting in the 1950s. Women took part in workers' mobilizations, but remained generally marginalized within these male-dominated spaces (Gutiérrez 2023; Mercado 2016).[233] By the 1960s, given the increasingly lack of competitiveness of the Tucumán sugar industry and the abandonment of import-substitution industrialization (ISI), the bureaucratic authoritarian regime of Juan Carlos Onganía (1966-1970)[234] permanently closed fifteen sugar mills in 1966-1967. This left Tucumán's rural population largely unemployed and in extreme poverty (Pucci 2007).

By the late 1960s, the rural areas in the South of the province had become the nest of a Marxist guerilla group, the *Ejercito Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army, ERP), which organized in the rural areas surrounding the then abandoned sugar mills. As political and economic elites feared the growth of a revolutionary movement in the province, in 1975, the government of Isabel Perón launched the Independence Operation[235] intervening the province with the military leadership of General Antonio Bussi to suppress the guerilla group, then composed of approximately 250 active militants. A repressive military intervention was thus unleashed in the province to eliminate "subversive elements," and within only a few months the guerilla groups were dismantled, poor rural communities were targeted by the armed forces as potential national security threats (Jemio 2021). Since then, rural areas have slowly become abandoned following the mass exodus of unemployed *zafreros* and persecuted political leaders

---

[233] Anarchist and communist unions organized small workers' strikes in 1884 and 1904, but by the early 20th century, increasingly organized zafreros led forward their first major strikes in 1927. In 1961, following the rise of Peronism, the Peronist *Federación Obrera Tucumana de la Industria Azucarera* (Tucumán Workers' Federation of the Sugar Industry, FOTIA) organized a hunger strike in which 25,000 workers marched to Buenos Aires, in protest of their poor working conditions and unregulated remuneration. The FOTIA became the biggest workers union in Tucumán and has largely shaped Peronist party politics in the province.
[234] Also called the "Argentinian Revolution."
[235] *Operativo Independencia.*

who have moved to the outskirts of the capital of San Miguel de Tucumán, or reached bigger cities, such as Córdoba, Rosario, and Buenos Aires.

Despite the guerilla groups having been officially dismantled in 1975, repression continued and intensified in the province, with the instauration of the civil-military dictatorship (1976-1983). Following the military coup, General Bussi grew as a major figure of political authority, leading forward a totalitarian political project in the province. Repression of Left and Peronist activists throughout the military dictatorship reached unprecedented levels in Argentina's history and Tucumán was amongst the most harshly hit by disappearances, massive killings, and illegal detentions, particularly targeted at Leftist social activists, Peronists, unionists and workers, intellectuals, and students. Local economic elites, including the sugar plantation owners, actively collaborated with the provincial police forces and the military, transforming some abandoned sugar mills in clandestine detention centers. More than any other places in the country, the regime enforced in Tucumán between 1975 and 1983[236] resembled that of a totalitarian regime, where individuals' displacements, communications, and daily lives were under constant, heavy surveillance (Crenzel 1999; Nassif 2018).

In the context of the human rights trials which were carried out in 1985 during the Alfonsín government, ex-General Antonio Bussi was prosecuted and condemned to imprisonment for the illegal detention and murder of civilians. Following President Menem's amnesty decrees for military generals in 1990, the ex-repressor was however liberated and

---

[236] There is some degree of controversy over the "beginning" of authoritarianism in Tucumán; while the last episode of authoritarianism in Argentina is usually historicized as having begun in 1976 with the military coup, most scholars argue that in Tucumán, repressive and authoritarian measures were implemented as early as 1975, during the democratic Peronist government of Isabel Perón. I stick to this latter interpretation, given the scholarship produced on and in Tucumán specifically.

founded his own provincial political party. Throughout the 1990s, *Bussismo* would have succeeded in gaining wide popular support amongst Tucumanos (Colombo 2016; Crenzel 1999). *Bussismo* as a political force grew in Tucumán's legislature, eventually leading to his election as governor of the province through his right-wing, conservative party *Fuerza Republicana* (Republican Force, FR). In the early 1990s, Bussi's party was already a powerful force in Tucumán institutional politics, both in the legislature and by becoming Governor of the province between 1995 and 1999.[237] Starting in 1999, Peronism governed the province and since 2003, as part of the Center-Left Kirchnerist national coalition of the Front for Victory (2003-2019). Yet, governors Julio Miranda (1999-2002), José Alperovich (2003-2007; 2007-2011; 2011-2015), Juan Luis Manzur (2015-2019),[238] and Osvaldo Jaldo (2019-…), all from the PJ, would continue embracing a socially conservative agenda and hold strong ties with economic and religious elites.[239]

With the downfall of *Bussismo* in the early 2000s, the province has seen a constant increase in its democratic features—including in partisan competition and freedom of expression—as well as a high level of social protest (Arce and Mangonnet 2013). But the province is situated in one of the country's poorest regions and its rural areas suffer from a major lack of access to state services. The province has some of the country's highest infant and

---

[237] From 1991 to 1995, Fuerza Republicana held 35.7% of the seats in the provincial chamber of deputies, and finished second in the race to governorship, with 44% of the votes. FR's representation rose to 45% of the legislative seats during his governorship (1995-1999), and the ex-general had been elected with a generous 47.2% of the votes, defeating the two traditional parties, the PJ and the UCR (Atlas Electoral de Andy Tow 2023).

[238] During this period, the government of Tucumán stood in opposition to the national Center-Right coalition Cambiemos.

[239] Still, the existing literature does not clearly place Tucumán in the category of subnational authoritarian regime (Giraudy 2010) nor of subnational rentier-state (Gervasoni 2018).

maternal mortality rates, as well as high levels of poverty and unemployment—reaching an average of 19.5% of unemployment amongst women between 2000 and 2003 (Indec 2023).

In all, the strong presence of racial and class inequalities in Tucumán, along strong religious and conservative political forces make it a case where social and institutional and social resistances to feminist projects is the greatest of all three chosen provinces. Yet, Tucumán is also characterized by a history of activisms in the realm of workers' and human rights, as well as of an important center of women's and feminist activisms in the North-West.

CONCLUSION

The study of women's rights' incorporation in comparative politics has been, despite important exceptions, mainly theorized through a focus on national and international-level actors. Accordingly, since the 1990s, reproductive rights and gender-based violence laws in particular, generally appear as having gradually expanded and in Argentina, more importantly so during the Left Turn. However, as I argued in this chapter, historically-constructed territorialized cleavages – relating to both racial and class exclusions – are a key component of Argentina's political system and society since colonial times and early state formation. These structural inequalities are seldom accounted for in the study of gender policy in Argentina and particularly, how they play into the social and political construction of women's rights in different areas of the country.

In this chapter, I argued that neoliberal reforms in the 1990s have placed territorialized politics at the center of women's rights' incorporation in Argentina. First, by constitutionalizing women's rights and simultaneously decentralizing key social policy areas to the provinces, pre-existing, historical power arrangements between different sectors of society have become more

salient. As a result, subnational governments and social actors have gained protagonism in the problematization of reproductive rights and gender-based violence. Second, following the "crisis of neoliberalism" in 2001, territorial gender inequalities were incorporated as a key component of feminist struggles for women's rights, rescaling the logic of collective action to the subnational level in ways that have not been fully explored in the literature. Thus, the study of gender justice and injustice can be fruitfully scaled down to the subnational level, through what I conceptualize as the subnational gender justice regime.

In this dissertation, I therefore unpack how neoliberalism, through its ideological, institutional, economic, and social effects, has shaped the problematization of gendered issues often deemed "intimate" or "private" – including, how local actors interpret, negotiate, and incorporate reproductive rights and gender-based violence. These more subtle political battles would indeed go unnoticed for analysts who remain centered on national-level politics, where a "Left Turn" is known to have taken place. The following three chapters thus dive into three subnational contexts to unpack the incorporation of women's rights agendas in the interior of Argentina, through their distinct problematizations in the Provinces of Buenos Aires (Chapter 4), Santa Fe (Chapter 5), and Tucumán (Chapter 6).

***

Chapter 4: A "Purple Area" of Citizenship in the Province of Buenos Aires

Violence against Women and *Feminismo Popular*

INTRODUCTION

As the largest and most densely populated province of the country, home of some of the country's greatest socioeconomic inequalities, the Province of Buenos Aires (PBA) is considered a pioneer province in the adoption of measures to tackle violence against women in Argentina. Grounded in women's movements' activism since the third wave of democratization, the province adopted early on protection and assistance measures in the late 1980s, early 1990s, including civil precautionary measures[240] and Women's Police Stations. In 2000, the province adopted its family violence law, implemented starting in 2005. During the Left Turn, the provincial policy framework was complemented and expanded to tackle violence against women from a gender perspective, in both public and private spheres.[241]

Given this shift from a "domestic violence" policy approach during the neoliberal decade, to a "violence against women" approach during the Left Turn, what patterns of change and continuity have characterised the PBA's problematization of protection, assistance, and justice?

---

[240] Those are restraining orders and exclusion from the home (Law 11243/1988). Both are civil measures delivered by Family Courts.

[241] As detailed in Chapter 3, during the Left Turn and particularly the governments of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2007-2011; 2011-2015) the national state embraced a gender perspective in its policy approach to violence, by developing instruments targeted at women victims of violence, instead of encompassing all family members. The national and provincial governments expanded their assistance network services for victims (also known as the "critical route of assistance," increased access to justice measures, inaugurated specialized courts and prosecutors, and developed partnerships with civil society organizations working on violence against women. While suffering from budget reduction and institutional downgrading during the Center-Right government of *Cambiemos* (2015-2020), pressure from the Ni Una Menos movement allowed sustaining existing policies. In the recent years, the Peronist government of *Frente de Todos* (2019-2023) developed new preventive and monitoring policy instruments, which were all applied in the PBA, always part of the same governing coalition. However, since the temporal scope of the thesis is 1990-2020 the analyses is centered on the initial year of the *Frente de Todos* government (2019-2020).

How do women, and women's organizations, interact, contribute to, or challenge this regime, and what patterns of exclusion/inclusion emerge from these interactions? This chapter shows that despite the expansions of the gender-based violence policy framework beyond the domestic sphere, assistance, protection, and prevention policies in the PBA have remained largely centered on a thin definition of violence, which both feeds into and legitimizes an individualized, judicialized approach to gender-based violence, while eluding its structural roots. With a focus on the Greater Metropolitan Area—also known as the *Conurbano Bonaerense*[242]—this chapter illustrates that with judicialized assistance and protection, the state does too little, too late, and that existing policies are ineffective to put a stop to the ongoing rates of violence against women in marginalized spaces and sectors. In turn, women's organizations and survivors from popular sectors, living at the crossroads of structural and interpersonal violence, contest and challenge the state's fragmented gender justice regime as they navigate different forms of GBV in what I call, the "purple area" of citizenship.[243]

In the first part of the chapter, I show that assistance and protection policies still operate under a neoliberal logic of judicialization that only captures limited manifestations of violence and expressions of (in)security, responsibility, and risk. Existing psycho-social assistance, judicial and police protection, and prevention measures are thus porous, leaving unaddressed structural gender exclusions women experience in their lives, families, and communities. As I show in the chapter, instead of contributing to the eradication of GBV, judicialized protection and assistance tends to contain familialist legacies from the previous neoliberal era, and to

---

[242] The Conurbano presently hosts about 10.9 million people, representing around 25% of the total Argentine population, and 64% of the PBA's estimated population (CIPPEC 2024),

[243] I expand on this concept later in the chapter, but as a hindsight for the reader, I am here alluding to and gendering Javier Auyero's (2007) concept of "grey area of democracy." Purple refers to feminist movements, including the Ni Una Menos, who use this color to denounce and end gender-based violence in Argentina.

entrench binary understandings of "feminine-victimhood" and "masculine-violence" grounded in specific gender and class assumptions, leaving the most marginalized women unassisted and unprotected.

The second part of the chapter centers on the experiences of *feministas populares* in the PBA's Conurbano and capital city La Plata.[244] Through these insights, I illustrate how situated expressions of class, racial, and gender *violences* (in plural) in the province, both at the structural and interpersonal scales, form a "purple area" of political action for women in which they re-conceptualize gender-based violence and act politically to eradicate it. Women's agency in this purple area unfolds in a context of political entanglement between feminist movements, states, and traditional, class-based social organizations and parties, re-situating GBV on both structural and interpersonal scales (Pitch 2014). Popular feminists' collective responses to the dilemmas posed by these sometimes-contradictory spheres of belonging, constitute challenges to the state's neoliberal approach to violence, victimhood, risk, and agency—thus negotiating, at least at the local level, the province's gender justice regime.

FAMILY VIOLENCE UNDER NEOLIBERALISM (1990-2003)

In this first section of the chapter, I explore the early problematization of the PBA's "family violence" policies.[245] This section demonstrates that early debates on criminality and insecurity in the PBA, and particularly the Conurbano, shaped provincial policy agendas on

---

[244] I focus mainly on the experiences of a women's association working in GBV assistance, feminist activists' part of the Left *piquetero* movement, and activists employed in a Peronist worker's union. I do not claim that these experiences are representative of the diversity of popular feminisms within the PBA. Yet, together, they provide an overview of some experiences and illustrate some of the ways through which women situated at the intersection of different systems of oppression understand and navigate their environment.

[245] Linking back to Carol Bacchi's "What's the problem represented" approach (see Chapter 2), the first two sections of this chapter seek to answer the following questions: Question 1: What's the problem represented in the policies? Question 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (problem representation)? Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about?

domestic violence, seeking to address a supposed "crisis of the family" in poor sectors. While governing elites understood the "crisis of the family" as being enmeshed with poverty, drug consumption, and social marginalization – generating chaos and criminality in communities and families – security and domestic violence policies during the neoliberal decade explicitly sought to reinforce the traditional family unit. Yet, despite the Convention do Para emphasizing the prevention, sanction, and eradication of violence against women, in the PBA, a "tough on crime" approach strengthened provincial police forces in the management of violence – particularly violence committed in the public sphere, by young and poor men. This gendered and classed public security focus, combined with weakly enforced assistance measures for victims of domestic violence, rendered invisible popular-sector women experiencing domestic violence. As a result, impunity and state inaction regarding patriarchal violence in the "private" remained the norm, while women were subjectified as individually responsible for solving the "crisis of the family."

The early efforts to tackle the issue of domestic violence in the PBA took place as a socially conservative branch of the PJ was elected at the national and provincial governments, leading forward a decade of neoliberal reforms.[246] The highly popular Governor Duhalde, in power between 1991 and 1999, maintained strong ties with President Menem and tightly followed the national political agenda.[247] The earliest policies adopted in the PBA at the end of

[246] In 1991, Eduardo Duhalde is elected Governor under the banner of the PJ and in 1993 forms an alliance with the Movimiento por la Dignidad y la Independencia (Movement for Dignity and Independence, MODIN), a conservative Peronist party led by the former military Lieutenant Colonel Aldo Rico. Rico was one of the leaders of the rebellion of *Carapintadas*, who led military coup attempts against the democratically elected governments of Raúl Alfonsín and Carlos Menem, between 1987 and 1990. During the Constitutional Reform in 1994, he advocates for the inclusion of the anti-abortion clause in the Constitution (*El Litoral*. "Aldo Rico 'No nos impide hacer el país que queremos.'" August 23, 1994). In 1997, he becomes mayor of the city of San Miguel, in the PBA.
[247] Despite growing dissatisfaction with the economic situation, support for the Peronist government of Carlos Menem remained high in the province until the late 1990s, as Peronist unions renewed their support for the PJ in the 1995 national election. Peronism held strong control over social mobilizations and workers' unions through its

the 1980s centered on what was then called "family violence" and revolved around the protection and assistance of all family members against acts of physical and psychological violence.[248] In 1986, the PBA was the first province to modify by decree its Criminal Procedural Code and incorporate precautionary measures— restraining orders and exclusion from the home for perpetrators of family violence.[249] Then, two years following the brutal assassination of Alicia Muñiz by celebrity boxer Carlos Monzón in 1988, the province creates its first Women's Police Stations, composed of all-female police and staff that would receive domestic violence complaints.[250] In the early 1990s, according to the newspaper Clarín, 127 assistance centers were created in different cities of the province—forming specialized teams of female medical doctors, psychologists, and lawyers to assist the victims.[251]

Women's organizations in the province assisted women experiencing violence in their homes, but considered state services to be largely insufficient.[252] If feminist organizations demanded services for women addressing violence committed in their families, most political

---

clientelist apparatus, a structuring historical pattern in which the Peronist state maintained close ties with organized Peronist sectors of "civil society". Duhalde became interim President of Argentina between 2002-2003 in replacement of President Fernando de la Rúa, in the aftermath of the major crisis that hit the country. It is broadly acknowledged that the election of Nestor Kirchner to the presidency with a weak 22.25% of the votes in 2003 is in great part thanks to Duhalde's mobilization of Peronist clientelist networks in the PBA's Conurbano (K. M. Roberts 2006, 134; Sosa et al. 2022).

[248] Since the 1994 constitutional reform, like other provinces, the PBA is characterized by a highly decentralized architecture in health, security, and social services. Yet unlike in other provinces, these services are often implemented and managed by districts, through a complex web of local, provincial, and national funds and political networks. This largely decentralized health and social services provision institutional architecture renders policymaking a complex, multilevel process involving local, provincial, and national institutions—as well as civil society organizations.

[249] Decree 1174/86 modifying Law 11243.

[250] Ministerial resolution 4570/90. Between 1988 and 1991, 8 women's police stations were created are continued operating throughout the 1990s and 2000s (S. Calandrón, n.d., 27). Between 1988 and 1991, 8 women's police stations were created are continued operating throughout the 1990s and 2000s (S. Calandrón, n.d., 27).

[251]The list of cities included La Plata, Quilmes, Morón, San Isidro, San Martin, Florencio Varela, and Mar del Plata (Artusa, Marina. "No Habrá Comisarias Especiales Para Víctimas de La Violencia Familiar. ¿Quién Ayuda a Las Mujeres Golpeadas?" Clarín, February 26, 1993).

[252] For instance, in the City of La Plata, the only refuge for women victims of violence (Casa Abierta Maria Pueblo) started operating only in 1997.

elites and some NGOs advocated for a "family-centered" approach that would not exclude children and the elderly as potential victims.[253] The "Women's and Family Police Stations" constituted a compromise between feminist understandings of family violence to be primarily directed against women and familialist views who eluded the gendered nature of family violence. Despite the PBA's early policy efforts being acclaimed by most feminist organizations, organizations such as *Lugar de Mujer* denounced the lack of training of the personnel, reporting various forms of mistreatments towards women who resorted to police for assistance and protection. In addition, feminist organizations reported a weak enforcement of the judicial measures of emergency—as they argued, police commissioners were all men and "filtered" the complaints they deemed unimportant or non-urgent—thus most civil complaints that were filed never reached the courts.[254] Yet, with the adoption of the national law on family violence in 1994,[255] the province was urged to develop more assistance services—and to improve already-existing ones. In the PBA—just like other similar Latin American initiatives, for example, those adopted in Brazil—the police and judicial systems became the core institutions involved in the protection and assistance mechanisms for victims of domestic violence.

But as discussions on family violence were taking place, they soon became enmeshed in broader discussions about crime, poverty, and a supposed "crisis of the family." In the context of rising criminality during the 1990s, particularly stringent in the PBA's Conurbano, middle class

---

[253] Hilda "Chiche" González de Duhalde, the governor's wife, in charge of the Provincial Women's Council, advocated for the broader name "Family Strengthening Units" ("*Unidades de Fortalecimiento Familiar*") (Artusa 1993, Clarin, see doc 10. La Capital p.2; DSC5226). In Artusa, Marina. "No Habrá Comisarias Especiales Para Víctimas de La Violencia Familiar. ¿Quién Ayuda a Las Mujeres Golpeadas?" *Clarín*, February 26, 1993; *El Día*. "Sancionaron la exención de Ingresos Brutos y la creación del ministerio de Familia. Arduas deliberaciones en la Legislatura bonaerense. Reclamos de los radicales." March 25, 1994.
[254] Artusa, Marina. "No Habrá Comisarias Especiales Para Víctimas de La Violencia Familiar. ¿Quién Ayuda a Las Mujeres Golpeadas?" *Clarín*, February 26, 1993.
[255] Law 24.417.

citizens' sense of insecurity was on the rise and they increasingly mobilized to denounce the lack

of security in their neighborhoods, demanding more police presence (Saín and Barbuto 2002).[256]

Leading forward a "tough on crime" approach to security, the Peronist Governor Ruckauf (1999-

2002) had famously declared in 1999 that, "we need to shoot the criminals"[257]— representing the

Conurbano as both a dangerous place and one where the Rule of Law and basic human rights can

be ignored or curbed. That same year, Aldo Rico, an ex-military and repressor during the last

dictatorship, became Minister of Security in the province—strengthening the provincial police

force as well as developing measures of assistance services for victims of crimes.[258]

Meanwhile, feminist organizations demanded more direct state action to assist victims of

domestic violence specifically, pushing for the adoption of a provincial law that would have

more political weight than decrees and ministerial resolutions. It is in this context that Senator

Elisa Carca, along with the codirector of the *Centro de la Mujer* of Vicente López, emblematic in

assistance policies, presented a provincial bill on family violence to adopt and strengthen the

national law with provincial-level policy instruments.[259] When the provincial law was adopted in

2000 with unanimous support in the provincial Senate,[260] family violence was defined as "any

action, omission, abuse, affecting the physical, psychological, moral, sexual, and/or liberty of a

---

[256] *El Día*. "Echaron al comisario. Todo un barrio indignado por el brutal ataque a dos chicas." May 12, 2001; *El Día*. "Las calles están desiertas. El miedo y estupor del barrio que fue testigo del horror." June 12, 2001.
[257] Soriano, Fernando. "'Hay Que Meter Bala a Los Delincuentes', Su Polémica Propuesta." *Clarín*, November 30, 2015. https://www.clarin.com/policiales/inseguridad-palermo-ruckauf-meter_bala_a_los_delincuentes_0_SyWejyFw7g.html.
[258] Additional psychological and social assistance services were created throughout the province to assist individuals who were victimized in the context of crime. The Red de centros de asistencia a la víctima (Network of victim assistance centres, CAV) was created in 18 judicial departments of the PBA, in tribunals of the province, assisting and orientating victims towards psychological and legal services. While those centers attended all crimes, most complaints dealt with family violence and mostly women resorted to those services. In Caruso, Liliana. "Ya Funciona La Red de Centros Para Ayudar a Las Víctimas." *Clarín*, October 15, 1999, sec. Informe especial: Las marcas de la violencia. Newspaper Archives Biblioteca Argentina, Rosario, p.15.
[259] The Centro de la Mujer, Elisa Carca (UCR), and Susana Salerno (PJ) drafted the bill (*El Día*. "En la provincia. Se aprobó la ley que castiga casos de violencia doméstica." July 12, 2000).
[260] The law was not formally implemented until its regulation, in 2005.

person in the family group, even as it does not constitute a criminal offense."[261] If the law technically expanded the previous more limited definition of violence and the family, including actions not considered as a criminal offense—such as physical violence, death threats or homicide attempt, or sexual assault—the law involved civil legal procedures, primarily under the jurisdiction of family and civil law courts.

Feminist movements and organizations in the PBA had thus been successful in politicizing the private sphere and shedding light on the family as a potentially highly violent place for a significant number of women. Legislators celebrated the dismantlement of a "fine line" between the private and the public sphere.[262] As state intervention was becoming more important, the compiling, digitalization, and publication of judicial, assistance, and police statistical information now gave a quantified view of the scale of the problem. The province's emergency phone service recorded an increase in calls for assistance, from 1,128 in 2001 to 1,800 in 2002. In 2002, province's women police stations received around 30,000 complaints— and specialists estimated that this number represented only about 25% of the total cases, due to underreporting. In the year 2000, the PBA inaugurated 5 new specialized police stations, this time renamed "Family Police Stations," before being finally unified in 2004 as "Women's and Family Police Stations" (Calandrón 2008, 27).

For many women, including those I met during fieldwork, the 2001 crisis was a moment of profound subjective transformation, often sparked through community organizing, protest, and

---

[261] Law 12569/2000, art. 1. Moreover, families were understood as "groups originating in marriage or civil unions, including the ascendents, decendents, collaterals, and/or co-blooded, as well as convivientes o direct descendents of one or the other involved", considering as well present or past non-married couples and unions (Law 12569/2000, art. 2).
[262] "Legislative Session Diaries," October 30, 2000. Archive of the Legislature of the Province of Buenos Aires.

political awakening in which their intimate bodily and life experiences acquired a political

meaning. As Barbara Sutton argues:

> The crisis proved to be catalytic and many women spoke out clearly and loudly about the problems they were experiencing. As known ways of life and expectations crumbled, they challenged prevailing social relations and institutions such as the economy, the family, the state, and the Catholic Church. (Sutton 2010, 3)

For Sutton (2010), neoliberal reforms of the 1990s, which had heavily relied on women's

unpaid care labor and increased financial precarity, led popular-sector women to question

traditional gendered responsibilities and expectations, rendering visible social issues affecting

women, including gender-based violence, unpaid care work, and denied sexual and reproductive

rights. Emilia, an abortion rights activist from a southern town of the PBA that I spoke to, was

18-years old when she got pregnant. The pregnancy was unwanted. Her traumatic and lonely

experience with birth giving coincided with and the country's social crisis in which teenage

pregnancies became particularly visible in public health discourse, a context in which she

perceived as having allowed her to perceive her intimate experience as political, rather than

individual.[263]

Moreover, for impoverished women and their communities in the PBA to survive,

women organized collectively and proposed new models of womanhood through which they

politicized their bodies as sites of contention, negotiation, and resistance. But the crisis also

dramatically affected middle-class women, disrupting their studies, forcing them to take on

multiple employments, and re-orienting them towards different forms of political activities,

including women's movements. As this psychologist from La Plata, feminist activist and ex-

public servant told me, she had to interrupt her studies in 2001 due to the crisis, after needing to

---

[263] Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, April 15, 2021.

get three different jobs to sustain herself economically. It is her involvement with popular-sector organizations in the outskirts of Buenos Aires that, by hearing other women's experiences, understood the political importance of struggles for gender equality.[264]

Therefore, during the 2001-2003 crisis, through women's rising involvement in informal employment and grassroots community organization, gender relations in working class and popular sector families were deeply transformed—as well as their subjective understanding of the political (Jelin 2007; Molyneux 2010). Since then, the province has witnessed the rise of anti-neoliberal, popular-sector women's movements forging new alliances with feminist movements, under the label of "*feministas populares*"— or popular feminists—and whose intersectional demands center on poor women's access to basic service provision, formal employment, dignified living conditions, but also the legalization of abortion and the eradication of violence against women and LGBTQI+ (Di Marco 2010; Campana and Lashayas 2020).

In this context of rising women's social mobilizations politicizing their personal and family lives, political authorities increasingly perceived the murder of women in the context of family violence as "one of the most serious and recurring problems" in the province, contributing to its problem of insecurity and increasing homicide rates.[265] Yet, at a time where the state's security statistics were still gender blind, defining the root causes of family violence was subject to intense political debate in the media and amongst politicians. Ongoing problematization, even after the adoption of the law, involved determining who could constitute a victim, a perpetrator, and which policy instruments could adequately respond to the problem. Different discourses

---

[264] Interview with member of Foro Feminista. In person, in La Plata, February 3, 2020.
[265] The province's 12 Women's Police Stations, which had begun collecting and publishing criminal information showed that 55 homicides of women had occurred in 2002 (7% of all intentional homicides)—and 40 in 2003 (8% of intentional homicides).

surrounding the problem of family violence existed within the state, society, and the media but above all, increasing violence in both the public and the private sphere was perceived as linked to a "crisis of the family." Over time, this supposed crisis became associated with lower-class sectors; public criminality became associated with violence within families as part of a same phenomenon of moral disintegration of the Argentine society. Meanwhile, in a context of neoliberal reforms lower-class sector women coped with the important transformations in the labor force dynamics, including their own entrance to the informal labor market, as well as heightened economic precarity.

In the context of the 2001-2003 crisis, state actors indeed started associating the rising trends in domestic violence to poverty and social marginalization—arguing that unemployment had destabilized families, triggering an unstoppable cycle of violence within them and in the public sphere. In a report published by the Institute of Criminal Policy of the Attorney General,[266] it was stated that domestic violence was mostly due to "a combination of unemployment, family breakdown and exclusion that causes violence and often ends in crime," and domestic violence complaints represented around 30% of the total police consultations in the province.[267] The report concluded that the high rate of domestic violence, particularly in the Conurbano, "demonstrates a weakening of the family as a sphere of socialization, support, and care which later causes a negative impact on social coexistence and affects crime."[268] Individuals

---

[266] *Institute of Criminal Policy of the Procurator.*

[267] Similarly, the President of the College of Psychologists of Buenos Aires sustained that: "*In a context of increased job opportunities and effective prevention work on family dysfunctions and cultural preconceptions and customs, both violence and crime would decrease*" (La Nacion 2003, see doc 8 La Capital, p.11).

[268] The report also stated that the departments with the greatest rates of homicides perpetrated in the context of family violence were all situated in the Conurbano: Lomas de Zamora (24.9%); San Martin (14%), Quilmes (10%), and La Matanza (9%) (*La Nación*. "Violencia Familiar, Causal de Asesinatos. El 45% de Los Homicidios Dolosos Ocurridos El Año Último Tuvo Su Origen En Peleas Entre Parientes Directos o Entre Vecinos." September 4, 2003).

engaging in criminal activities, mostly small-scale robberies, were described in the media as "criminals," and "young men, unemployed, low-educated and close to drug and alcohol use."[269]

Yet, while most media coverage centered on criminality in the streets, public transporation, and local commerce, violence committed within homes or against family members or intimate partners was also getting increasing media attention and became intertwined with discussions on insecurity. Interestingly, Felipe Solá, then Governor of the Province, conflated violent behaviors committed through public criminality—he saw as motivated by survival — with violence committed in the family. Both were seen as rooted in the same causes:

> […] there is a degradation of society, an explosion of the family because of the increased neurosis of society linked to economic degradation, the loss of employment, and the impossibility of rebuilding as a worker and having security. The decision to engage in violence in the neighborhoods, in the neighborhood, against a neighbor or against one's family, is not so dissociated from the decision to move to violence to earn a living and this produces criminals willing to put their life on the line, who despise their own life and that of others.[270]

Therefore, politicians and state institutions problematized family violence as an issue of insecurity, linked to economic hardship and therefore, a problem associated with lower classes. Naturally, police forces and the judiciary, who were working together in the implementation of a more repressive approach to crime, were also central actors in the management of domestic violence.

Yet, during and after the 2001 crisis, both the PBA's police forces also became major sources of discontent in the population, who denounced crippling corruption, ties with organized

---

[269] At the time, it was reported in the media that 50% of the imprisoned population in the province was under 26-years old, among which 62% had been raised in Minor's Institutes (*El Día*. "Cada día es más precoz el inicio de los menores en el delito. Los chicos estaban cabreros." September 18, 1994).

[270] *La Nación*. "Violencia Familiar, Causal de Asesinatos. El 45% de Los Homicidios Dolosos Ocurridos El Año Último Tuvo Su Origen En Peleas Entre Parientes Directos o Entre Vecinos." September 4, 2003.

crime, the criminalization of picketers and police violence in poor neighborhoods.[271] Citizens

and human rights organizations denounced the police forces' high rates of homicidal institutional

violence—a pattern that came to be known as "*gatillo fácil,*" or quick trigger—as well as

ongoing torture and disappearances targeting particularly social activists (Alma and Lorenzo

2009, 122).[272]

In this context of mistrust against the institutions that were to enforce law and order in the

province and amid increasing poverty, some political elites, especially those deemed more

"progressist" or sensitive to class inequalities, also pushed counter-discourses to detach family

violence from discussions on poverty and challenge class prejudices. Yet, while these discourses

sought, they rarely involved a consideration of the patriarchal norms and gender inequalities

underlying more violence committed in families. For Deputy Amaro, sponsor of the bill, family

violence was neither a matter specifically related to gender, nor to class inequalities—but a

universal "evil" affecting all social classes and family members alike, but especially children:

> Family violence affects us all, cuts across all social strata and is not only an evil of
> our country, but also exists in the countries of the first world, despite the fact that
> they do not have unemployment problems, economic and social like ours. […] With
> this project we are settling a historical issue that, beyond being a gender problem,
> is something that concerns us all, because the family is everyone's, the children are
> everyone's and the children who die by terrible beatings are inhabitants of this
> Province.[273]

---

[271] By the end of the 1990s, the embeddedness of the PBA's and federal police forces in criminal organizations and networks had been exposed, and since 1997, major reforms of the provincial police forces were implemented, partly to respond to the growing social delegitimating they were experiencing (Dutil and Ragendorfer 1997; J. S. Calandrón 2008; S. Calandrón 2008; Frederic and Saín 2008). In 2001, in the peak of the crisis, 87 persons were killed in Buenos Aires and the Conurbano with the participation of the PBA's police forces.

[272] The Madres de Plaza de Mayo, for example, denounced police as murderers and torturers: "The provincial government led by Ruckauf proposes the construction of many prisons to fill them with picketers and the poor, especially from the Buenos Aires metropolitan area. The province of Buenos Aires has the most murderous and torturous police force. The rulers need it to crush any popular response" (Asociación Madres de Plaza de Mayo. "La Posición de La Madres En El Congreso de La Mujer," September 2001. CeDInCi).

[273] "Legislative Session Diaries," October 30, 2000. Archive of the Legislature of the Province of Buenos Aires.

Still, the security logic entrenched domestic violence policies, largely reliant on police and judicial protection of victims deemed vulnerable—women, children, and elders in heterosexual family arrangements—relied on a familialist norms that involved mandatory family mediation sessions. At the same time, violence against women remained largely normalized in the media and stripped from its patriarchal roots; in the local newspaper El Día, femicides were still treated as "crimes of passion" and seen as motivated by "jealousy or abandonment," instead of unequal gender norms and relations.

While domestic violence was now, by law, considered as an issue of public interest, those who experienced it—mostly women—were considered individually responsible for re-uniting the family and solving the "crisis of the family." State responsibility was to grant the victims sufficient resources to "solve *their* problems":

> The most important thing is the programmes of support and dissemination of information to victims. I say this because when we travel to the neighborhoods, we find that both women and children and the elderly, who are victims of family violence, do not know where to turn to solve their problems.[274]

In that sense, this policy approach speaks to neoliberalism's gendered relegation of social welfare to the family—here, where women are both invisible as victims of violence, yet made responsible for solving the crisis of violence in their families. Male violence, in turn, was only visible when committed in the context of public criminality, tackled through "tough on crime" approach to security, but rendered invisible in discussions on family violence. During the 1990s, men were thus "absent-present" actors in the problematization of domestic violence (Hearn and McKie 2009).

---

[274] "Legislative Session Diaries," October 30, 2000. Archive of the Legislature of the Province of Buenos Aires.

In all, despite addressing violence in the private sphere, politicians, state actors, and the mainstream media problematized and institutionalized family violence as an inherent consequence of the economic and social deprivation, leading to a loss of morality amongst popular-sector families. Indeed, on one hand, political elites associated rising unemployment, and poverty generated by neoliberal reforms with increased violence within both families and in communities. While women as victims of patriarchal violence were rendered invisible in the institutionalization of family violence laws and policies, they were also made individually responsible for solving the crisis their families and communities were experiencing.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE UNDER "POST-NEOLIBERALISM"

THE LEFT TURN (2003-2015)

The election of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner to the presidency in 2007, following the first Kirchner government between 2003-2007, came with two more mandates of Peronist governance in the PBA. Governor Daniel Scioli (2007-2011; 2011-2015), also part of the Front for Victory, maintained tight connections with the Kirchner.[275] In 2009, the national law 24.685 on integral protection of women was adopted, changing the way in which violence was legally conceptualized, now understood as being rooted in unequal gender relations, manifesting through different forms, and taking place both in the public and private spheres.[276] Yet, while the national

---

[275] At the time, Peronist-feminists—many of whom organized under the Evita Movement *(Movimiento Evita)* — were a growing political force in the PBA, working with the provincial Women's Council for the coordination and implementation of a gender equality agenda.

[276] As I covered more extensively in Chapter 3, the incorporation of a gender perspective to prevention, assistance, and sanction policies departed from the previous paradigm centered on family violence and addressed gender inequalities in *all* interpersonal relations and spaces—that is, at home, work, in the streets, and that perpetrated by state agents. This shift led to the adoption of a National Action Plan against Violence against Women *(Plan de acciones contra la violencia hacia las mujeres).* Only three years later, the murder of women by men in the context of GBV—colloquially known as femicide—was incorporated to the criminal code as an aggravated homicide.

law was considered a public law that applied to the whole country,[277] the PBA did not formally

adhere to the national law and its policy obligations until 2012.[278]

During the Left Turn, and particularly under the two governments of Fernández de

Kirchner (2007-2015), impoverished women and particularly mothers, were placed at the center

of social inclusion and redistributive agendas in Argentina.[279] This renewed interest for the

economic and social empowerment of lower-class women, and their role in the economic

development of their communities promoted by global development agendas, also influenced

how gender-based violence policies were designed, to increase their reach to lower-class women.

With the adoption of the new national law in 2012 in the PBA and a new national action plan to

eradicate violence against women, the security and judicial approaches that had dominated the

1990s and early 2000s would leave room for a new emphasis on the transformation of unequal

gender norms in society at large, as well as assistance and judicial services more sensitive to

gender power relations and more accessible to women in marginalized neighborhoods.

As the country was just starting to recover from the social, economic, and political

upheavals of 2001-2003, statistics revealed a dire situation regarding the extent and prevalence

of family violence—as it was reported that forty percent of intentional homicides in the province

had occurred in the context of domestic violence—and were committed by men against

women.[280] Women's organizations in the PBA had been pressuring the province to regulate the

family violence law adopted in 2000, and it was finally in 2005 that plans for new services of

---

[277] Laws of public order are those that "uphold the cardinal social, political, economic, moral, and religious principles of a legal community whose existence takes precedence over individual or sectoral interests" (Sistema Argentino de Información Jurídica 2009).
[278] Law 14.407/2012.
[279] See Chapter 3.
[280] *El Día*. "El dato. Números que reflejan la violencia familiar." November 26, 2005.

assistance materialized.[281] The lack of assistance services for women specifically denounced by women's organization and in the media placed additional pressure on provincial and national states to increase their services.

In fact, existing assistance services were concentrated in the center of cities, thus mostly accessible to middle and upper-class women living in central areas; the General Directorate of Gender Policy of the PBA specified that 70% of the complaints about family violence had been filed by middle and upper-class women.[282] Yet, impoverished women were perceived as more vulnerable to violence, thus needing a greater access to protection and assistance services. For the Directorate, if family violence was not an issue limited to lower socioeconomic sectors, poor women's greater economic dependency on their partners and their lack of access to state services increased their vulnerability to violence:

> In the middle and upper sectors they have more socio-cultural and economic intellectual resources to get out of the circle of violence. They do not have as much economic dependence as in the lower sectors and often have a place to stay if they leave the aggressor. In the lower sectors unfortunately the violence is more naturalized. And also after the complaint, women must return with the batterer because there is no other possibility.[283]

For the Assistant Secretary for Criminal Policy of the Supreme Court of Justice of the PBA, the solution rested in bringing the justice system closer to impoverished neighborhoods, through decentralization of services:

---

[281] Interview with Coordinator of Health Secretary, Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. In person, Lomas de Zamora, April 25, 2022.

[282] The fact that the provincial government collected this data in 2005 is surprising, given that this was prior to the adoption of the national law on integral protection that explicitly requested government institutions to collect gender-sensitive data. These early data collection efforts were however conducted under the provincial family violence law, adopted in 2000. This initiative is coherent with the fact that Buenos Aires has been, overall, a pioneer province in the adoption of family and gender-based violence eradication policy instruments (see Chapter 3).

[283] Elustondo, Georgina. "Datos Oficiales de La Provincia de Buenos Aires. Violencia Familiar: Un 70% de Las Denuncias Son de La Clase Media." *La Nación*, November 10, 2005.

The high number of queries received from very diverse subjects means that before people did not have adequate access to justice. We have opened offices in different municipalities to decentralize the work. There are places where justice is present for the first time. In them we serve all the people who are close, and if any conflict does not correspond to our specific area, we refer it. If not, we seek a solution or we judicialize. The state must again become an ally of the people of scarce resources since wealthier sectors of society have other means.[284]

Impoverished women thus became, for the first time in family violence policies, at the center of problematization as subjects to be supported, instead of invisible or responsible for their own safety. With the adoption of the provincial law regulation, exclusion from household and restriction orders on the perpetrator were complemented with a network of institutions and measures of assistance for women, children, and other members of the family who experience violence.[285] In other words, gender-based violence had been "mainstreamed" to other ministries and departments at different levels of the state. The creation of "critical routes" of services involved articulating state institutions[286] with municipal women's areas, organizations, and communities as a safety and assistance net for the victims. The decentralization of assistance also involved the creation of institutional mechanisms of articulation and communication between local institutions (schools, primary healthcare centers, Women's Police Stations, and family courts) and civil society organizations involved in addressing GBV (women's NGOs, associations, and community centers).

The provincial Ombudsman's Office was also created to provides free legal counseling, and the protocolization of police procedure.[287] In the following years, the province would

---

[284] *El Día*. "La violencia familiar sigue en aumento en nuestra región. En La Plata se pasó de 400 a 500 consultas por el tema; coinciden datos provinciales." June 17, 2003.
[285] Adopted in 2001, law 12.569 also involves the obligation for schools, hospitals, and the justice system to report violence against children specifically.
[286] These included the provincial and national Women's Councils, Ministries of Security and Justice, as well as the Ministry of Social Development.
[287] Law 13.834 (2008) and 14.883/17.

inaugurate new Women's Police Stations (reaching 24 in 2020) and by 2008, guidelines and procedures were adopted for police officers to assist women experiencing violence, reduce revictimization, and properly evaluate risks of escalation. By protocol, all police officers in the province were instructed to bring the person experiencing violence to the Women's Police Station to file a formal complaint.[288]

Those mechanisms of articulation between state institutions, and between institutions and civil society organizations, were thus perceived as a way to increase the state's reach, improve communication, and as a more integral approach to protection and assistance. In 2011, "local tables" (*mesas locales*) were created in various cities of the Conurbano, for these newly articulated institutions and civil society organizations to regularly exchange on cases for a more efficient interinstitutional attention.[289] The Provincial General Direction of Gender Policies created within the Ministry of Social Development (2012-2020), also in charge of administrating social welfare plans,[290] was mandated to coordinate the work of state and civil society services for impoverished women experiencing violence.[291] Programs such as the Programme to Strengthen Assistance to Domestic Violence in Primary Health Care (PROFAVI)[292] were created in 9 municipalities, connecting the municipal healthcare system to assistance services. The PROFAVI indeed tackled domestic violence through primary healthcare centers and a network

---

[288] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in Buenos Aires, February 4, 2020.
[289] Local tables were created only in 2014 in Matanza through Ordenanza 23.654/14, but based on my informants, existed informally prior the decree (Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022).
[290] Interview with social worker and psychologist at the Office for Assistance to Women Victims of Violence, Secretariat for Women, Gender, and Diversity of Lomas de Zamora. In person, Lomas de Zamora, March 5, 2022.
[291] The only Women's Police Station in La Matanza was inaugurated in 2005—only accepting complaints for domestic violence and sexual abuse.
[292] *Programa de Fortalecimiento de la Atención de la Violencia Intrafamiliar en Atención Primaria de Salud*

of state and non-state organizations organized locally.[293] In addition, emergency funds were put

in place for women in need of emergency housing, and a new emergency refuge was opened[294]—

forming a total of 74 offices dedicated to the attention of women experiencing violence in their

families throughout the province. The regulation also planed the creation of a 24-hour emergency

telephone line, known as line 144, as an entry point to the rest of the services. These new

assistance services may have generated more possibilities for victims to denounce their

aggressors; in 2005, 4,073 complaints were filed for family violence in the women's police

stations while in 2013, this jumped to approximately 85,000 (see Figure 5 below).

THE RIGHT INTERLUDE (2015-2019) AND THE RETURN OF PERONISM (2019-2020)

The rise of the Ni Una Menos movement coincided with the election of the Center-Right

government of Mauricio Macri at the national level and of María Eugenia Vidal as governor of

the PBA (2015-2020). During their mandates, the national and provincial governments

downgraded the Women's Councils to the status of Institute, though without significantly

shrinking their budget (Instituto Nacional de Mujeres 2014).[295] However, despite the presence of

the ex-director of the well-known NGO Casa del Encuentro as head of the National Women's

Institute, the National Plan of Action for the Prevention, Assistance and Eradication of Violence

against Women[296] leads to an uncoordinated agenda throughout the territory and its small budget

was not fully executed (Bosio et al. 2019). In the PBA, the employment status of public servants

and street-level bureaucrats working in violence assistance degraded, as the service provision

was partly outsourced to a private company. While fewer resources were allocated to assistance

---

[293] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in Buenos Aires, February 4, 2020.

[294] Hogar Fatima Catan.

[295] The budget allocated to the National Women's Council, between 2008 and 2014, represented an average of 0.002% of the total national budget, and between 2014-2017, 0.004% (Instituto Nacional de Mujeres 2014, 22).

[296] *Plan Nacional de Acción para la Prevención, Asistencia y Erradicación de la Violencia Contra las Mujeres.*

and more precarious employment generated instability in assistance service provision (notably the telephone line 144), prior assistance centers were globally maintained, and emergency refuges were renovated and created in the province.

In 2015, the rise of massive social mobilisation and growing visibility of femicides and transfemicides revealed with great intensity the failures and cracks of the justice and police systems to prevent patriarchal violence and femicides. The numbers collected by the civil society organization Casa del Encuentro—the first organization to have systematically collected statistical information on femicides in Argentina—and the Women's Observatory of the Supreme Court, showed an increase in femicides and transfemicides between 2010 and 2020 in the PBA, the most extreme form of violence against women (see Figure 5 below), the vast majority committed against cis women by cis men—in the context of intimate relations where the perpetrator was the victim's partner, ex-partner, family member, or someone known to the victim.[297]

---

[297] In 2020, 15 of the 94 femicides, or about 16%, were committed against international migrant women, mostly from the neighbouring countries, and 4 against women who engage in prostitution (Oficina de la Mujer, Corte Suprema de la Nacion 2020).

Femicides and Transfemicides
Province of Buenos Aires (2010-2020)
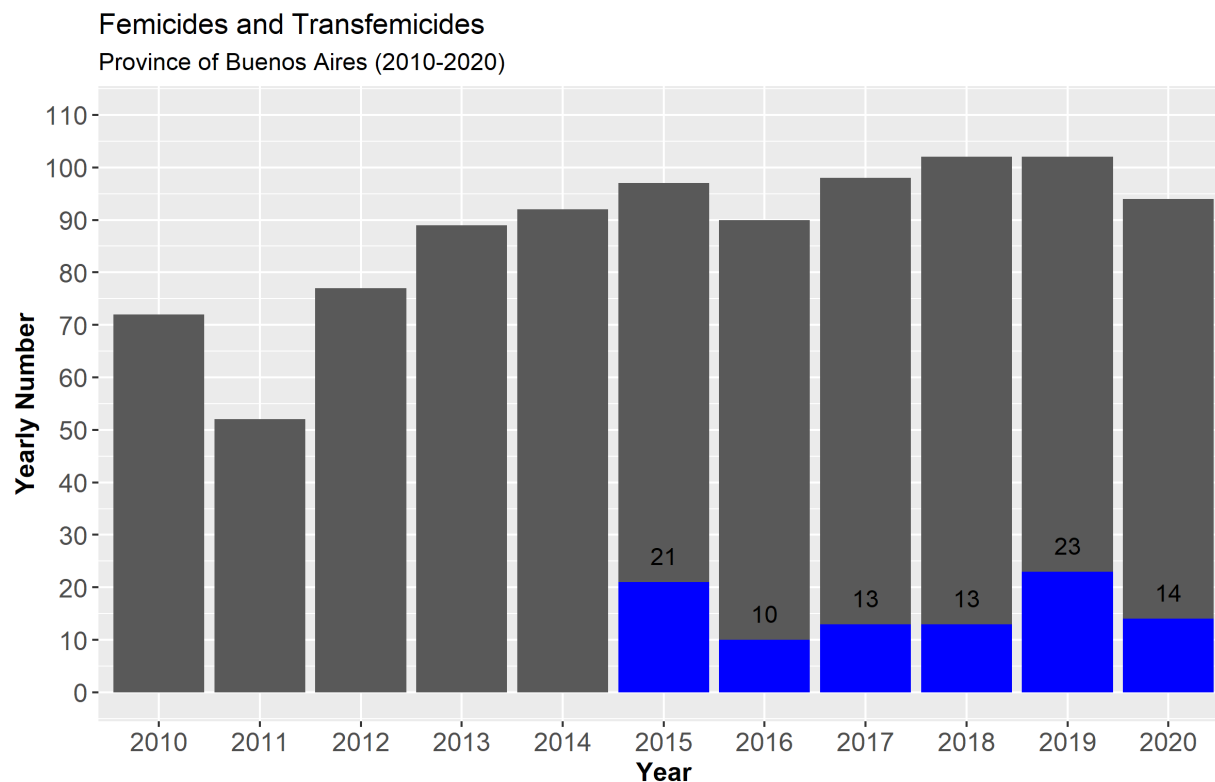
Note: The numbers represent the amount of reported formal complaints filed by the victims prior to their assassination.
Trans women are included in the data collected by the Casa del Encuentro,
and since 2016 by the Supreme Court Femicide Observatory.
Source: Compiled by author with data from the Femicide Observatory in Argentina 'Adriana Marisel Zambrano'
coordinated by the Civil Association La Casa del Encuentro (2010-2017) and the National Registry of Femicides of the
Argentine Supreme Court of Justice (2018-2020).

Figure 5: Femicides and Transfemicides in the Province of Buenos Aires (2010-2020).

Particularly since 2015, a new attention was placed on perpetrators of violence which had, until then, remained invisible in most policy approaches adopted since the 1990s. On the one hand, the incorporation of the incorporation of geo-localized electronic ankle monitors in 2018 sought to displace the responsibility for women's safety over to men.[298] But the question of whether preventive policies would incorporate perpetrators or not unleashed debates amongst feminist movements. These discussions animated the 2017 ENM organized in the city of Mar del

---

[298] I elaborate on these measures in Chapter 3.

Plata, and feminists increasingly questioned the victim-centered approaches that had prevailed, debating how organizations and states should deal with perpetrators.[299] If a number of prevention programs emerged in different municipalities of the province, for the most part, discussion groups amongst men convicted for gender-based violence, the format, availability, and durability of these programs varied enormously throughout the province.[300]

After a single 4-year mandate of the Cambiemos government, Alberto Fernández was elected under the *Frente de Todos* coalition in 2019. The creation of the Ministry Women, Gender, and Diversity initiated what many feminists saw as a new era in state feminism, both in terms of symbolic institutionalization and materially, with new resources granted to the ministry. Two new programs were created early on, which continued, with few differences, the previous agenda initiated since 2010: the program Communities without Violence[301] and the program Accompany.[302] While the former was aimed at creating municipal gender areas throughout the country and work with men perpetrators of violence towards non-repetition and violence prevention, the latter replaced the previous Ellas Hacen program; but this time, involving direct cash transfers and training for women in situation of GBV, without the intermediation of social organizations.

---

[299]One women's association, for example, was contacted by the Juvenile Court as early as 2005, implored to start developing programs with men who engage in violent behaviors, with the aim of reducing re-incidence, when such program did not yet exist (Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022). By the year 2005, as demands for assistance and increasing reporting of domestic violence were being felt in family and civil courts, interest for state intervention towards perpetrators had slowly started to emerge.

[300] Interview with Director of the Ministry of Women, Gender Policies, and Sexual Diversity, Undersecretariat for Policies Against Gender-Based Violence, Provincial Directorate of High-Risk Situations and Critical Cases. Online, May 17, 2022.

[301] *Programa Comunidades sin Violencia.*

[302] *Programa Acompañar.*

To conclude, the "problem shift" in the anti-violence against women feminist agenda

since 2009 has reflected different policy approaches to assistance, protection, and prevention.

During the Left Turn, policy emphasis was placed on poor women's assistance and

empowerment as victims of violence, through increasing access to psychological and social

services, access to justice, and a decentralized programmatic approach to gender-based violence.

During the Center-Right government of Cambiemos, however, pressured by the Ni Una Menos

movement, the state turned to violence prevention in two ways: by preventing high-risk violence

situations to become femicides through technologized protection, and by preventing perpetrator

re-incidence through prosecuted men discussion groups. To unpack how these policies have

shaped the gender justice regime in practice, I now turn to my fieldwork research, centered on

the years 2020-2021.

THE LABYRINTH OF JUDICIALIZED ASSISTANCE

In this section, I argue that despite a formal shift in the problem represented, policy

discourses and practices on the ground have remained shaped by legacies of the previous

neoliberal familialist approach to gender-based violence. Still centered on a thin understanding

of gender-based violence, assistance and sanction policies still relied on a judicialized logic of

intervention that still produced gendered and class exclusions.[303] As shown in Figure 5 above,

available data shows that between 2015 and 2020, on average, sixteen percent of femicide and

transfemicide victims had filed a formal complaint to the authorities prior to their assassination.

Acknowledging that these statistics probably underestimate the amount of victims who reached

---

[303] Linking back this section to Carol Bacchi's WPR approach (see Chapter 2, Part II), this section broadly contrasts the problematizations observed in the previous section (Questions 1-3) with practices on the ground. This section also tackles questions 4 (What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?) and 5 (What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?).

police stations but whose complaints were not filed, this number could be interpreted in two ways: first, that sixteen of feminicide victims had sought state assistance and were not protected, or second, that eighty-four percent of those victims *did not* reach out to or seek out for state assistance. While both these interpretations are plausible, in either case, the feminicides were the consequence of the state's failure to guarantee women their right to life, free of violence, and its inability to prevent the escalating of violence against women.

Through a focus on dividing practices and their subjectification effects, this section shows that protection, assistance, and prevention measures carried gendered and classed assumptions often rooted in familialism, that often reproduce social exclusions instead of dismantling them. While women are often portrayed as irrational in the way they adapt to, cope with, and challenge violence and risk while seeking assistance from the state, their victimhood status often remains conditional on their ability to adequately follow the established policy path. Men perpetrators, in turn, are for the first time included in protection policy through weakly-enforced surveillance and in prevention efforts; yet they are included only following a judicial order and only when deemed "recuperable." Together, these gendered policy limitations generate specific forms of exclusions: by imposing high expectations and individual responsibility on women to navigate assistance services and the judicial system, they have created boundaries around which women are considered victims of violence and which ones are not (or cannot); by limiting preventive approaches to judicialized perpetrators with a specific profile, they only partially solve men's "absent-presence" – and address the perpetrator's patriarchal norms and behaviors once the cycle of violence is already deeply engaged. As a result, the cracks between interdependent assistance policies, the judicial system, and law enforcement, exclude the most marginalized women and reproduce gender inequalities.

Facing a conundrum as they work with often inefficient policy instruments to prevent and eradicate gender-based violence, the frustration experienced by committed street-level bureaucrats on the ground, acting with limited resources and well aware of the limitations they are operating with, reveal a gap between women's experiences with gender violence and policy solutions designed to address it.

"A COMPLAINT MUST BE FILED"[304]

In the offices of a municipal program of assistance to women experiencing violence, a public servant told me: "We never give the neighborhood police station as an option."[305] Indeed, as I observed, the local police station did not even appear in the critical route of resources poster that was suspended on the wall behind her desk. She continued, "Honestly, we've had cases where the police know the aggressor, and that complaint that the women made was torn apart or got lost."[306] The following is what she told me when I asked her if she could explain the steps that women experiencing violence had to follow when seeking assistance from the state. Her testimony is broadly in line with what other public servants I interviewed explained.

First, women must reach either the Women's Police Station[307] or the Ombudsman Office,[308] which provides free legal representation. Depending on the harm inflicted, women can either file a civil or a criminal complaint. Then, they must physically go to the family tribunal they were assigned to—randomly selected within the legal department, to ensure impartiality—to

---

[304] "*Denuncia, tiene que haber*" (Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020).

[305] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

[306] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

[307] There is currently only one Women's Police Station in La Plata.

[308] The Ombudsman Office opens everyday, from 8am to 2pm only.

pick up the restriction order, usually delivered in 48 hours following the initial complaint. Based

on the judge's assessment of the level of risk involved, restriction orders can be either a formal

prohibition of approaching the victim, an exclusion from the household, or more recently, the

delivery of an anti-panic button for the victim or an electronic anklet for the perpetrator, if he had

violated the restriction. As I was trying to note all the details and was starting to get confused,

she continued: "So, this is monitored by 911 [police services], 24 hours a day. If the victim and

the aggressor get close to one another, the woman receives an alert by telephone, stating that the

man is near. In any case, we had some cases were people decided not to continue with the

measure because it seemed blurry or whatever."[309] After 90 days of the publication of the

restriction order, the parties meet separately with the judge, and based on an updated risk

assessment, a decision is made to either renew the emergency measures, or not. She continues:

> It is at that time, as we continue to follow up with the case, when we generally make a presentation to the technical agency before the final date issues, with an evaluation report of what happened during all this time. Honestly, there are courts that welcome us with open arms, and there are others that don't care... because they make their own assessment. From the program and from the field of health, we consider that this is the first time that technical agency sees that person, and that an evaluation of half an hour, having gone through all that process, is just not enough.[310]

In other words, while the judicial measures of protection are issued and when necessary,

renewed temporarily, assistance services continue to work with victims in psycho-social

assistance. Along increased access to assistance services, violence against women policies in the

PBA followed a rising trend in their judicialization. Between 2010 and 2019, the number of civil

court cases on violence against women increased by 350%, from 50.000 to 175.000 annual cases

---

[309] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.
[310] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

(See Figure 6 below).[311] For this other public servant, thanks to these new points of access, it was now possible for women living as far as La Matanza to file a formal complaint and receive state assistance:

> But as far as the number of resources to take care of the problem is concerned, it has increased a lot. Before there were two places where they were taken care of. Say, a woman who was from a place far away, from La Matanza, who takes an hour and a half to get here, had only one place where they could take the complaint, right? And this happened 15 years ago. Yes, it has improved. Of course, it is always necessary to put more resources, especially for girls in the poor neighborhoods, so that women who are much more precarious can make a complaint, or follow a treatment, or be heard.[312]

Thus, while there had been improvements in access to justice and assistance services, those same services were dealing with increasing demand and little additional resources. As I observed, assistance policies were conditional on the level of assessed risk in which the victims found themselves, based on their life situation. As this public servant tells me:

> Risk assessment is fundamental, at the onset of taking the case, seeing what resources we have. We have a bit of everything. We have people who have an affective or social network, say, community, that allows them to leave their home and stay sheltered or until maybe the precautionary measures go out, in the home of a brother, a neighbor, a friend... and then there are others that don't have this.[313]

Consequently, the language, pace, and demands of the justice system—particularly, the criteria for the delivery of emergency judicial orders–has permeated the world of assistance, defining who could access resources, left for those deemed as the most vulnerable. Yet, as the first testimony reveals, street-level bureaucrats who are working with victims, do not always see

---

[311] The decline in 2020 to 130.000 may be attributed to the sanitary restrictions imposed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited access to state services. Despite lower access to justice, the number of femicide for 2020 remained stable compared to previous years (see Figure 6).
[312] Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, July 2, 2020.
[313] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

their assessment considered in the judicial procedure, and judicial risk assessment regarding

violence escalation and femicide sometimes remains contained within the more hermetic judge's

office. Risk evaluation, as a dividing practice, indeed determined the type of assistance services

victims could access: "medium risks" involve, for example, psycho-social accompaniment and

access to national programs such as "Women Make" or "Accompany,"[314] while "high risk"

situations combined with the victim's high socioeconomic precarity and social isolation,

involved access to temporary emergency housing. But as I learned, for those situations judged as

high risk and for women who do not have a housing alternative nor social networks of support,

assistance became conditional on judicialization and remained temporary. In other words, as a

public servant working in assistance[315] explained in an interview, access to a temporary housing

remained conditional on filing a formal complaint and the establishment of an "exit" plan:

> Without a judicial precautionary measure, people cannot enter the shelter, for and this is because they must provide support for other people too. There also must be an exit strategy. And that is the hardest point for everyone. Because people cannot go into the shelter indefinitely, there must be a plan for how they will leave.[316]

---

[314] See Chapter 3 for a more detailed explanation about these programs.
[315] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.
[316] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

Gender-Based Violence cases initiated in the Family and Penal Courts
Province of Buenos Aires (2010-2020)
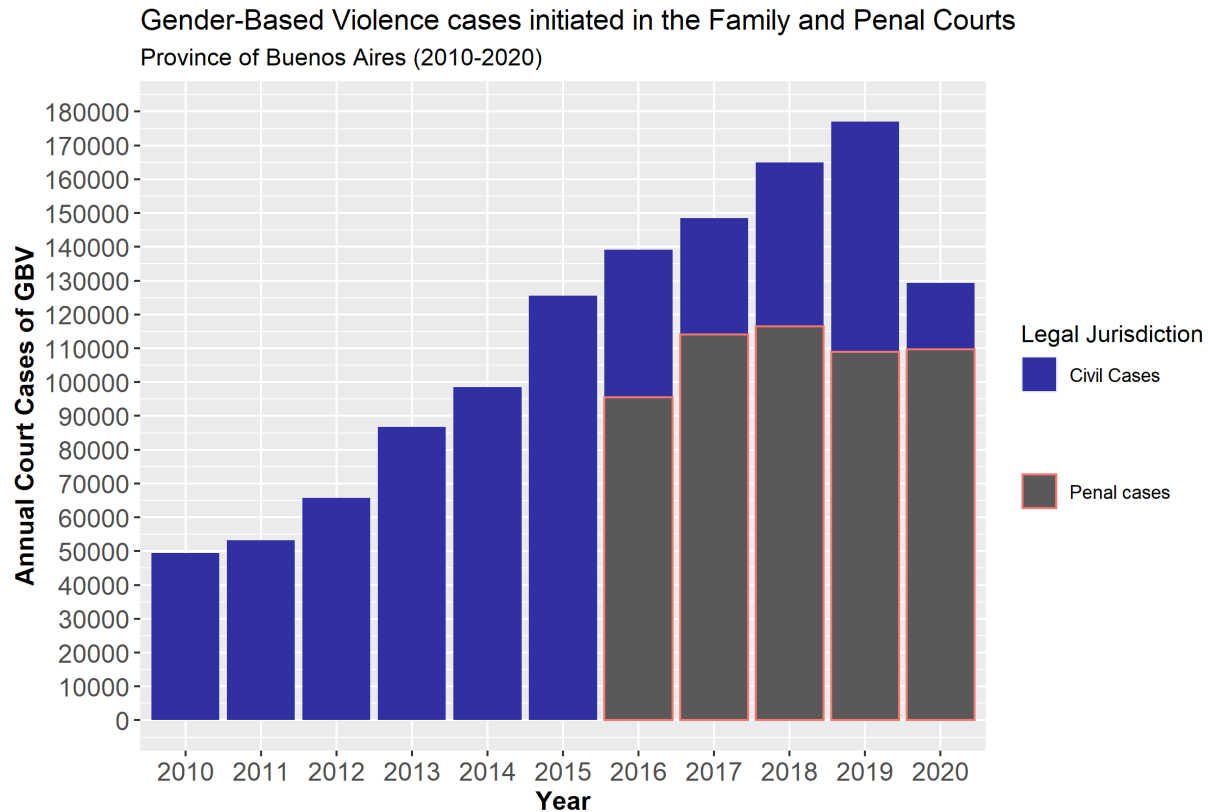
Figure 6: Gender-based violence cases initiated in the Family and Penal Courts. Province of Buenos Aires (2010-2020).

Thus, women in the highest state of vulnerability, saw their access to state resources conditional on judicialization and all this, under the pressure for a fast-paced healing, re-building themselves, and re-organizing their lives. If strengthening the victim, ensuring their safety, and supporting them in their decisions was now seen as a goal of the assistance service, the justice system imposed specific constraints and understandings of what protection and security meant. For many assistance workers with whom I spoke, the judicial system is more often an obstacle than an ally in the resolution of cases. As this team told me during a group conversation in their offices:

Participant A: But the judiciary remains a very big obstacle.

Participant B: That's what we call... Machirulo.[317] The thing is, many times, for example, the woman is in court, at a hearing, and they put her in the same place as the violent person. That's very common.

Participant A: Until recently, someone tried to do mediations, which are prohibited by law and not appropriate, and we have received complaints of that kind. I mean, the judiciary is very behind in adapting to the new times. But well, we have to keep working on that. It hinders more than it helps, in my opinion.[318]

Indeed, it was becoming increasingly clear that the failure of the justice and police systems to stop violence was not only due to a lack of *access* to justice, but to an ongoing patriarchal bias *within* the police and justice systems that re-victimized women and put them in greater danger.[319]

As many interlocutors interviewed and street-level bureaucrats cited in newspaper articles reported, formally denouncing their aggressor was at times a dangerous avenue for victims and by exposing them to more violence—or even judicialization themselves. The Coordinator of the Gender Violence Observatory of the PBA's Ombudsman Office, states that: "Sometimes, femicide is the continuation of a process that began with violence, followed by a complaint and the murder is a reprisal against the woman's reaction."[320] Search for autonomy and independence from the channels offered by the state is thus often a trigger of GBV, as women challenge the

---

[317] A colloquial, slang expression used in Argentina to qualify something or someone patriarchal, or *machista*.
[318] Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. In person, in Buenos Aires, July 2, 2020.
[319] Already in 2005, the Functional Investigation Unit N11 had penalized the refuge Casa Maria Puebla for not allowing fathers denounced for domestic abuse with access to their children. As a result, justices disclosed the refuge's location to violence perpetrators, putting the security of the hosted women and children at risk. Dario Witt, worker at the refuge, claimed that "it is serious that the justice does not know that protecting our address is fundamental and that this is guaranteed by a resolution of the attorney general of the supreme court" (*El Día*. "Un refugio secreto para víctimas de la violencia familiar en peligro." November 26, 2005).
[320] *El Día*. "Un refugio secreto para víctimas de la violencia familiar en peligro." November 26, 2005.

gender norms that place them in a situation of submission and dependence with regards to men.[321]

Public servants and street-level bureaucrats working directly in assistance raised important points: the justice system's response can feed into GBV, particularly against women who challenge traditional gender norms. Cases were also reported in the media in which the justice system presented a clear bias favorable to aggressors in cases in which women challenged norms of submissiveness and obedience. For example, in 2006, the Chamber of the Court of Cassation of Buenos Aires, reduced the sentence of a young man for the murder of his partner. The young woman had told the murderer that she had an affair with another man, which caused his violent reaction—inflicting the woman with more than 40 injuries.[322] The judicial institution thus fomented a climate of impunity around violence against women by implicitly legitimizing, naturalizing, and reproducing it.[323]

In addition, in the newspaper El Día, the refuge Casa María Puebla denounced the law enforcement system's unequal treatment of women's complaints for domestic violence. They denounced how a man's complaint to the police "is taken immediately and that of the woman

---

[321] This is particularly true in the case of younger women. The Coordinator indeed states that young women of between 20 to 30 years old are particularly vulnerable to violent reactions from their partners, as they show autonomous behavior that challenge traditional gender norms: "at that age [20-30 years], women have greater autonomy and productivity. They are mothers and sometimes the reaction of man is also against their children, as a form of punishment towards them." "At that age [20-30 years], women have greater autonomy and productivity. They are mothers, and sometimes the man's reaction is also directed at their children, as a form of punishment towards them."

[322] Despite the violence of the attack, the judge's reasoning to lower the sentence was based on the victim's supposed "almost provocative" attitude—her promiscuousness—and a favorable personal impression of the man being accused (Debesa and Galmarini 2011).

[323] As reported in the Supreme Court Femicide Observatory, since 2014, only 15 sentences have been issued—and most perpetrators remain detained for years before facing justice. Meanwhile, the prisons and police stations in Buenos Aires are overflowing; according to a ruling produced by the Penal Enforcement Court N2 of La Plata, the imprisoned population reaches twice or thrice the prisons' maximum capacity. As reported by the Observatory, between 2014 and 2020, an average of 18% of the perpetrators of femicides have committed suicide in detention, before even facing trial.

generally ignored."[324] The street-level bureaucrat argued that "the woman's complaint is usually not dealt with or they wait for there to be irreparable harm or abuse, sometimes even death due to violence on the part of the husband, in order to deal with it."[325] Access to state resources for women is thus not only seen by workers on the ground as a matter of increasing services, but also as a cultural struggle against a patriarchal culture within the justice system: "an unequal struggle facing very strong cultural issues."[326] If Women's Police Stations and the Ombudsman's offices were considered safer options, public servants knew that most women end up revictimized in ordinary police stations.

While the critical route of services offered several new assistance and legal service points and alternatives, as we see above, street-level bureaucrats who work in assistance testify of a wide diversity of experiences, needs, and conditions among women who experience violence, in which formal complaint is often not the preferred solution. For this worker, respecting the victims' pace and needs are crucial component of what her understanding of assistance is:

> we can accompany the person in the process of whether they are ready or not to make a complaint, what resources are available to leave that situation; if they really want to leave that situation, if they really can, because the factors that influence a situation of violence are endless, from a subjective position. There's the economic issue... [327]

Based on her experience, filing a complaint when the victim is not ready, or not in a position where she feels she can safely do so, could increase the risk of escalating violence:

> We don't rush a complaint at all, considering precisely that a complaint is often counterproductive, because of the characteristics of the violent person, let's say, or

[324] *El Día*. "Un refugio secreto para víctimas de la violencia familiar en peligro." November 26, 2005.
[325] *El Día*. "Un refugio secreto para víctimas de la violencia familiar en peligro." November 26, 2005.
[326] *El Día*. "Un refugio secreto para víctimas de la violencia familiar en peligro." November 26, 2005.
[327] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

the man who engages in violence. And on the other hand, often it can't be sustained.[328]

The critical assessments of formal complaints—either civil or criminal—was shared amongst many other public servants and street-level bureaucrats working in assistance. For a feminist prosecutor I interviewed, who is considered as a legal expert in GBV in the province, what sometimes really mattered for the victims was the ability to tell their story, to be heard by the state or the perpetrator, and for the harm committed to them to be stopped and recognized as such.[329] For many of them, assistance involved "co-building" the demand:

> It's about thinking with the victim, considering the situation of violence. What does she want to do? Because the issue is what the situation is, what she wants to do, what she's willing to endure, and what she can endure. I mean, because No… The victim may want many things, from having the violent person excluded from the home and going through a judicial process, to simply grabbing a bus and going with her family to another province and never coming back.[330]

Concern for the victim's autonomy involved questioning the linearity and preestablished routes towards ending a situation of violence. Similarly, in this other assistance center in a Southern municipality of the Conurbano, the employee told me that:

> The idea is to strengthen women. If they haven't filed a complain, they don't have to do it, because maybe they're not ready yet to make a complaint. Right? So, we have to understand their timing, their process. What we do here when they arrive is provide them with all the information. What is it that they can do? What are their rights? What do they have and what can they access? What can they reach out for? All those things. But we can't force them to do something they don't want to do if they're not ready for it.[331]

---

[328] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

[329] Fieldwork notes: Interview with Prosecutor from the Specialized Prosecutor's Unit for Gender Violence. In person, San Isidro, May 4, 2022.

[330] Interview with Director of the Ministry of Women, Gender Policies, and Sexual Diversity, Undersecretariat for Policies Against Gender-Based Violence, Provincial Directorate of High-Risk Situations and Critical Cases. Online, May 17, 2022.

[331] Interview with social worker and psychologist at the Office for Assistance to Women Victims of Violence, Secretariat for Women, Gender, and Diversity of Lomas de Zamora. In person, Lomas de Zamora, March 5, 2022.

In addition to risks of violence escalation and revictimization when filing a formal complaint, women might be at risk of criminalization themselves. What follows is an example such a situation. Mariana lived in an impoverished neighborhood of La Plata and was experiencing violence from her partner, who had drug consumption issues. As we were discussing in her office, the public servant tells me about this event:

> Participant A: The woman arrives at the health centre to do a check. The social worker sees her, knows her from the neighbourhood and sees her as very malnourished. She is malnourished. We are summoned because we know that in the neighborhood there are situations of violence with her, with the family, we know each other. You know that the neighborhood knows.
>
> Colleague S: It is known.
>
> Person A: With the man, he has drug problems, everything. We summoned her, everything. We start crying in the middle of the interview, I was with the two children, she starved, malnourished, hurt, because the night before the guy almost stabbed her. Right there we made contact with the shelter, she didn't have enough for the bus fare, I gave her my bus ticket, and here she goes. She went to look for her two babies, the guy was asleep because he was high, she took out the two babies, we put her in touch with the shelter, she came to the shelter and stayed. She stayed two days, three days, but couldn't stand the isolation. She wanted to go. We had planned the exit strategy with the family. Her family would take her in. Well, the guy was pretty violent and the family was scared too. His dad and his sister lived there too. Well, the thing is that they took her in, the guy had precautionary measures, but he started visiting her, because he wanted to see the kids, and she let him in. The family objected and said no, not here, we are afraid. And in the middle of all of this she went back together with him...
>
> Colleague S: With her children, I imagine...
>
> Participant A: ...yes yes yes, pregnancy and reconciliation. Well, we kept working with her, a lot through her sister, as her sister was already tired. He was violating the restraining orders all the time, but the woman violated these measures too. Because that's the thing, he has to comply with the measures but so does she. She can't just let him come see the kid. No, no. She had to send someone else if the child has the restriction too. And well, they had asked us at this time for what actions we had taken. We had already submitted a report to the court, asking them to please do something. With her, with the kids, with everything, because the truth is they were at risk. We worked with the school, we worked with everyone. [...] The judge says well, this is a high-risk situation, we'll put the dual ankle monitor on him. A month later, the guy grabbed her, made her leave the device at home, went with her to

225

court and said, we want you to take us off the device. And this was a case that was worked on at the local level. Because I worked on it with the Public Defender there and the judge, and I said to him, "What are you going to do about it?"

Colleague S: What are you going to do about it? [in agreement and desperation with previous comment from her colleague]

Participant A: "Well ... lock them both up!", I said, "Lock them both up!". There are kids, the older kid, the dad used him to carry and bring back the drugs he sold me…

Colleague S: No, I can´t, no, no… [Still in agreement with her colleague, same tone]

Participant A: "Lock them both up!"

In this example, after surviving an attack that could have been deadly, Mariana filed a complaint against her partner to her local police station and reached out for state assistance with her two children. Without sufficient money to pay public transportation to the police station, family court, and assistance services, she still had managed to access these resources with her two children. Yet, in the worker's story, despite Mariana's extreme state of vulnerability, many decisions she took were perceived as defying the "logical," "proper" decisions and what, as an endangered victim, she should have done to keep herself and her children safe: Mariana should have stayed in the emergency housing following the exit plan established with her family; she should not have let her partner contact her and the children, putting all of them at risk; she should not have gotten pregnant from this violent man; she should not have let a violent man manipulate her. In all, with a look of despair, without other solutions, the public servant concluded, "Lock them both up!".

While I do not know what happened to Mariana and her children, this example reveals the malleability of the victimhood status and the inadequacy of a binary understanding of victimhood/perpetration imposed by the judicial system. In absence of adequate and sufficient

assistance support services centered on the victim's social needs, what started off as a story about Mariana's experience with patriarchal violence and struggle to dealing with assistance, ended up as a situation in which she was now perceived as a perpetrator against her children, complicit in her partner's violence. It also speaks to the increasing penetration of a judicial logic into assistance services for cases of intimate-partner violence—and its real-world, exclusionary effects on those who are experiencing violence and seeking assistance from the state.

When treated through the lenses of family violence, perpetration and victimhood can become malleable categories, and victims who defy the states' institutionalized solutions to violence can quickly become perpetrators, when they defy the state procedure. In this example, criminal law, state assistance, and the police have together failed to protect this woman and the children from violence—and on the contrary, exposed *her* to potential criminal prosecution. Regardless of the public servants' gender perspective in recognizing gender power imbalances in this situation and good intentions in assisting the victim, the existing policy instruments could not provide Mariana the sufficient support to escape this violent relation, even if this was her intention in the first place. And the public servant with whom I spoke knew that very well; her expression, "Put them both in jail!", might have reflected a complete sense of powerlessness in front of this situation, and an inexorable reliance on the justice system to fill the enormous preventive gaps the policy had generated.

Thus, the incapacity of many victims to "sustain a complaint"—mentioned to me by multiple other state workers—suggests that navigating the complexity of the judicial system requires both economic, social, and emotional resources that many people in a state of high vulnerability do not have. As Mariana's story shows, decisions taken by women living in

precarious conditions to reduce risks for themselves and often, their children, can be perceived as irrational when they do not correspond to the needs, criteria, and processes imposed by the justice system.

In all, despite the growth of assistance and access to justice services, as well as new technologies of protection for survivors, the logic of state assistance remained entrenched in the judiciary's logic of late-stage interpersonal conflict resolution, a procedure that may involve even greater victimization and risk for the survivor. Meanwhile, assistance services provided temporary support that left structural features which increase women's vulnerability to violence unaddressed. The language of protection, including the notions of "risk" and the increasingly judicialization of assistance, along with scarce resource attribution of prevention and assistance policies, involved dividing practices making a specific "woman-victim" subject. These women are indeed expected to embrace paradoxical attitudes upon which their access to assistance relies autonomy in their ability to navigate the complex judicial system to "solve their problems," control their aggressor's behavior, and a reliance on judicialized state protection. Behind the state's subjectification of marginalized victims' agency lied the implicit assumption that they would, eventually, file a formal complaint for their full protection.

"ONE REALIZES THAT WE'RE ALWAYS TOO LATE"[332]

Frustration amongst staff working in assistance to GBV was recurrent throughout my interviews. For a street-level bureaucrat I talked to, the emotional toll of dealing with complex needs, seemingly contradictory and irrational decisions, added to the precarious working conditions that these workers, mostly women, faced. This, many revealed, added to additional

---

[332] "*Una se da cuenta, que siempre llega tarde*"

pressure coming from growing feminist mobilizations for the state to address the pressing issue

of femicides. As this worker tells me:

> To some extent, we need to work on the issue of frustration, because the teams sometimes believe they are taking the right path, the right steps, and yet that person returns to the aggressor, right? It's related to the problem [of GBV] itself that is being addressed. And sometimes they can't see the big picture... there will always be something missing and we never stop working... but this always happens, with the femicides that occur, one realizes that, well, we're always too late.[333]

Even when following "the right steps," situations of GBV are extremely complex to

solve, and state resources are largely incapable of addressing the root causes of violence

experienced by the most marginalized women. As a result, many cases are dropped, for different

reasons that make certain situations intractable, too complex for the existing state resources and

mechanisms.

> Participant: Once we stop dealing with an issue, we do it because the situation of violence is unmanageable, either due to the person's subjective situation, because they don't want to leave, or because... then we prepare a judicial report, submit it to the court, alone or with any other institution that was involved in the situation, and we consider the case closed. We don't continue to support it within the program because it slips out of our hands. This is part of the shared responsibility we have with other institutions, it's quite complicated to continue supporting this. We also terminate some cases due to loss of contact; we have situations...
>
> Rose: The person doesn't show up anymore…?
>
> Participant: They don't show up anymore, or they move, or they show up at other health centers because we don't help them anymore. Or we terminate it because the situation has been resolved, there's a cessation of violence, and so on.[334]

For most public servants I interviewed, the justice system and sanction mechanisms do

not address the root causes of violence. They instead suggest that the approach should promote

---

[333] Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. In person, in La Plata, July 2, 2020.
[334] Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

more horizontal relationships, "Because otherwise, we're always trailing behind femicides."[335]

Cases that "slip out of the hands" of assistance services are therefore relegated to the justice

system, and once again, the gaps in prevention and assistance are fulfilled by short-term judiciary

remedies to deeper problems. She continued, "as prevention and eradication efforts grow, I

believe the judicial aspect will decrease significantly in its involvement".[336]

IRRECUPERABLE MEN

By the year 2015, a new interest for violence prevention entered policy approaches

through decentralized programs of group discussions amongst men convicted for GBV. Yet, in

practice there was little agreement as to what prevention meant, and which institution should

implement it. For María del Carmen Farbo, Solicitor of the Supreme Court de la PBA, preventive

policies could take place through the justice system.[337] For the director of the then newly created

Secretary of Gender, "prevention" meant increasing police intervention with and monitoring of

the perpetrators of violence:

> the public policies that guide this government will not only look at the woman
> victim of violence, but at the aggressor. Because public policies are put together,
> and violence continues, regardless of the roadblocks you attempt to impose. So,
> you have to look at where these guys are, all these aggressors, who actually are out
> there, have the electronic wristband indication for their control, but they don't wear
> it, and the other one... Last week they [the police] went out to look for three guys,
> not knowing where they were. So just knowing where these guys are is an act of
> prevention.[338]

---

[335] Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. In person, in La Plata, July 2, 2020.
[336] Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. In person, in La Plata, July 2, 2020.
[337] She argued that "We decided to establish specialized investigation units, with trained and committed prosecutors focused on family violence. Statistics provide us with tools to work on prevention" (Debesa, Fabián. "Primer Relevamiento En La Provincia. Violencia de Género: El Pico de Los Femicidios Se Da Entre Los 20 y Los 30 Años." *Clarín*, May 17, 2016).

[338] Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. In person, in La Plata, July 2, 2020.

In fact, police and judicial understandings of prevention rested on high-level risk assessments; prevention meant, preventing femicide from occurring in high-risk situations and preventing re-incidence for already convicted men. When deemed appropriate,[339] courts would impose convicted men mandatory participation in discussion groups, composed of six sessions led by a psychologist or social worker. As a public servant responsible for one of these programs tells me, admission to those discussion groups is conditional on the man not having problematic drug consumption, or psychopathic traits. The men are invited to exchange and deconstruct some of the gender norms that are seen as being at the root of violence they exercise against women:

> We use different techniques with the idea that they can express their ideas, thoughts, and emotions, and begin to reflect on what they think about their ideas so they can find healthier ways to relate to others. They can learn and relearn ideas related to gender issues. These rigid ideas they sometimes have about stereotypes of what is masculine and feminine often come from being raised with certain values or sociocultural mandates that are deeply ingrained. So, their behavior is also linked to these mandates where a man is expected to be a certain way, which often leads to resolving conflicts through violent behavior. We help them find other ways to resolve their conflicts that do not involve violence, where they can first think and then act, rather than being impulsive or reactive.[340]

As she explained to me in interview, the goal of these sessions was to "help them understand that responding to violence with violence only increases the level of punishment," and has important consequences and costs on their lives—as well as to find "alternative methods where the consequences are less severe and less harmful to them."[341] Ultimately, the program's

---

[339] For example, men who are given an electronic ankle monitor device must attend these sessions (Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020).

[340] Interview with social worker and psychologist at the Office for Assistance to Women Victims of Violence, Secretariat for Women, Gender, and Diversity of Lomas de Zamora. In person, Lomas de Zamora, March 5, 2022.

[341] Interview with social worker and psychologist at the Office for Assistance to Women Victims of Violence, Secretariat for Women, Gender, and Diversity of Lomas de Zamora. In person, Lomas de Zamora, March 5, 2022.

goal, as she sustained, was "To reduce recidivism or to ensure that those who participate in the men's discussion groups do not commit the crime again. This is also the purpose."[342]

In summary, while "prevention" emerged and institutionalized as a new solution to the problem of GBV in the policy, though unequally throughout the PBA, the term's use remained limited to security and justice institutions centered on the problem of high-risk violence situations—and intervened only once violence had already been committed. In turn, these programs were reserved to men deemed "recuperable" by the state, that is, those who did not present too high levels of socioeconomic and health marginalization.

FEMINISMO POPULAR AND THE "PURPLE AREA" OF CITIZENSHIP

In this third and last section of the chapter, I highlight the role of popular-sector women belonging to popular feminism, in reinterpreting, challenging, and negotiating the meaning of "gender-based violence," "risk," "victimhood," and "perpetration" in their everyday work and advocacy for the eradication of GBV.[343] I argue that popular feminists' advocacy to eradicate GBV unfolds in what I call a "purple area" of citizenship, in a context of high socioeconomic marginalization. This purple area constitutes both an epistemological *space* to challenge the state's dominant understandings of GBV, and a territorialized *place* for the situated expressions of collective and individual agency with, within, and outside institutions. As a form of political intersectionality, the purple area is indeed constituted by women's experience and understandings of intersecting oppressions, where structural gendered exclusions and

---

[342] Fieldwork notes: Interview with social worker and psychologist at the Office for Assistance to Women Victims of Violence, Secretariat for Women, Gender, and Diversity of Lomas de Zamora. In person, Lomas de Zamora, March 5, 2022. One prosecutor with whom I spoke also had that same interpretation.

[343] This section addresses more directly Carol Bacchi's question 6: "How and where has the representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and/or how can it be disrupted and replaced?" (see Chapter 2).

interpersonal gender violence are seen as intertwined and contested through everyday anti-neoliberal advocacy for the eradication of social inequalities. Thus, rather than judicialized assistance and protection, "accompaniment out of violence" is seen as a more adequate and inclusive framework for feminist interventions with persons who experience GBV.

POPULAR-SECTOR WOMEN'S AGENCY IN THE "PURPLE AREA"

When I arrived for a second visit to a women's organization working on gender-based violence in the municipality of La Matanza in the Conurbano, a group of six women—most of whom I had met only the day before—were seated around the table, vividly discussing what had happened the evening after I had left. As I struggled to understand what was going on between voices, nervous laughs, and worried looks, Teresa, the head of organization, turned to me to explain what had happened. As the women recalled the events, still in shock, they told me how a group of *barrabravas,* or football hooligans,[344] had attempted to "take" the *Sociedad de Fomento*, a community center situated nearby the women's organization and with which they maintained longstanding ties.[345] As I learned, alarmed by the potential loss of a major space for women's grassroots activities and community services in the neighborhood, Teresa, along with other women in the organizations, had rushed to the community association to confront the assaulters.

---

[344] While no study to my knowledge has been conducted on the phenomenon, journalistic work in Argentina has shown that football hooligans maintain tight connexions to local politicians and authorities, particularly in the Conurbano, working for candidates and intimidating political opponents during elections, for example—usually remunerated with state money (Auyero 2007).

[345] Initiated by a religious priest from the school of Liberation Theology, the community association in which Teresa initially took part was also connected to Peronist militancy. Unemployment and poverty had drastically risen during the 1980s and 1990s, and basic service provision in communities constituted a key demand of community, religious, and political organizations in this neighborhood with high levels of social and economic exclusion.

As the women were vividly discussing the events, exchanging on what could have motivated the assaulters, Teresa offered to introduce me to the community center and discuss amongst the other women the troubling events. The large warehouse of the center served, since its creation following the transition to democracy in 1983, as a soup kitchen, a kindergarten, and a primary healthcare center. We entered a room full of people, mostly women, children, and elders, both seated and standing, waiting for their doctor's appointments. We quickly passed through the wait room of the healthcare center to reach the wider warehouse space, where some women were seated around a plastic table and others, chatting about the last evening's event while drinking mate and making *torta frita*,[346] typical of rainy days in Argentina.

According to the group of women chatting there, the hooligans had been hired by political brokers from a Peronist-affiliated social organization with strong presence in a nearby neighborhood, with the aim of expanding their territorial presence. For them, both the attractiveness of the space itself and the territorial struggles for political control of the area by factions of Peronist-affiliated social organizations had motivated the assaulters. The elections were approaching and "things were moving" in the neighborhood.

The PBA was indeed, since the 2001 crisis, host to routinized struggles for democratic and economic inclusion from marginalized sectors in what Javier Auyero has labeled a "gray zone" of politics (Auyero 2004; 2007). Violence in marginalized areas of Argentina had become routine politics and shaped by an exclusionary citizenship regime and democratic life in the country. Auyero conceptualized "the gray zone" of politics as an "area of clandestine relationships where routine politics converges with extraordinary violence" (Auyero 2007, 25).

---

[346] Fried bread.

For the sociologist, clandestine relations uniting party politics, social organizations, and local state authorities that blur the boundary between violence and everyday strategies of survival, endanger citizenship and democracy. In line with Guillermo O'Donnell (1993b), he argues, "Where clandestine relationships prevail, the public dimension of politics is at risk" (Auyero 2007, 51).

Auyero's insights on the grey zone of politics reveal how exclusion structures democratic and political life in many marginalized areas of Argentina. But in fact, beyond electoral interests and clandestine relations between politicians, police forces, and social organizations, the women I talked to understood this attack as a *patriarchal* attack, directed against a women's organization perceived as an "easy target." When we came back from our visit back to the women's organization*,* Teresa commented, "These guys are all monkeys!". For her, the attackers had unfairly targeted an ally organization in the neighborhood, and their actions were those of *machistas* seeking to exclude these women from the public sphere through physical domination and occupation of their spaces.

For these women, situated at the intersection of class, race, and gender oppressions, the routinized and exceptional violence generated by interactions between perpetrators of collective violence, neighbors, families, and community leaders, and party leaders and members—as conceptualized by Auyero—takes other forms and expressions. Gender-based violence against women often transcends these different groups and their boundaries, simultaneously taking place within families, intimate relations, social organizations, and the state. The forms of violence that women experience in their daily lives in the *Conurbano* include intimate-partner violence by community, political, and social leaders and comrades, husbands, partners, brothers, and fathers,

male-dominated social organization's control over women's policy and political spaces, or police involvement in sex trafficking networks, femicide, disappearances, and sexual violence.[347]

Going back to the events described above, beyond a story of assault on a women's organization and collective space, Teresa proudly emphasized the way in which she and the neighbors had "put their bodies on the line"[348] to defend their community's space—a common expression amongst social movements and now adopted by feminist movements in Argentina (Sutton 2007; Tarducci 2017). The narrative put forward by Teresa and the other women I talked to was not one of victimhood but rather one of successful defense of their political and community space—a space in which women, for the most part, supported each other and their community. As Barbara Sutton (2007) argues, it is in the context of the 2001-2003 crisis that the expression had gained more visibility in Argentina, as women's bodies became politically understood as sites of resistance to neoliberal reforms and exposed as vehicles carrying new forms of embodied agency. "*Poner el cuerpo*" in Argentina, usually means more than using one's body, and speaks to an understanding of political agency amongst activist circles, referring

---

[347] In the middle of the 2001 crisis, in the context of the Trials for the Truth of La Plata, reopening in 2006 to judge the ex-military repressors responsible for human rights violations during the last military dictatorship (1976-1983), the testimony of Nilda Elow incriminated policeman Miguel Angel Ferreyro, denounced for sexual abuse, illegal detention, and disappearance at the clandestine detention center labelled "The Hell" (*El Infierno*) (*El Día*. "Juicio por la verdad. Un policia detenido por pregunto delito sexual." December 13, 2001). The repressor died without a trial, originally planned in 2020, due to his declining health condition (Human Rights Subsecretary 2024). Only a few months later, Natalia Melmann, 15 years-old, was raped and murdered by five provincial police officers in Miramar, a balneary city in the South of the PBA, following a dance party—an event that provoked the outrage of women's and feminist movements, but also ordinary citizens, who, upon the victim's family initiative have continued to organize multiple and widely-attended protests in front of police stations to demand justice for Natalia year after year (Roffo 2021). In the first trial in 2002, only three police officers were convicted for abduction, sexual abuse aggravated by the plurality of persons and criminal homicide causes —while two were declared innocent due to lack of evidence. Twenty years later, in 2022, upon reinvestigation of the case thanks to the family's pressure, the fourth ex-police officer was convicted for illegitimate deprivation with the use of violence, sexual abuse qualified by the intervention of two or more persons and double homicide aggravated by the participation of two or more persons and for having intervened the judicial process to achieve impunity (*Infobae*. "El crimen de Natalia Melmann: se postergó la definición de la libertad condicional de los asesinos," December 26, 2023. https://www.infobae.com/sociedad/policiales/2023/12/26/el-crimen-de-natalia-melmann-se-postergo-la-definicion-de-la-libertad-condicional-de-los-asesinos/).

[348] In her words, "*pusimos el cuerpo.*"

"not just to talk, think, or desire but to be really present and involved; to put the whole (embodied) being into action, to be committed to a social cause, and to assume the bodily risks, work, and demands of such a commitment" (Sutton 2007, 130).[349] Assuming the risks of being harmed is what the women had decided to do, to protect their space for female community leadership, organization to cope with, prevent, and eradicate violence.

For Teresa, of about seventy-years old, it is by physically putting her body out there at risk to violence and activating her own political contacts within the Peronist municipal government—a simple phone call to local authorities—that she and her community had stopped the dramatic event before it was too late. The police, Teresa claimed, would not have done anything to protect them. In fact, their inaction, she argued, revealed their complicity. Thus, to resist the assault, the women had performed what could be seen as "masculine" agency and methods and found alternative political channels of influence to protect their belongings and their political project. *Poner el cuerpo*—or putting their bodies on the line— here, was a gendered, extra-institutional resistance to acts of violence they perceived as a public expression of patriarchal violence.

But the story of "good, strong women" defending their space against the "bad, aggressive, male assaulters" was not that straightforward either and the women's narratives demonstrated some tensions and ambiguities in their political belongings. Teresa is a proud Peronist—just like the social-political organization that had supposedly planned, organized, and executed the assault against the organization. When I asked how she reconciled her political

---

[349] This analysis certainly resonates with Judith Butler's later book *Notes toward a performative theory of assembly* (2015), where they discuss the coalitional politics of democratic popular assemblies, performed through the body, by popular sectors living under neoliberal precarity.

affiliation to Peronism with her feminist stances, she replied straightforwardly, "We're all

Peronists." If Peronism had claimed to champion social justice in Argentina, in the recent years,

they had also led forward the gender mainstreaming agenda and most GBV policies had been

adopted under the Center-Left Peronist governments of Fernández de Kirchner. Yet, while she

remained both firmly convinced of her Peronist identity and belonging to the movement and

party, Teresa would not hesitate to criticize Peronist social organizations' patriarchal methods,

particularly regarding women.

For example, for Teresa and other workers in the civil association I interviewed, the

Program Women Make (2013-2020)[350] was both an opportunity for a formal recognition of

women's domestic labor and a new tool of control for political brokers in charge of

implementation. In practice, they denounced how the program's delivery remained under the

control of patriarchal men who maintained women in situation of violence, while collecting the

money from the program. As she claimed:

> In the end, many times it was the man who ended up benefiting because in Women Make, which was for all women in situation of violence, paid them, but their obligation was to attend self-help groups or individual therapy. But sometimes the political brokers didn't allow them to attend the groups, the therapy, so we practically didn't see the women anymore because many of the Peronist brokers are macho and abusive, and they are the comrades. You know? Quite authoritarian.[351]

Teresa's simultaneous characterization of the assaulters as "machos and abusive" and

"the comrades" reflect the double struggle popular-sector women engage in, in the context of

popular-feminist militancy and accompaniment of women experiencing GBV in a largely

---

[350] As detailed in Chapter 2, the program Women Make adopted in 2013 provided a six-month financial accompaniment for victims of violence along a training and promise of professional insertion in a worker's cooperative administrated by the Ministry of Social Development.
[351] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

marginalized area.[352] Here, women's opportunities for economic empowerment were mediated and constrained by patriarchal channels of access to the state, and women's violence experienced in the private sphere constituted a direct barrier to their plain inclusion into citizenship.

When I did fieldwork, the association worked with 11 groups of 8 to 15 women, attending approximately 100 people per week.[353] During the 1990s, the women's association had started working—through National, World Bank, and UNIFEM funding—with other community organizations, providing group and individual accompaniment to women experiencing GBV, training workshops in sewing and small-scale entrepreneurship and until recently, worked with men who engage in GBV.[354] Eventually, through the UN funded project (2005-2012),[355] the Women's Network articulates 14 assistance centers, all under formal agreement with the municipality. In 2020, through a formal agreement with the municipality the organization became a banner institution of the women's movement in the South Conurbano and until recently, the main network of assistance services available in this densely populated area. As tight collaborator with the Municipal state, the civil association was directly involved in providing assistance, individual and group discussions, as well as some professional training.

To understand the organization's complex relationships with the local state, provincial ministries, other Peronist social organizations, and their community, we must first go back to the

---

[352] The Program *Acompañar*, which replaced Ellas Hacen in 2020, became administered by the national Ministry of Women, Gender, and Diversity, which transferred the money directly to the policy recipient. The organization was largely favorable to the by-passing of social organizations in this case.

[353] Based on what Teresa told me, trans women were referred to another organization in the neighborhood who specialized in the LGBTQI+ community.

[354] As Teresa and N2 told me, the organization decided in 2020 to stop working with men who had committed violence, mainly because of their conclusion, after years of experience working with men in discussion groups that, *"Men are already set in their ways. Men don't change, they don't change. They don't change. For a man, he stops being an aggressor only when the woman changes"* (Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022).

[355] *Construcción de Ciudadanía.*

history of this women's association. Following her first ENM in 1989 in Rosario, where she had

solidified friendships, political, and intellectual ties with Catholic feminists, Teresa left the

Sociedad de Fomento, where she had volunteered since the end of the military dictatorship, to

create a space where women's issues would be heard and addressed in their specificity. The

women's organization was created in the early 1990s only a few meters away from the

community organization. Domestic violence—often committed by the same members of their

community, political, and social organizations—quickly emerged as a main concern amongst

women of the neighborhood, who, while discussing their daily lives and challenges, politicized

their individual experiences and started building a sense of feminine solidarity. The rise of

poverty and informal labor during the 1990s had transformed the association's link to the local

women, and violence against women committed by their husbands and partners became visible.

Meanwhile, feminist discussions of violence against women in the 1980s and 1990s,

centered on family and intimate-partner violence and sought to bring to light the enduring,

pervasive physical and psychological violence women experience in their homes, from the hands

of their partners, husbands, brothers, and fathers. This type of violence, they argued, had been

long ignored by a patriarchal state that dismissed women's lived experience and continued

enforcing arbitrary delimitation between the public and the private sphere to limit the scope of

interventions. Yet, popular-sector women's concerns for basic service provision in their

communities and involvement in mixed political organizations also clashed with middle-class,

urban feminist movements' demands, centered on more traditionally feminist issues, including

domestic violence against women, contraception, and abortion.

Teresa recalled her first experiences with the National Women's Encounters in 1989, at a time in which popular-sector women's alliances with Left and Peronist organizations were often sidelined, as women mobilized through traditional gender roles, as mothers and caretakers, and thus, for feminists, did not challenge the patriarchal social order. Many women from popular sectors felt marginalized in early ENMs, and their voice, experiences, and theorizing of oppression and violence felt delegitimized: "It was difficult for popular sectors to enter into feminism."[356] She recalls that in discussions, women from popular sectors felt their voice appropriated and their agency, denied. For example, she recalls how her friend Alicia, who experienced violence by her husband, felt that discussions on violence in poor neighborhoods were often led by violence "experts" and intellectuals:

> And at night, Alicia and I would get together, you know, and talk about how it went. You know? There were eight of us. How did it go for us? How did it go for you here? What happened to you? And she told me, "I'm not going anymore." Why not? "Because they don't let me speak. They're all professionals talking about us. They talk about how we get beaten or whatever. And I wanted to speak, she told me no, that they wouldn't give me the floor, I don't know, but in the end, they were the ones talking."[357]

Similarly, feminism was, at the time, considered by most women's movements in the PBA involved in Left and human rights organizations, as bourgeois, too intellectual, and foreign.[358] Popular-sector women felt delegitimized and unauthorized to speak about the issues that affect them and their specific demands. Meanwhile, popular sector women's organizations in

---

[356] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

[357] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

[358] The Madres de Plaza de Mayo also predominantly embraced a class-based approach in which women's struggles were to be led along men, and gender-related issues were perceived as counter-productive to class-based emancipation.

the PBA were organising and building their own agenda within and in parallel to the ENMs,[359] organizing as part of the women's movement:

> We were born without gas, without asphalt, and without a telephone, and we also wanted to have hot water. We wanted to have asphalt, and we wanted another telephone. You're riding in the locomotive, we don't mind riding in the caboose, but someday we'll get there.[360]

It is in this context of high unemployment, poverty, and social mobilisation that the ENM took place in La Plata in 2001, hosting a total of 15,000 participants. Despite the centrality of the crisis of the economic and political model, feminist discussions on violence against women were widely attended, and a group of feminists called Feminists in the Encounter,[361] for example, worked on dismantling myths that blur the boundary between love and violence in intimate relations, with the slogan "Don't say love when there's violence."[362] Popular sector women's presence at the 2001 ENM, including *piqueteras* organized under the banners and modes of action of traditional political organizations, put in tension the principles of political autonomy, horizontality, and consensual decision-making processes usually adopted in the encounters (Alma and Lorenzo 2009, 124).[363] Women's human rights organisations, who had strongly

---

[359] In 1996, in the Southern city of Bahia Blanca, a Regional Women's Encounter is organized, and the provincial Women's Council's provides financial support to the event grouping women's organizations from all over the province (*El Día*. "Quinto encuentro regional de la mujer bonaerense." September 18, 1994).

[360] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

[361] *Feministas en el Encuentro.*

[362] "Las Feministas En El XVI Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres. Algunas de Nuestras Consignas," 2001. CeDInCi.

[363] The crisis of 2001 sparked an increased visibility of LGBT activism, in particular, traverstis-trans activism in the province of Buenos Aires, one of the most visible one led by Diana Sacayán, an Indigenous trans woman originally from the Province of Tucumán. The movement's demands were centered around addressing the HIV/aids crisis and pushing for the derogation of the contravention code active in the Province of Buenos Aires, which allows detaining individuals who wear clothes that "belong to the other sex" and engaged in prostitution (*El Día*. "Incidente y detenidos en una marcha contra el sida." February 12, 2001).Transfeminist activists in Matanza initially allied with the *Movimiento Territorial de Liberación*, which was the Communist Party's *piquetero* movement, founding with other travesties the MAL, the *Movimiento anti-discriminatorio de liberación*. *Piqueteras* demanded,"Freedom for the imprisoned picketers, for the dismissal of all criminal cases against popular activists, and to defeat the austerity plan." ("XVI Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres. Las Mujeres Con Los Piqueteros Contra Los Ajustadores," 2001. CeDInCI).

opposed the amnesty laws adopted in 1988 and 1990, were also putting the spotlight on gendered and sexual violence committed in the province against women during the Dirty War (1976-1983). Again, many feminists sustained that the problematization of power relations in the private sphere remained absent from popular sectors' demands, and that gender remained subordinated to class both in political discourse and demands (cited in Alma and Lorenzo 2009, 136–37).[364]

Yet, despite tensions with women's movements who claimed belonging to both class-based, male-dominated movements and feminist movements, the 2001 ENM were transformative for the women of La Matanza who attended. During the 2001-2003 crisis and the ENMs, new understandings of feminism as a political identity developed amongst popular sectors, as related to the economic crisis and the neoliberalization of the state in Argentina:

> The man was no longer the provider, but he continued to be abusive, you understand? And so, that allowed us, as women, when going out to work, to have a different perspective and start to take ownership of this and begin to see, to work on the issue that women are citizens. And there, everyone, the country, was hit or struck, because the oppressor was the State; they had taken our money, they took our work, they took everything.[365]

Thus, popular feminists redefined GBV in their everyday advocacy as they inhabit the purple area. The narrative presented by Teresa following the assault, as well as previous discourses held by popular-sector women, illustrated an understanding of GBV that challenged the state's dominant conceptualizations of violence, victimhood, and perpetration. Rather than

---

[364] As Marta Vasallo, historical feminist and political activist, published online following the encounter: "The painstakingly found words of women telling their stories, aspirations, achievements, their double resistance against authorities, and often against their own husbands, ended up too submerged in partisan slogans. [...] The left and social resistance movements often prove to be spaces refractory to feminist critique, from conservative positions that, while not ignoring sexism, consider it a 'secondary problem' to be overcome in the socialist future but not to be fought in the present struggle."

[365] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

being understood as solely rooted in unequal gender relations, the popular feminists I interviewed understood structural class and racial exclusions in articulation with patriarchal norms, and women's lack of access to state services, unemployment, and poverty as *forms* of GBV. In other words, economic, social, and political exclusions were seen as generating the structural conditions for interpersonal gender violence in their communities' families. As Teresa recalls, men's social downgrading and unemployment, and women's entrance to the (mostly informal) labor market, altered gender norms and representations surrounding "providing for the family," but did not put an end to male domination and violence within it. Thus, violence was not only economic, nor was it only patriarchal, but related to neoliberalism's impact on power relations within the family, but also between impoverished sectors and the labor market:

> It's not just that violence is political, it's about the private and the public. With the paradigm shift, the man ceases to be the provider because he doesn't have a job. So, the woman emerges as the head of the household, the feminization of poverty. So, we start addressing the issue of the family because if you're the head of the family, if you're the one working, why does the man always continue to be seen as the boss?[366]

The civil association challenged dominant understandings of victimhood, and instead preferred to refer to "women in situation of violence" instead of "women victims," discursively affirming the agency of popular-sector women:

> Before, we used to call them "women victims of violence." When it was 2001, we changed the word. So, we started talking about women in situations of violence, and now we are also trying to change how we refer to them because if you label someone as a victim, they're sitting in the victim's chair. If we talk about a woman in a situation, situations change, they're variable. Today I'm experiencing violence, it doesn't mean I'll be with a violent person my whole life. The message from us is of popular education, right? It changes from the meaning too.[367]

---

[366] Interview with *piquetera* political activist in the FOL/Marabunta. In person, in San Isidro, April 28, 2022.
[367] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

As a result, as Teresa explained to me, political entanglement between women living in marginalized communities, feminist movements, and class-based struggles, disrupted the "autonomous" and "institutionalist" binary division in feminist movements. The simultaneous work of the organization with feminist activisms, community centers, Peronist social organizations, states, as well as international organizations, reflected the women's political intersectionality, and the materialization of their *mirada política*—or political perspective— enmeshed in multiple political fields:

> So, you see, this political perspective we have is based on our life experiences working with violence. I mean, when you ask how a network is born, we were born intertwined. Because we couldn't just go here, then there, then there according to political timelines. It's not like we're a network that only deals with gender and violence issues; we work through all political moments, face them, and survive them, otherwise we can't sustain... But then, when things return to normal, we go back to our work, you understand?[368]

For the popular feminist I interviewed, feminist, popular, and policy action were often intertwined and at times, working in contradictory ways. For Teresa, the Women's Network became, in a way, "became the municipality's public policy."[369] The civil association had just received the title of Municipal Secretary of Women and Gender—acting as both a civil society and a state organization in sometimes uncomfortable ways.

As defined by Graciela Di Marco (2010b), "the feminist people"[370] constitutes a nodal point for rethinking subjected groups' belonging, through a collective, grassroots democratic project. These women's strategies of survival challenged traditional gender roles through their

---

[368] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.
[369] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.
[370] Translation of the original concept "*el pueblo feminista.*"

political participation and collective action amongst popular-sector men and through the safeguarding of their political spaces as women, yet also challenged the public/private divide by centering their social and policy work on women experiencing intimate-partner violence. The intersectionality, dynamism, and political messiness that characterizes popular feminisms in Argentina—constitutes a *political positioning*, situating their worldviews but also their agentic behavior in-between class-based social organizations, feminist movements, and state policy.[371]

The event that took place at the community organization encapsulates the ways in which popular-sector women build and sustain political spaces when navigating sometimes contradictory belongings to feminist, Left, and Peronist ideological terrains. Seeing themselves as simultaneously victims and agents involves performing multiple roles as political actors that disrupts the binary of gendered expressions. Playing on multiple political fields at the same time to survive a patriarchal and capitalist exclusionary environment and for material and symbolic gains— performative feminine victimhood and masculine agency became both part of popular feminists' daily discourses and practices, in their advocacy against intertwined violence in the sphere of the intimate and in their political activism.

FROM JUDICIALIZED ASSISTANCE TO "ACCOMPANIMENT"

Given the situated meanings attributed to GBV, popular feminists negotiated the methods of intervention to work with women experiencing violence; their methods intertwined yet also partly differed from the state's, particularly regarding the role of the judiciary branch and police services. "The state" thus occupied this ambiguous discursive role as a homogeneous

---

[371] As explained in Chapter 1, this conceptualization differs from Kimberley Crenshaw's understanding of institutional intersectionality as a social positioning (1990; 2017b), as it considers women's agentic and political action within these structures.

"oppressor" for its responsibility for their neighborhoods' precarity, but also concretely treated

as non-permanent, flexible entity to be appropriated, challenged, and democratized through

public policies. Criticism received from autonomous feminists who refused to engage with the

state was met with a pragmatic concern for material resources to act against violence against

women, and push for state accountability:

> And don't forget that after the fall of 2001, we had to rebuild a state. And we built this municipal state. And we are the public policy. They [the feminists] criticized us because they said we were cheap labor in labor flexibility, but if we didn't ask for the money, they would give it to anyone who wouldn't do the same. I mean, it doesn't matter if we have to outsource, we'll do it, give us the money and we'll do the work. But all along, we had a positive image that we knew the state had to take responsibility for violence. We know that someday they have to stop giving us money and hire professionals. The State has to make the policy, but until it does, we have to do it.[372]

Working with specific policies of assistance, courts, for example, involved building the

state, replacing the state, and opposing the state. For example, the Social Development Secretary

had approached the association for the creation and administration of refuges, the Women's

Association of La Matanza had instead offered to expand integral, interdisciplinary assistance

services for women and children who experience violence. They challenged the municipal state's

policy solutions, proposed their own, and negotiated resources to materialize it:

> We don't agree that women should continue to leave their homes and hide in shelters. It's necessary, but it shouldn't be the main focus, right? So, we prefer that women have conditions, have a center to go to closer to their home. Right? So, we need the economic conditions to operate. So, we made this counterproposal, and the municipality accepted it.[373]

---

[372] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.
[373] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

This view resonated with another participant, feminist activist in a worker's union, understanding of popular feminism as way to make policy gains, but also as a method of negotiation that involved state and non-state instruments. As she argued: "We position ourselves from a class-based feminism, which fights for equal rights, fights for public policies that restore and guarantee those rights and finds resources to guarantee these public policies."[374]

But more than negotiating institutional resources, the popular feminists interviewed also showed different understandings of protection, and risk than those offered by state assistance policies. Emergency measures of protection were, for example, perceived as inadequate to protect marginalized women from domestic violence and even, as generating other constrains and burdens on them. Adriana, who worked at the association, told me that regardless of emergency measures and temporary refuges—without permanent access to housing, women who experience domestic violence often remain trapped with their aggressor, or in a never-ending cycle of emergency measures.[375] When referring to these same women, Teresa referred to them as a "captive population,"[376] between the court, group discussion sessions, and their violent homes. In addition, the exclusions from the household of the perpetrator often end up benefitting men who are released from their parental responsibilities: "It ends up favoring the man because he ends up being single father without responsibilities. They pay child support when they want, and when they don't all that weight falls on the woman."[377]

---

[374] Interview with CTA Union worker (Gender Commission). In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.
[375] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 10, 2022.
[376] "*población cautiva*". Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.
[377] Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

Since the outburst of the Ni Una Menos movement in 2015, social and popular organizations who were previously reluctant to feminism, started addressing issues of GBV within their own ranks. The picketer front *Frente de organizaciones en lucha* (Front of organizations in struggle, FOL)—autonomous from the PJ and belonging to the Left—indeed created a Gender Commission, and started addressing GBV in the organization. Accompaniment involved working with some state institutions—such as local clinics and schools—while limiting interactions with institutions that would not respond to the victim's needs and desires:

> Because between the neighborhood and the organization, they are like the two spaces, and let's say, the health center and the school are also like the institutions that have the greatest capacity to address things and to provide support, and where the comrades frequently go, right? And then, there's also the courts and whatnot, but there is no more of a relationship there, it's more like we go there are get frustrated, and the Women's Police Stations don't treat us the same way, it's like the relationship there is not an open dialogue, but always very tense and conflictive.[378]

Just like the street-level bureaucrats I interviewed, mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, respecting the person's pace was crucial. In FOL, accompaniment involved understanding, recognizing, and centering the person's desire, even if it felt counterintuitive or counterproductive to the aim of escaping a situation of violence, even in cases of high risk:

> And the other thing we have to deal with, which frustrates us a lot, is the back and forth of support. I mean, there are setbacks, like she comes back and approaches us, then she doesn't answer our calls for a year. (...) But well, these are frustrations that one has to learn to accept. You know? It's what I was telling you. We don't decide for others. We accompany in the best, most loving, and pedagogically possible way what they want to do. And many times, in 80% of cases, the comrades don't want to do what we want them to do. And that's very frustrating. But well. It's part of understanding the other as an autonomous person, so to speak.[379]

---

[378] Interview with a *piquetera* political activist in the FOL/Marabunta. In person, in San Isidro, April 28, 2022.
[379] Interview with a *piquetera* political activist in the FOL/Marabunta. In person, in San Isidro, April 28, 2022.

Their understanding of assistance was therefore based on the premise that frustration is not an impediment to the process of escaping a violent relationship but rather, an inherent part of the intersubjective act of accompanying someone experiencing violence in their non-linear journey. This approach involved grounding intervention on the person's needs, rather than on precise definitions of violence, victimhood, and pre-established routes. Putting in practice this approach meant opening to possibilities for re-defining violence—and re-defining what is "needed" to eradicate it. To finish, I believe the following example illustrates well how "assistance" can be re-interpreted in a different way, and for different purposes that go beyond preserving the person's immediate physical integrity. This includes, for example, accompanying women who have experienced violence in their recovery by providing a space of intimacy:

> For example, accompanying for years a lesbian couple of two "cholas," two Bolivian comrades who cannot be seen as such, not as a couple. One has a husband, the other is single, let's say. No, they didn´t manage to get her to marry a guy, and no, she suffered a corrective rape a few years ago for being a lesbian. And they did a lot, they became a couple in the organization, they met in the organization, they are neighbors, and we have been accompanying them and the accompaniment implies talking to them, containing them, strengthening them, lending them a place to see each other. I don't know, going to open the FOL office for them. On a Saturday at 08:00 so they can see each other and share. I mean, that's like the accompaniment.[380]

To conclude, in this last section I conceptualized what I call the "purple area" as a gendered site of women's political subjectivity and an example of what Sara C. Motta would call the "feminization of resistance," highlighting "the ways in which racialized subaltern women who simultaneously face multiple oppressions can also create and experiment with new political subjectivities, re-imagine emancipatory politics, and produce and embody multiple grounds of epistemological difference and becoming" (Motta 2021, 7).

---

[380] Interview with a *piquetera* political activist in the FOL/Marabunta. In person, in San Isidro, April 28, 2022.

As denounced by the Ni Una Menos movement more massively since 2015 in Argentina, existing protection, assistance, and prevention policies reflect a weak political commitment to eradicate GBV. In 2020, ninety-four femicides and transfemicides took place in the Province of Buenos Aires (PBA), forty-nine of which occurred in the *Conurbano Bonaerense*. This chapter has tackled the problematization of gender-based violence policies in the PBA from the 1990s to 2021, from both the policy and civil society perspective, as well as the gender justice regimes they produce.

The analysis presented illustrates that neoliberalism has shaped in the long run the problematization of GBV in the PBA, modelling the gender justice regime in important ways. In the 1990s, a security approach to family violence reinforced a familialist regime and subjectified women as responsible for solving the "crisis of the family" in impoverished sectors. Despite a problem shift signalled by the incorporation of a gender perspective in 2012 to violence policy and a social justice approach, in the PBA the prevailing framework upon which sanction, protection, and assistance policies were developed endured. Policies in practice often remained grounded in gendered and classed assumptions about victimhood, perpetration, individual responsibility, and agency. While the quantity of assistance services has improved during the Left Turn, the general trend has been an ongoing reliance on the judicial system for the management of violence against women and a judicialization of the logic of assistance. These quantitative and qualitative trends have produced binary subjectifications of victims and perpetrators which exclude the most vulnerable.

The chapter also explored how neoliberalism has affected in the long run the ways in which popular feminists experience, cope with, challenge and negotiate their political advocacy

and anti-GBV activism in their everyday interactions with police, courts, state programs, social organizations, and women themselves. Neoliberalism's impact on unemployment and poverty changed gender relations in popular families; women's increased participation in the informal labor market, along their ongoing submission within sometimes violent relations were increasingly politicized through collective grassroots organizing and experiences with ENMs. Neoliberal reforms have thus profoundly transformed political subjectivities and gave rise to popular feminism as a territorially grounded, pragmatic, and intersectional political commitment and space of activism for gender and social justice.

Inhabiting and building what I call a "purple area" of citizenship, characterized by structural socioeconomic exclusions and patriarchal violence in their intimate and community lives, women work with, against, and refine state problems and instruments in their everyday struggles to end GBV. Their overlapping loyalties and belongings to different political spaces produce discourses that blur the gendered boundary between interpersonal and structural violence—thus contributing to re-problematizing it. These redefinitions from the grassroots pose challenges to the provincial gender justice regime—although in very localized and fragmented ways. *Feministas populares'* support for the Ni Una Menos movement since 2015 can therefore be understood as pushbacks against individualized, judicialized conflict management in the context of gender, class, and racial exclusion.

This chapter has shown that in a post-neoliberal context, neither "the state" nor "civil society" constitute homogeneous, mutually exclusive categories—both street-level bureaucrats committed to feminist projects and activists outside institutions often push counter-discourses that are nonetheless curtailed by institutional limitations. In the purple area, popular feminists

sometimes claim autonomy, but sometimes become intertwined with more powerful groups and institutions, having real world effects on the institutional possibilities offered to persons who experience GBV. Under the neoliberal principles of civil society participation and decentralization as democratization, the purple area instead reflects a relegation of state responsibilities to, on one hand, women experiencing violence themselves, and on the other, highly feminized organizations conducting mostly unpaid labor, to protect and assist women experiencing violence in their communities. Yet at the same time, paradoxically, through this process, popular feminists have pushed alternative meanings and methods as those offered by the state, reinventing what a life without violence means.

***

Chapter 5: From Maternalism to Bodily Autonomy in the Province of Santa Fe

The Synergetic Transformation of the Gender Justice Regime

INTRODUCTION

When abortion on-demand was legalized in Argentina in December 2020, feminists in the Province of Santa Fe (PSF) were not starting anew with pregnancy terminations. During my fieldwork in 2021 and 2022, I may have heard this sentence more than a dozen times from activists, NGO workers, public servants, and abortion providers:

> So, our province has a whole history of implementing the ILE.[381] And besides, this is reinforced by a law. It's not like in other places where the law puts an issue on the agenda that didn't exist. Here, what the law does is to consolidate and legitimize something that was already being done.[382]

Rather than a push to start building from the ground-up, in Santa Fe the abortion law adopted in 2020 constituted a consolidating, legitimating legal device for practices that had already been around. How have discourses and practices over reproductive roles and responsibilities, abortion, health and rights changed over time in Santa Fe? How have they reflected in the provincial gender justice regime, and with what effects? This chapter highlights how the problematization of reproductive rights (RR) in Santa Fe has transformed from institutionalizing abortion as a criminal, socially illegitimated practice in the 1990s—to an increasingly legal, socially legitimized one in 2020. This shift in the provincial gender justice regime took place through historically-constructed synergic relationships between feminist and women's movements and socially-oriented public health actors since the 1990s—mostly driven

---

[381] ILE stands for "*interrupción legal del embarazo*", or legal pregnancy termination.
[382] Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Online, March 5, 2021.

by early experiences in the province's metropole, the city of Rosario. The chapter thus traces the role of feminist and women's movements in propelling and negotiating transformations in the PSF's gender justice regime, particularly, through the sexual and reproductive health programs implemented in the province since the 1990s.

The chapter unfolds in three parts: first, I explore the early problematization of reproductive *health* in the Municipality of Rosario during the neoliberal decade, under the local governance of the Socialist Party, dynamic feminist movements, and a strong social medicine health sector. I then turn to the Left Turn (2003-2015), arguing that those early alliances had paved the way for a slow turn to a reproductive *rights* framework in the province, pushed by active feminist movements and ally public health actors in the local and provincial governments. Last, focusing on the 2015-2020 period, I show that discourses and practices of feminist networks on the ground, illustrate both processes of dismantlement of maternalistic institutions, as well as the everyday construction of abortion as a reproductive right. As a result, impoverished women have become increasingly institutionalized as subjects of health, and later, subjects of bodily autonomy rights. While still operating within the boundaries of the previous legal abortion regime, these efforts have paved the way for the incorporation of abortion on-demand when the law was adopted at the national level, in 2020.

A Socialist Experiment in the 1990s: Rosario's Early Reproductive Rights Agenda

The 1990s witnessed the pioneer adoption of reproductive rights programs in Rosario, when the national government was blocking any initiatives related to the Cairo (1994) UN Conference on population.[383] Throughout the 1990s in Santa Fe, the decentralization and

---

[383] I discuss this in Chapter 3.

neoliberal healthcare reforms occurred amid the development of synergetic relationships between local feminist and women's movements, the Socialist municipal government of Rosario, and the city's public health sector that allowed to build a pioneering local reproductive rights agenda. Following the 2001-2003 crisis, Rosario's local agenda, similarly to what was happening had the national level, provincialized under a public health program centered on gendered notions of "responsible procreation." The 2001 crisis, in addition to increasing demands from popular-sector women for the deepening and expansion of reproductive health services, allowed for a partial provincialization of the agenda. Much more conflictive and facing greater opposition from conservative sectors, this negotiation process led to the adoption of a provincial program on "responsible procreation" in the PSF, that institutionalizes abortion as a "criminal" and "risk" practice to be prevented, challenging only in a limited way the prevailing maternalistic gender regime in the province.

In this first section of the chapter, I argue that for the past three decades, the problematization of women's bodily autonomy rights have revolved around three core aspects: (1) defining the meaning, scope, and gender of reproductive responsibility and rights; (2) negotiating *who* the subjects of the policy are and what power they hold over their reproductive decisions—between the foetus, the state, and the pregnant person. Institutionally, these negotiations have manifested through contestations over the means through which reproductive rights would be materialized (i.e. the types of contraceptive methods available and abortion techniques); (3) delimiting and confining the right of medical professionals to conscientious objection, limiting its impact on women's rights.

Rosario is, according to most people I talked to, a *different* place. If the "Cradle of the Flag"[384] is often seen as distinctively *progressive*—understood as European-like social democratic, multiple interpretations of this distinct character resurfaced during interviews. [385] Amongst feminist sectors, however, narratives surrounding the *Rosarina* identity were often tied to its important historical feminist movements, its strong healthcare system, and the unusual presence of the Socialist Party in governing the municipality and later, the province. In turn, the Argentine Socialist Party who has frequently governed the city, contrary to other parties, "Has had a whole bunch of projects and initiatives and things written and reflected on regarding the situation of women, regarding inequality, violence, sexuality. [...] I mean, it's a party that has all that somewhat European, somewhat internationalist heritage, and that well, brings all this to Argentine politics."[386] When it comes to abortion in Argentina, Rosario is often given as an example of pioneer in the implementation of legal abortions. It is with pride that multiple interlocutors would tell me, "In fact, Rosario is the first in the province, zero deaths from clandestine abortions, right?"[387]

In the early 1990s, Rosario is amongst the first municipalities in the country to adopt a gender equality agenda, often leading or closely following the city of Buenos Aires. If the first Women's Area in Rosario was created during the 1980s under the municipal government of Horacio Uzandizaga (1983-1989), from the UCR, by the late 1980s, women's rights were part of

---

[384] "*La Cuna de la Bandera*" is Rosario's common nickname, as it is in this city that the Argentine flag was designed and raised for the first time, in 1812.

[385] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

[386] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[387] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

the Socialist Party's platform of Hector Cavallero who, from early on in his mandate,

implemented programs in the realms of women's health, political participation, and violence

against women. In Rosario, reproductive health became a core area propelled by the local

women's movements and public health sectors.[388]

With its 3,000 participants, the 1989 ENM was an important space of articulation and

debate that reflected a growing and increasingly diversified local and national women's

movements.[389] For the first time, the workshop "Birth control and abortion" made its way into

the official program.[390] In other words, it is in Rosario that sexual and reproductive rights, and

abortion specifically, start formally entering the ENMs.[391]

Pushed by this growing feminist movement, feminist Socialists, and early local

femocrats, the Women's Integral Health Plan was adopted in the early 1990s to attend women's

specific healthcare needs, implemented by the local Secretary of Health with the participation of

the Women's Area. Only a few years following the Cairo (1994) and Beijing (1995) conferences

that provided the first international legal framework on sexual and reproductive rights, in 1996

the Municipality of Rosario creates the Program of Responsible Procreation in the Secretary of

Health,[392] and starts purchasing and distributing oral contraceptive methods in municipal

healthcare centers.[393] The program embraced both a rights-based and health-based approach:

---

[388] As I explain in Chapter 3, in Argentina, birth control was decriminalized in 1987—that is, rendered not punishable—but state funding of contraception was still not permitted under administrative laws until 2003.
[389] The first ENM held in 1986 had 1,000 participants (Buenos Aires), followed by 600 in 1987 (Córdoba), and 2,000 in 1988 (Mendoza) (Alma and Lorenzo 2009).
[390] That year, a record number of self-convoked workshops (36) are organized, illustrating a diversification of participation beyond traditional organizations linked to the PCR.
[391] Anonymous participant, cited in Alma and Lorenzo (2009, 155).
[392] Municipal Regulation 6.244.
[393] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.

> Considering that denying access to information and contraceptive methods while condemning women who resort to abortion is denying the right to motherhood in a voluntary and desired state and denounces an authoritarian conception.[394]

Rosario's early reproductive health and right policy thus largely reflected the UN Conferences—yet went further, by questioning what was perceived as an authoritarian maternalistic status quo. The need to ensure women's right to "voluntary" and "desired" maternity partially echoed arguments formulated by the women's movements, but the municipality remained limited to the legal context of criminalized abortion imposed by the national criminal code. Ultimately, the program's goals were to "Prevent risks such as premature pregnancy, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases."[395]In all, the program still problematized abortion as a health risk to be prevented.

In that sense, feminist movements demanded much more radical changes, including a rethinking of women's sexuality and abortion not as a "risk" but as a right, and a form of emancipation from maternalism. Discussions over the right to decide over one's body in the national and regional women's encounters revolved around redefining gender relations, roles, and meanings around sexuality, parenthood, and desire. First, women's and feminist movements in the ENM and ERM demanded to reframe reproduction as shared responsibility between men and women.[396] In all, they associated the dominant norms and institutions reinforcing biological

---

[394] Municipal Regulation 6.244.
[395] Municipal Regulation 6,244.
[396] In the workshop on health at the 1994 Regional Encounter in Rosario, participants demanded to hold a broader societal debate on abortion, "Taking into account as a premise that it is not solely the responsibility of the woman"[396] ("Taller 'Salud.'" In Conclusions of the XIV National Women's Encounter. Rosario: CeDInCI, 1994). This same logic was reiterated the following year, in Santa Fe: "We believe in responsible motherhood and fatherhood. The best legacy we can leave our children is for them to feel wanted" ("Taller 'Salud Reproductiva.'" In *Conclusions of the V Regional Women's Encounter*. Santa Fe: CeDInCI, 1995).

reproduction as a "naturally feminine" or woman-specific issue, with broader patterns of gender inequality in society:

> Access to employment is easier for single women or married women without children. Motherhood, being considered solely the responsibility of women, continues to be a discriminatory criterion against them in access to employment.
>
> There is a lack of reproductive autonomy in women. The lack of information and access to responsible reproduction leads to unintended pregnancies.[397]

Already, the local Woman's Agency emphasized the existence of *unpunishable abortions*—referring to the exceptions to the criminal code—and demanded their implementation. The agency emphasized how *illegal* abortions, more than abortions themselves, constituted risks for women's lives and health: "Illegal abortion is in many cases a cause of death among women. There is fear of having an abortion and difficulties in doing so, even in permitted cases, in public hospitals."[398]

Demands for the legalization of abortion were thus attached to demands for women to become agents of their sexual and reproductive decisions. Reproductive rights—including access to information, birth control, and abortion—were thus seen as vehicles to de-gender biological reproduction by situating women as autonomous subjects of rights.[399] However, similarly to the program, as part of the women's encounters held in Santa Fe the denial of reproductive rights

---

[397] "Taller 'Salud Reproductiva.'" In *Conclusions of the V Regional Women's Encounter*. Santa Fe: CeDInCI, 1995.
[398] Vallejos (1999).
[399] As mentioned in the Conclusions of the 1998 regional women's encounter in San Javier: "women have always been told where to place desire, and in the Modern Age - mainly due to socio-economic needs - the mandate was: PLACE DESIRE IN MOTHERHOOD. This resulted in women having a fragmented sexuality, often irreconcilable between reproduction and pleasure. The different ruptures that women are making in order to demystify, lose fears and shame are discussed so that we can recover our right to exercise a free and responsible sexuality, knowing that being a woman is not the same as being a mother, approaching what we understand as sexual health: the ability to enjoy and control sexual behavior; being free from fears, shame that inhibit our response and being free from organic disorders. This necessarily implies the ABILITY TO DECIDE ABOUT OUR OWN BODIES" ("Taller 'Salud Sexual de Las Mujeres.'" In *Conclusions of the VIII Regional Women's Encounter*. San Javier: CeDInCI, 1998).

was understood as a form of gendered authoritarian repression: On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, women have called governments to "end the repression against women for the decision to have or not have children."[400]

In addition, the ENMs organized during the 1990s in Santa Fe reflected growing demands amongst women for a democratization of reproductive autonomy through the public healthcare system, mostly for the benefit of the least privileged. Beyond reproductive choice, the conclusions of the encounters show a consensual take on the need to push for the public funding of reproductive health services. The demands for abortion included adequate sanitary conditions, dignified and humanized hospital attention that respect women's lives and move away from logics of population control.[401]

Thus, Rosario's pioneering reproductive health and rights program was largely supported by the local feminist movement, for its inclusion of the most socioeconomically marginalized sectors of society. In the 1995 Regional Women's Encounter in Santa Fe, participants adhered to the bill presented in the National Congress for the creation of the National Program of Responsible Procreation, arguing that "With this law, the aim is to expand a right that the most privileged social sectors have had for a long time" and as an efficient way to both reduce maternal-infantile mortality and the free exercise of reproductive rights.[402]

---

[400] "Taller 'Nuestros Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos.'" In *Conclusions of the IV Regional Women's Encounter*. Rosario: CeDInCI, 1994.

[401] As the conclusion of the 1994 IV Regional Women's Encounter in Rosario state, "Legal and free abortion in adequate health conditions and respect for the life of the woman. The right to have the children one desires, when one desires, and how one desires, with dignified and humanized hospital care. We defend the right to be subjects and not objects of population policies." ("Taller 'Nuestros Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos.'" In *Conclusions of the IV Regional Women's Encounter*. Rosario: CeDInCI, 1994).

[402] "Taller 'Salud Reproductiva.'" In *Conclusions of the V Regional Women's Encounter*. Santa Fe: CeDInCI, 1995.

But beyond the demands formulated by the women's movements which, from 1994 on, became partly supported by the international reproductive rights agenda, local public health sectors were also pushing for this agenda on the ground. In fact, as I was told in interview in Rosario, reproductive health and rights already formed part of the informal practices adopted by a set of committed public health public servants in the early 1990s. As an ex-Program Director reveals in an interview:

> Before 1996, we began to buy contraceptives and choose oral contraceptives as cycle regulators, because otherwise, they could not be legally purchased since we could not provide contraceptives. So, we had 100, or 200 thousand women with menstrual irregularities, but we gave them as cycle regulators, and IUDs were purchased as disposable material. [...] In the administrative laws, it was not allowed, it was misappropriation of funds, we could not, it was something that was not in the Vademecum, we could not buy it as such.[403]

This strategy of dissimulating the purchase of oral contraceptive methods and DIUs to lead forward a reproductive rights agenda in Rosario was also confirmed by an ex-Counsellor: "contraceptives were purchased and presented as disposable materials so that the expenses would not be noticed... Those were all strategies."[404] While initially informal and undercover, a political consensus on the importance of guarantying birth control methods through the municipal healthcare system was emerging in the metropole, leading to a formalization of these practices through the municipal program. According to a public servant at the Women's Area at the time who later became provincial deputy, it is this same consensus that allowed the mayor to resist pressures coming from the local Catholic Church, who strongly opposed the bill.[405]

---

[403] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.
[404] Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020.
[405] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

The presence of public health allies for the reproductive health and rights agenda should be contextualized in a city with a historical commitment for social approaches to health since the 1920s—influenced by Socialist and Anarchist European immigrants (Allevi et al. 2021).[406] Amid the decentralization and partial privatization of healthcare in Argentina's neoliberal decade, between 1989 and 1995, Hector Cavallero[407] instead expanded the local primary healthcare system, granting Rosario its distinctive character and identity in the realm of healthcare. In her interpretation of the sustainability of sexual and reproductive rights policies in Santa Fe, and particularly in Rosario, an ex-Minister of Health argues that reproductive health and rights understood this aspect of the metropole's identity as a consensus between the women's movement, popular sectors, middle class intellectuals, political elites, and the media:

> Because there was an appropriation, there was an appropriation by the popular sectors that directly benefited from those policies, and by the entire society of Rosario, considering it as a value of the city. […] For a long time, many middle-class sectors, intellectual middle class, and others, highly valued the fact that there was a very good public health system, and that it complied with all that. It was a value, even for those who did not use that public health system.[408]

His political successor, Hermes Binner (1995-2003),[409] also maintained tight connections with the Rosario Medical Association.[410] For the ex-Ministry of Health, Rosario's

---

[406] Rosario had acquired since the 1920s a Plan Sanitario—under the mayor Manuel Pignetto, also a medical doctor—developing social medicine and municipal health infrastructure (Allevi et al. 2021). The creation of the Faculty of Medicine in Rosario (then, pertaining to the UNL created in 1919), led to a growing professionalization of health professionals—in 1932 emerged the Asociación Médica de Rosario, with its Centro de Estudios Sanitarios who had as its objective the promotion of social medicine and public health (Spinelli, Librandi, and Zabala 2017).

[407] He was a biochemist himself.

[408] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[409] Binner later became Governor of Santa Fe (2007-2011).

[410] *Asociación Médica de Rosario.* Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

interdisciplinary, community-oriented, social medicine is what makes it different from the

"hospital-centric" approach prevalent in the rest of the country:

> Argentina has a hospital-centric logic, where budgets are allocated more to emergency and tertiary-level hospitals, and less to primary care. Rosario took on the task of ensuring that in primary care, the possibilities of health problems that arise could be guaranteed and addressed. [...] Health centers have doctors, psychologists, gynecologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, health agents, which means that an interdisciplinary approach also allowed for rights in sexual and reproductive health.[411]

Beyond their internal organization, primary healthcare centers were seen as having a

more integral approach to health, where social, psychological, physical, and cultural wellbeing

are equally valued, and where primary healthcare centers play a greater role in communities.[412]

The strength of social medicine approaches in the UNR Faculty of Medecine, according to ex

provincial deputy and public servant, led to the growth of a "social commitment,"[413] and a form

of "militancy"[414] for health and social rights amongst healthcare professionals in Rosario:

> There are generations of health professionals trained in this conception, due to the commitment of the Faculty of Medicine in some cases, in some situations, and because of their own practice and activism, and because of a whole generation of health professionals who truly understand, in a militant and socially committed way, their actions.[415]

---

[411] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.
[412] As the ex-Minister explained, "Health centers were conceived as a space not only for hard health issues but also where people could propose encounters linked to the physical, mental, cultural, and creative aspects, right? So, within the health center, there are spaces for painting, knitting" (Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020). This opinion was also shared by a feminist public servant and ex provincial deputy: "I mean, it is a conception of a health center that not only receives people, gives them an appointment, prescribes a medication, but articulates, participates in neighborhood meetings to solve coexistence problems. It is a conception of health deeply intertwined with the social fabric" (Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020).
[413] "*compromiso social.*"
[414] "*militancia.*"
[415] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

When I interviewed him in Rosario, an ex-member of the board of Santa Fe's public pharmaceutical laboratory expressed a similar experience, also seeing his position regarding the state as responsible for public health as a form of militancy of public health, which involves active state participation in the provision of public health.[416] Therefore, given the importance of local feminist and social health movements, it is fair to argue that Rosario's municipal program did not emerge out of a direct, top-down translation of UN human rights instruments. Instead, bottom-up pushes coming from several local actors would, through their practices and discourses, build meaningful reproductive rights and health policy on the ground.

Moving Towards Autonomy Through Strategic Allyship

By the late 1990s and early 2000s, synergetic relations between the healthcare system, the Women's Area, and the women's movement provided an institutional context favorable to feminist ideas and approaches. Formal and informal articulations between those sectors unfolded through the temporary presence of feminist activists in positions of local governance—who maintained their primary loyalty towards autonomous movements, who maintained a "feminist inconformity"—and the forging of networks of public health allies.

In Rosario, early healthcare and gender equality initiatives took place through the forging of working relationships between the local femocrats and feminist movements, characterized by a partial and strategic autonomy and collaboration—what Vargas and Wieringa (2019) have conceptualized as a "triangle of empowerment." Following the initial experience with women's health, between 1999 and 2003, a group of feminist members of the Socialist Party and part of

---

[416] As he told me in interview, "It's a personal or ideological expression in which I was trained and for which I worked and still work, which can be described as a public health activism. What do I mean? The State must be present in public health, with different actions regarding the drug policy" (Interview with Member of the Board of the Pharmaceutical Industrial Laboratory, State Corporation (LIF). In person, in Rosario, February 20, 2020).

the student movement oversees the local Women's Area who will continue the institutionalization of a gender equality agenda in the municipality.[417] For the feminist Socialist Director of the local Woman's Agency,[418] discussions on sexual and reproductive rights in Rosario were enmeshed in a large network of ideas on gender inequalities that gained larger public visibility and legitimacy:

> [Policies on] violence against women, and sexual and reproductive health, is not the same as them being two public policies or somewhat lost programs within the municipal structure, than backed by a plan for equal opportunities, which was presented by the Mayor, with a public event at the Monument of the Flag, with a whole range of pamphlets, graphics, with meetings of the secretaries... [...] They were two programs inserted into the midst of a larger discussion on gender issues.[419]

These channels of debate and influence between social movements and the local government—which according to many of my interlocutors I interviewed, lasted at least until the end of the second mandate of the Socialist Party—infused the problematization of feminist ideas and perspectives through the Elected Council and the executive branch.[420] One of the historic feminist activists in the province, founder of a well-known women's right NGO, indeed sees the local level as facilitating the exercise of democratic citizenship, due to the presence of smaller social networks, and easier access to elected officials and the local media by the citizenry:

> The municipal government allows citizens to have more access. It's where democracy can be realized a little more. Democracy is like an illusion, right? But let's say it's less of an illusion in the municipal government, because you might know the officials, you can reach them, try to influence them, you know the

---

[417] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[418] Silvia Augsburger, who happens to be a biochemist trained in the National University of Rosario, would later become involved in the adoption of laws for the expansion of sexual and reproductive rights as deputy of the National Congress and be an active member of the national campaign for abortion rights.

[419] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[420] Through the Women's Area, the women's movement indeed participated in the municipality's gender equality agenda, communication strategy, budget, consulting councils, and participatory initiatives, which influenced the local policy agenda.

councilors, you can pressure them, you can organize a demonstration, you can make a proclamation, report to the press. And they are sensitive to that. So, it allows you to exercise some degree of influence for the women's movement in a more positive, closer, more realistic way.[421]

In 1999, the Woman's Area conducted, along with women's organizations, women elected officials, civil servants, and academics,[422] the first survey on gender inequalities in the city, named "Diagnostic on the Situation of Women in Rosario." This diagnostic would form the basis of the municipality's Plan of Equality between Men and Women (2000-2004; 2005-2009).[423] The plans sought to address the interlocked nature of various forms of discriminations related to sexual and reproductive health, women's democratic participation, violence against women, and employment.[424]

Thus, this reflected an understanding of the state as a fluid, temporary space of influence amongst Rosario's feminist and women's movements, particularly those belonging to the Socialist Party. Indeed, many public servants involved in the Women's Area whom I interviewed maintained a foot firmly grounded in the movement and their sense of belonging and loyalty remained towards the movement. This deputy, feminist activist, and ex- public servant describes her role in the state as a "circumstance," and a "transitionary space of governance or

---

[421] Interview with member of Insgenar. In person, in Rosario, February 16, 2020.

[422] Hilda Habychain, a local feminist academic, would later create the first graduate degree in gender studies in Latin America at the Universidad Nacional de Rosario (Busaniche, Kreig, and Rodríguez 2023). The Friedrich Ebert Foundation—associated with the German Social Democratic Party and in Latin America, the *Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales*, was also hired as a consulting entity throughout the development and implementation of the plans.

[423] *Plan de Igualdad de oportunidades entre Varones y Mujeres* was created by the Municipal Ordenanza N 15322, through the "*Comisión Ad'Hoc para la elaboración preliminar del Plan de Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Varones y Mujeres*".

[424] As an Ex-Councillor and provincial deputy told me, "When I started as a councillor, already having ties to the women's movements, what we did was take advantage of the contact we had with women's organizations to work on issues of other discriminations that until that moment the municipal government did not address and did not see, which are ultimately the basis of discrimination. [...]. They were visible to women's organizations.]" (Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020).

representation," more than a career.[425] In addition, Rosario's Women's Area at the time—under

the then recently re-elected Socialist Party—also took part in the 2003 ENM, participating in the

workshops and assemblies as "just another person around the table, proposing things."[426] At the

time, the local government was still entangled and connected with networks of women's

organizations throughout the city.

This partial autonomy between the state and the movements allowed the latter to remain a

critical actor, despite institutionalization, cross-fertilizations, and potentially co-opting

institutional channels:

> The women's movement has always wanted more. It has never been satisfied with
> just, "Oh, there is a responsible procreation ordinance, great!" No. The women's
> movement has always been very active in verifying that it was enforced, in
> demanding in one healthcare facility or another where it was not being enforced,
> where there were obstacles.[427]

In fact, the movement maintained a certain power leverage over the municipal state that

healthcare professional allies were well-aware of. When describing the role of the feminist

movement in pressuring the local government, my interlocutor mentions the legal changes, but

also the day-to-day practices: "The experience of the first allies within the administration in

Rosario is that they learn from and take direction from the feminist movement [...] it is the

feminist movement that applies pressure and that finds and creates a positive synergy with allies,

---

[425] She mentioned, "In my personal experience, what always happened is that women in management or
representation spaces worked on women's rights, it was like a circumstance of our activism for women's rights. But
we always felt like activists for feminism or feminisms. And wherever we are, I insist, occupying a transitory
management space, a representation space, we promoted from those places alone, the same as we did in the field,
that is, in grassroots organizations, always working together" (Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and
Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020).
[426] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February
14, 2020.
[427] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February
14, 2020.

with people sensitive to the issue."[428] This "synergy" with public health and femocrat allies prevented the local movement's cooptation because the women's movements would continue to play a role of influence *after* policy adoption.[429] Thus, feminist public servants—many of which who's loyalty rested primarily in women's movements—developed the city's policy agendas well aware of the power, influence, and non-conformism of feminist Rosarinas.

"RESPONSIBLE PROCREATION" AND "CRIMINAL ABORTION" IN TIMES OF CRISIS (1998-2001)

The provincialization of Rosario's reproductive rights agenda, amid the 2001 crisis, occurred at a moment when the national government did not yet have its own legislation. In 2001, when the major economic, social, and institutional crisis hit Argentina, Rosario became the city with second-highest rate of unemployment in the country (20.2%), after Catamarca—more than doubling the rate reached during the 1995 tequila crisis.[430] The percentage of unemployed women almost doubled that of men.[431] In this context, the province witnessed the rise of a strong *piquetero* movement—in which women have very high participation.[432] While poverty and hunger were increasing, Rosario and Santa Fe experienced, like all other major cities in the country, multiple episodes of looting.[433]

The 2001 crisis in Santa Fe provided an impetus for popular-sector women, public health actors, and feminist movements to expand the reach and content of reproductive health policies

---

[428] Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020.

[429] As my interlocutor sustained, "there was strong follow-up by women's organizations, the women's movement, to demand, influence, monitor, accompany, defend, and disseminate them, in other words" (Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020).

[430] El Litoral. 2001. "Más de 4 millones de personas tienen problemas con el empleo. En el país, totalizan 2.283.000 millones los desocupados," July 20, 2001.

[431] 37.9% of unemployed were heads of household, compared to 62.1% ("non heads of household", mostly women) (*El Litoral*. 2001. "Cómo es la situación en el Gran Santa Fe," July 20, 2001).

[432] *El Litoral*. 2001. "Piqueteros hacen olla popular frente a Gerencia de Empleo," April 12, 2001.

[433] Amid massive social protests, six people are killed in Rosario during confrontations between police forces and protesters (*El Litoral*. 2001. "Ordenan investigar la represión policial durante las revueltas," December 22, 2001).

to the rest of the province. With rising poverty and unemployment, popular sector women in

Santa Fe and Rosario mobilized as part of the major social protests happening throughout the

country. Yet according to the Socialist politicians and ex-public servants with whom I spoke, in

Rosario, women's demands centered on insuring continuity in the provision of contraceptive

methods, which had been accessible freely through the municipal program since at least 1996.[434]

For Socialist politicians, this meant that popular-sector *Rosarinas* had "appropriated" the right to

birth control and their demands could hardly be ignored by local politicians.[435]

In parallel, feminist and women's organizations in the province strongly supported the

adoption of a provincial law and program through letters of support from INGOs, petitions, and

direct lobbying. In a document titled "Reproductive health: an urgent and unpostponable right"

sent to provincial deputies and that related the experience of Rosario with its municipal program,

members of the women's movement and allied politicians[436] argued that sexual and reproductive

rights constituted a basic human right.[437] Along the public health, NGOs in Santa Fe also

emphasized the importance of providing effective information and contraceptive methods,

centered on the prevention of three social problems that had been at the core of Rosario's

---

[434] According to an ex-coordinator of the Women's Area: "Binner meets in various assemblies with the neighbors and asks them, "What do we prioritize in health? We can't keep buying everything, what do you put first?" And the women, for the first time, place their demand first and say, "contraceptives" [...] Binner recounts, in many interviews, the impact that had on him. In the midst of it all, before milk, or at the same level, they asked me for contraceptives, not to stop the supply of contraceptives. That, in the middle of an economic, social crisis, as serious as the one in 2001, in Argentina, was an impact. It means that by 2001, there was already, my reading is that there was already an appropriation by the users, of that service, that service served them and they wanted it to continue." (Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020).

[435] This same anecdote was told to me in an interview with another member of the Socialist Party who had experienced the 2001 crisis as public servant in the municipality "Women from lower-income sectors said that there might be no antibiotics, no problem, but there must be contraceptives. [...] In other words, if there were cuts to be made, women asked that contraceptives not be cut. This is very interesting when society appropriates a right." (Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020).

[436] Acción Educativa, Sindicato de Amas de Casa, Proyecto Santa Fe, Fundación Gémina, women from the UCR, from the FREPASO, PJ, and independents.

[437] *El Litoral*. "Un derecho impostergable." November 27, 2000.

municipal program about five years earlier: maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, and clandestine abortions.[438] Referring to clandestine abortions, they sustained that "They pose serious health risks and even death for women without resources." They argued that "ensuring free access to these services helps to compensate for the social inequalities suffered by poor women in our city."[439] As poverty was reaching unprecedented levels and families were forced into informal work for subsistence, the provincial healthcare system had to absorb an important proportion of the population who had lost their private healthcare insurance.[440]

Already by the late 1990s, the exceptional reproductive health policies in Rosario were already seen as insufficient to mitigate the sanitary consequences of the crisis. In 1998, the responsible from the Municipal Reproductive Health Program, argued for the adoption of a provincial program.[441] With all these different actors pressuring the provincial legislators, on May 20th, 2001, law 11.888 creating the provincial program of reproductive health and responsible procreation was finally adopted[442] with three main objectives:

> a) Promoting responsible motherhood and fatherhood through birth planning, favoring appropriate intergenic spaces, within the framework of recognizing the right to life from the moment of conception.
>
> b) Guaranteeing the population access to complete and truthful information about existing fertility control methods, natural or artificial, ensuring equal opportunities in the exercise of personal freedom.

---

[438] The Socialist mayor of Rosario and the Provincial Health Ministry were then worried about potential cuts in national provision of medication, birth control, and antivirals for HIV-aids due to political and economic instability in the country (*El Litoral*. "Preocupación en Salud." December 27, 2001).

[439] *El Litoral*. "Preocupa la falta de envíos de drogas a los hospitales." December 28, 2001.

[440] I discuss this in more details in Chapter 2.

[441] *El Litoral*. "Un derecho impostergable." November 27, 2000.

[442] Three bills written by provincial deputy DiPollina (Alianza Democracia Progresista Socialist Party), Alicia Ester Tate (UCR), another one by Dr. Francisco Nicolas Sellares (a medical doctor) were presented to parliamentary commissions (Derechos y Garantia and Salud Publica y Asistencia Social) to create the provincial program of reproductive health.

c) Training personnel directly or indirectly linked to the program. The Program will orient its actions towards the most unprotected and at-risk social groups.[443]

The program, which involved the creation of Sexual and Reproductive Health Counseling Offices in healthcare centers, hospitals, is composed of interdisciplinary teams of healthcare professionals that attend women and men's needs in terms of birth control and family planning.[444] Managed from the Ministry of Health and Environment, the program included a consulting Advisory Council[445] to monitor the implementation and suggest changes accordingly.[446]

Yet, the translation of Rosario's municipal reproductive health and rights agenda to the provincial level involved a more conflictive problematization process. The negotiated construction of reproductive responsibility, the right to life since the moment of conception, gender equality, and a concern for the most unprotected and risk social groups, opposed contradictory views on how to delimit rights and responsibilities. Those distinct policy objects were institutionalized through two main debates, reflecting the subjectification of poor women as partial subjects of rights: (1) the incorporation of the medical professionals' right to conscientious objection; and (2) the incorporation of "non-abortive" contraceptive methods only into the province's public Vademecum. Through gendered negotiations around the problem of

---

[443] Article 2, Provincial Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation.
[444] Later, these counseling offices would also be the spaces where legal abortions are implemented.
[445] '*Consejo Asesor.*' The Consejo Asesor was ad-honorem, and act as a non-bonding consulting institution. In 2004, the Consejo Asesor included professional colleges, two representatives from the Multisectorial de Mujeres para la Acción, one from Insgenar, one from Casa de la Mujer, and one from Fundación Gemina (Res.308/2004).
[446] The Advosory Council would be composed of scientific and university sectors, healthcare professionals, professional associations, the Pan-American Health Organization, and NGOs "with experience in the matter."Due to the controversial inclusion of religious organizations in the first advisory council, the law was later amended to restrict the presence of organizations opposed to sexual and reproductive rights.

"risk" and "responsibility," different gendered and classed conceptualizations of bodily autonomy rights institutionalized in Santa Fe.

First, deputies demanded the incorporation of the right to consciencious objection for healthcare profesionals, to grant them the right to refrain from implementing the reproductive health practices included in the program—that is, providing information and prescribing contraceptive methods.[447] The inclusion of the right to conciencious objection aimed at protecting medical profesionals' authority over medical practices that went against their personal values, whether moral or religious. Institutionally, it preserved power in the hands of the medical authority against their patients' reproductive decisions. Feminist activists were well aware of the underlying religious agenda behind the inclusion of the right to conscientious objection as a product of negotiation between the Catholic Church authorities and legislators.[448]

Second, women's bodily autonomy was also limited through the incorporation of "non-abortive" methods as the only birth control methods available through the public healthcare system. This restriction came shortly following the incorporation, in Rosario, of emergency contraception into the municipality's sexual and reproductive health program.[449] As a product of this negotiation, the municipal ordinance, which specifically aimed at reducing adolescent unwanted pregnancy and abortion, mentioned that:

> Informing adolescents about emergency contraception pills can help prevent unwanted pregnancies and also serve as an introduction to regular contraception.

---

[447] "Letter from the Archbishop Alberto Nazareno Hammerly." Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz: Archives of the Legislature of Santa Fe, July 11, 2000.

[448] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[449] A feminist activist from the organization *Casa de la Mujer* had presented the bill, later adopted as Municipal Ordinance 7.282.

[...] By preventing unintended pregnancies, emergency contraception can reduce the need for abortion.[450]

But for conservative sectors, the emergency pill opened the door to abortion and, being what they considered an "abortive contraceptive method,"[451] constituted an attack on fetal rights, the Constitution, and constitutionalized international children's rights treaties (San José de Costa Rica).[452] In all, two legal barriers to reproductive rights were institutionalized in the law, placing limits on women's bodily autonomy and power vis-à-vis the state and the fetus: the former entrenching healthcare profesionals' right to consciencious objection and the latter, institutionalizing limitations associated with the types of birth control methods to be covered by the public healthcare system.

In the 1990s, in Rosario and throughout the province of Santa Fe, abortions remained treated as a crime and the exceptions to the criminal code were either unknown or ignored by healthcare professionals and public health authorities. Social sanctions on women who were suspected of having performed an abortion were, at the time, greater than legal sanctions—but threats of criminal prosecutions were frequent, as well as mistreatments.

Based on a medical doctor who has practiced in an hospital in the Rosario area since the early 1990s:

> Well, all the women were... like something out of a movie; the crusade, the police interrogation. And then nothing happened, so to speak. Sometimes they called us to testify, but never, never did anything happen in terms of women going to jail or anything like that. But yes, let's say that having a criminal record played against

---

[450] Municipal Ordinance 7.282.

[451] The emergency contraceptive pill and the coper intrauterine device are recognized birth control methods effective after an unprotected intercourse. They are effective before a pregnancy is declared and do not affect a pregnancy in course.

[452] "Legislative Session Diaries," November 30, 2000. Chamber of Deputies of the Province of Santa Fe.

them when applying for a job. Well, for everything we know that a criminal record can work against.

Rose: And was that common practice?

Yes, because... Because we had about 350 situations in just the service that was working, 300 and 350 situations of abortion were women who died from abortions per year. The truth is that if we stop to think about it, it's few, so to speak, but they were the ones who were going to have and that women went to when they had to choose between us reporting them, torturing them at the hospital, or dying. Yes, and in fact, many died. A figure that could be scandalous today.[453]

Healthcare professionals were, in fact, *mandated by the law* to denounce any induced abortion they witnessed in their duty as healthcare professionals.[454] An anonymous source from the Rosario Criminal Court, cited in the newspaper *La Capital*, also confirmed my previous interlocutor's assessment: "despite the fact that there is a police presence in public hospitals, there was a doctor who, in a case similar to the one we were discussing, and not finding the officer, contacted the police station to report a patient."[455] Women who reached public hospitals following abortions, stillbirths, or miscarriages were thus subject to a simultaneous or changing status from "patient" to "criminal."

Following the reporting of these events in the local media, generally critical of those practices in the healthcare system, the social and health consequences of clandestine abortions were made increasingly visible in Rosario. In fact, what was increasingly presented as institutional violence against these women was seen as particularly problematic for a city who took pride in a tradition of socially oriented medicine. A critical mass of healthcare professionals

---

[453] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.
[454] Following the case of a woman who reached Hospital Centenario in a critical state after an unsafe abortion in 1998, a ruling from the provincial Supreme Court established that medical doctors were obligated to violate professional secrecy to denounce those who had had an induced abortion (G, A B s/ Recurso de Inconstitucionalidad. Aborto provocado (Expte. CSJ N° 293-97)).
[455] Rey, Alejandra. "Por Una Sentencia de La Corte Suprema de Santa Fe Que Anula El Secreto Profesional. Rechazan Científicos El Fallo Sobre Aborto." *La Nación*, November 9, 1998.

took position publicly on the issue, particularly with regards to the high rate of complications from unsafe abortions that affected the most marginalized—which as reported in the media, represented in 1998, 42% of the total hospitalizations in gynecology.[456] In addition to the health consequences of unsafe abortions, some healthcare professionals publicly denounced mistreatments related to suspected abortions in the healthcare system. It is the case of Dr. Doris Bellman, Chief of Clinical of the Provincial Hospital, cited in the newspaper La Capital: "It is common for patients suspected of having had an abortion to be mistreated by everyone from anesthesiologists to nurses, which reflects the prejudices entrenched in society regarding the issue."[457] The medical doctor denounced that her hospital had incorporated a police officer to monitor the internment room, to take complaints when women were suspected to have aborted— a decision she and other healthcare professionals who spoke in the media, considered would only increase the health risks by de-incentivising women to reach out to the healthcare system.

In all, along the degendered access to family planing and birth control as a responsibility of heterosexual couples and "men and women" policy subjects, women were still constructed as partially autonomous subjects. Indeed, women, as policy subjects remained submitted to fetal and medical rights, through the criminalization of abortion, the incorporation of the right to conciencious objction, and the exclusion of "abortive"contraceptive methods in the provincial program. Consequently, despite important challenges coming from Rosario, maternalism is only partially challenged in Santa Fe and women's reproductive autonomy—particularly poor teenage women's sexual and reproductive behaviors—are associated with "risky" and "irresponsible" practices.

---

[456] *La Capital*. "El Hospital Provincial Atiende Un Aborto Complicado Por Día." December 21, 1999.
[457] *La Capital*. "El Hospital Provincial Atiende Un Aborto Complicado Por Día." December 21, 1999.

CHALLENGING MATERNALISM DURING THE LEFT TURN (2003-2015)

During the Left Turn, feminist movements, who then constituted a growing political force in the province, begin politicizing more forcefully the still taboo issue of abortion. Under such growing pressure and national-level institutional openings, such as the Supreme Court F.A.L. Ruling in 2012, abortion rights would slowly shift. In this section, I show that in the PSF, the rising politicization of criminalized abortions as a healthcare issue propelled by local feminist movements, transformed the problematization of abortion from being a "criminal practice" to a "risk" health practice.[458] Through the adoption of protocols for the implementation of abortions that are not criminalized by the law,[459] as well as the public manufacturing and coverage of abortion pills,[460] the province of Santa Fe takes important institutional steps forward to dismantle maternalistic institutions in reproductive healthcare.

THE 2003 ENM AND "CON TODO AL AIRE"[461]: TURNING POINTS FOR ABORTION RIGHTS IN ROSARIO

The ENM that took place in Rosario in August of 2003, attended by approximately 10,000 women, is considered a watershed moment in the struggle for abortion rights in Argentina (Sutton 2020). Only five months following the election of the Center-Left Peronist government of Nestor Kirchner, the economic and social crisis was still raging throughout the country. The women's movement was then traversed by the rise of popular sector assemblies, *piquetero* movements, popular education initiatives, rural peasant associations, workers' cooperatives and

---

[458] In 2005, only a few months following the adoption of the *Guide for improving post-abortion care* at the national level, Rosario adopts it and three years later, the PSF follows. When at the national level, the Supreme Court Ruling F.A.L (2012) formally establishes the permitted circumstances for non-punishable abortions as per the criminal code and that same year, Santa Fe adheres to the new *Technical Guide for the Integral Attention of Non-Punishable Abortions* (Res.612/2012) produced by the National Government.

[459] As mentioned in Chapter 3, exceptions to the criminal code (article 86) include abortions for health or life-threatening reasons, or in cases of pregnancies caused by rape of a disabled woman.

[460] Namely, Misoprostol.

[461] "Everything Exposed," is the name of a report published by the NGOs CLADEM and Insgenar in 2004 in Rosario, testifying of reproductive and obstetric violence experienced in the municipal and provincial healthcare systems.

movements, critical and alternative communication initiatives, and student organizations (Alma and Lorenzo 2009, 145).

In addition to the ongoing social and economic crisis, in 2003 the north of the city of Santa Fe is plunged under the muddy waters of the Salado River—which worsens dramatically the living situation of the most marginalized sectors of the city. [462] Given the dramatic crisis that affected the most vulnerable sectors of the city, women's associations mobilized and new women's associations, collectives, and networks were formed to respond to the social and sanitary emergency and later, rebuild their communities, as well as demand justice.[463] A year later, these older and new networks, along emerging collectives of lesbians, travesties, and trans women, grouped under the *Multisectorial de Mujeres de Santa Fe* (Multisectorial of Women of Santa Fe, MMSF) to lead forward a renewed feminist agenda in the city.

The increasingly diversified organizations in the PSF thus made the Rosario encounter particularly intersectional, where support for abortion came from different sectors of the women's, feminist, and LGBTQI+ movements. Reflective of the recent events in the province and the country, the 2003 ENM was also characterized by the marked presence of popular sector women –often Indigenous and racialized—and lesbian feminists who have historically occupied

---

[462] In a matter of a few hours following the rupture of a protective dam on April 26, 2003, 36.890 homes are flooded, 150.000 people are displaced, causing around 134 deaths and immense material loss. Major public infrastructures, such as the Children's Hospital, were also overflooded and severely damaged (*El Litoral*. 2003. "La ONU y Unicef centrarán su ayuda en el Hospital de Niños," March 5, 2003). National and international humanitarian aid was distributed mainly through Church, community networks and associations already active in the impoverished neighborhoods, and healthcare emergency assistance (*El Litoral*. 2001. "Hospitales trabajan a pleno y no solo en la emergencia.," December 28, 2001).

[463] The Red Interbarrial de Mujeres was formed at the time and along the Sindicato de Amas de Casa, led to the creation of the *Colectiva de Mujeres La Verdecita*. Two major women's organizations are Carpas Negras de la Memoria y la Dignidad and Marchas de las Antorchas (Busaniche, Kreig, and Rodríguez 2023).

a place of relative marginalization within different movements and organizations (Alma and Lorenzo 2009).

It is in this context of growing women and LGBTQI+-led political activism that abortion became a central topic in the 2003 ENM, marking the first steps of the *Campaña Nacional por el Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito* (National Campaign for the Right to Legal, Safe, and Free Abortion).[464] The green handkerchief—initiated by the NGO Catholics for the Right to Decide to symbolize the mothers and grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo—was widely distributed and used during the ENM.[465] Despite growing opposition from ecclesiastic authorities, with Santa Fe's Archbishop directly pressuring the organization commission of the ENM, feminist movements were moving to a second step of abortion rights campaign-building, from debating abortion to political actions towards its legalization.

The first workshop on "Strategies for access to legal, safe, and free abortion" took place, as well as the first Assembly for the Right to Abortion, that grouped 5,000 women in the Economics Faculty of the Rosario National University. Those assemblies, unlike the workshops held in earlier ENMs, gave rise to numerous public testimonies, politicizing the then taboo issue of abortion at a much larger scale than before. As a silenced practice, still repressed and criminalized, the intimate experience of abortion had never in the ENMs been so collective as in 2003.[466] In addition to voicing experiences of abortion, the assemblies and workshops aimed to

---

[464] Since the year 2002, the Assembly for the right to abortion, created in the city of Buenos Aires, grouped popular sector organizations, who sought to make the 2003 ENM in Rosario a space to discuss nation-wide strategies for the legalization of abortion on demand.

[465] As one participant mentioned, "In fact, it was at the National Women's Meeting in Rosario where we first marched with the green scarf. [...] It was the first time we marched with the slogan "Legal Abortion" at the meetings" (Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020).

[466] As mentioned in a memoir of the ENMs, "A memory from that assembly was the atmosphere in which it occurred. There were many, different, and diverse women, but what united them was the firm conviction of the right

move away from moral debates on abortion, and rather to start developing initial strategies of action and arguments in favor of the right to abort amongst those in favor of legalization.[467] As a participant mentioned in interview:

> (...) While there were some differences from the beginning, such as those who supported free and unrestricted abortion, not just legalization, we managed to create a pamphlet that more or less reflected all the positions around the decriminalization and legalization of abortion. (Dora Coledesky, cited in Alma and Lorenzo 2009, 151-152)

The 2003 ENM gave multiple women's organizations, feminist, lesbian feminist groups, and non-organized women an impetus to continue organizing around a common agenda on specific symbolic dates (25th of November and March 8th)—which spread to multiple cities around the province. The group *Mujeres Autoconvocadas de Rosario* (Self-Organized Women of Rosario, Mujeres Autoconvocadas) was created in 2003 following a campaign named "Self-organized women for the right to decide," grouped various already-existing organizations in the city ("Mujeres Autoconvocadas de Rosario (MAR) – enREDando" 2008).[468] Quickly after, the agenda on abortion reached the city of Santa Fe, and the first sexual and reproductive rights counselling offices in healthcare centers were created, pushing for sex education in schools, and greater access to contraceptive methods.[469]

---

to decide about their own bodies. It was an atmosphere that allowed hands to be raised, not to vote, but to say "I had an abortion." Hands were raised, timidly in some cases, with a conviction of struggle in others, but all embodying the recognition that the personal is political" (Alma and Lorenzo 2009, 159).

[467] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[468] The organizations included: CEDEIFAM, Casa de la Mujer, UMA, "Pan y Rosas" (PTS), Red Informativa de Mujeres de la Argentina (RIMA), Las Safinas, and Indeso Mujer.

[469] Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Online, March 5, 2021.

In the early days of the Left Turn, with growing politicization and feminist mobilizing around reproductive rights and particularly abortion, the first strategy adopted by the movements was to shift problematization away from legality and morality. Instead, feminists targeted patriarchal medical power as constituting a form of gendered institutional violence. In Rosario, where social medicine and community health approaches were considered by political elites a part of the city's identity, this discursive reframing would successfully shift political meanings on abortion from an unambiguously "criminal" practice to a partially lawful practice.

In 2003, with the adoption of the PNSSPR complementing the provincial program, public health centers in the province started receiving more resources to implement their own program. A year later, the PSF expands its provincial program, with the incorporation of surgical contraception amongst its birth control method options.[470] With the election of Hermes Binner as Governor of the province under the *Frente Progresista Civico y Social* (Progressist, Civic, and Social Front, FPCS)[471]—many of Rosario's policies would be scaled up to the province and to the rest of the province.

During the governorships of Hermes Binner (2007-2011), Antonio Bonfatti (2011-2015), and Miguel Lifschitz (2015-2019)—all three from the PSP—the province led forward a Strategic Provincial Plan involving regionalization, decentralization, and participatory planning based on territorial integration, social and economic development (Defensoría del Pueblo 2019). This approach involved important reforms in healthcare, coupled with a strong rights-based approach.

---

[470] Law 12.323. The law covers vasectomy and fallopian tube ligation.
[471] The FPCS is a coalition uniting the Socialist Party and progressist sectors of the UCR. While considered Center-Left, this non-Peronist coalition was nonetheless part of the opposition group to the national government of Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner (2007-2015).

Bringing to the provincial level the policy experiments developed in the city of Rosario since 1989, the provincial government emphasized, when it comes to health, primary healthcare development and territorial reach through decentralization (Venticinque 2020)—thus incorporating both elements associated with neoliberalism (decentralization, participatory planning) and social health (an emphasis on primary healthcare).

The creation of the provincial program on responsible procreation and the incorporation of surgical contraception, by granting both women and men new contraceptive methods—also involved a redistribution of power between medical doctors and their patients in their reproductive decisions. Feminist organizations indeed proposed a transformation of the healthcare model limiting the power of judges and medical doctors over patients' reproductive decisions as subjects of rights. The *Fundación Gémina para la Salud y el Desarrollo Humano* from the city Santa Fe, for example—situated the new law in a struggle to move away from a "a model of beneficence under which judges empowered doctors to proceed even against the express will of the patient" to a "model of moral responsibility of autonomy, establishes a sphere of intimacy where interference by third parties, including the doctor, is not permissible, and redefines the obligations of the doctor to the patient."[472]

Therefore, feminist sectors in and outside the state problematized medical power—a form of state power— over women's bodily autonomy. Similar feminist arguments on bodily autonomy in support of the bill on surgical contraception were also embraced by state institutions and actors in Rosario. The Coordinator of the Women's Department of the Social Promotion Secretary of the Municipality of Rosario, clearly putting forward a rights-based approach, where

---

[472] "Letter from the Fundación Gémina Para La Salud y El Desarrollo Humano." Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz: Archives of the Legislature of Santa Fe, May 11, 2000.

"It is a fundamental step for women to *take ownership of* decisions about their sexual and reproductive health, and to end dependence on which health services they can access. [...] Respecting the right to choose and the self-determination of women over their own bodies."[473]

Bringing the criminalization of abortion in the healthcare system to the forefront of the political agenda became, shortly after the 2003 ENM, a core strategy of feminist movements in Rosario. That same year, the human rights and feminist NGOs CLADEM and Insgenar published a report named "Everything Exposed: Human Rights Report on Reproductive Health Care in Public Hospitals."[474] In the report, the feminist activists bring up multiple testimonies of institutional violence against women during obstetric care in municipal and provincial hospitals in the city of Rosario, including cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, violation of the right to intimacy, information, and to free and informed consent.[475] For one of the authors of the report, abortion criminalization in healthcare facilities constituted a form of violence, as much as violent practices that occur during birth giving or gynecologic examinations. Amongst the various testimonies collected stood those of women suspected and accused of having aborted voluntarily, who denounced mistreatments, menaces, among other violations of their rights by the medical personnel. For example:

> R. was 18 years old and five months pregnant. Since she was bleeding heavily and we were very scared, we took her. "When we arrived, you're so desperate and the

---

[473] "Tomo Apoyo al Tratamiento y Aprobación Del Proyecto Que Habilita En La Provincia de Santa Fe La Ligadura de Trompas y Vasectomía Como Método de Intervención Quirúrgica." Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz: Archives of the Legislature of Santa Fe, May 11, 2000.

[474] Con todo al aire: reporte de derechos humanos sobre atención en salud reproductiva en hospitales públicos. Buenos Aires: INSGENAR : CLADEM, 2003.

[475] This trend was also confirmed by participants during interviews, including this one: "In local hospitals, they mistreated women who were giving birth, so we went to the Ombudsman's Office. But the municipality was also involved in some way, and we demanded that they train the doctors and refrain from obstetric violence... from separating women, from shouting at them, from imposing unnecessary cesarian sections, from not accepting a respected birth, the birth plan that each woman had" (Interview with Director of CLADEM. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020).

first thing they say to you is, 'Didn't you do anything to yourself? Did you take something? They threaten you... You have to fight to be treated and when they do treat you, they threaten you (t17).[476]

The report politicized and denounced the prevalence of both formal and informal mechanisms of penalization around abortions grounded on the enforcement of maternalism in Rosario's local healthcare system. Both legal and social sanctions were mostly shown to be enforced on socioeconomically marginalized women particularly, who practiced unsafe abortions and attended public hospitals due to complications. The report highlighted abortion criminalization as being at the heart of gender inequalities in reproductive roles and responsibilities:

> […] the violation of the human rights mentioned, in the context of public assistance in reproductive health services, has a strong gender bias since men are not involved in any of the mentioned practices. Furthermore, in cases of abortion, only women are blamed while conception is only possible through the involvement of a man and a woman. Let us bear in mind that, in some cases, pregnancies result from casual relationships and men adopt an attitude of disengagement regarding them. On the other hand, some pregnancies result from sexual abuse, which would denote an even greater severity regarding human rights violations. (*Con todo al aire: reporte de derechos humanos sobre atención en salud reproductiva en hospitales públicos* 2003, 34)

---

[476] Other testimonies in the report included: "G. started bleeding when she was 16 weeks pregnant. Since the bleeding was very heavy and she couldn't walk, a family member carried her to the obstetrics department... She knocked insistently because she thought she was going to faint in the waiting room and they weren't attending to her. When she entered the department, the professional who received her said to another doctor, 'Can you believe an abortion at 3 a.m.?' 'Listen to what the girl says, she's negative on top of it all'... 'If you leave, we'll have to call the police' (t16)" or "'What did you do, did you take something, inject something?'! 'She wouldn't let me speak or explain that I had just had a baby'. The nurse kept insisting: 'Come on, come on, were you pregnant?'... and when I tried to explain what was happening to me, she said really harshly: 'I'm already very tired, come on, open your legs so I can examine you.' L. says she felt very bad and very sore, and the nurse didn't care: 'on the contrary, she kept saying things to me and told a student, look, these cases usually come like this, they don't know what happened to them. And then I took advantage and told her that I had had a baby here four months ago, and she says to me: How did you have a baby?! And after that, she treated me normally" (t21)" (Con todo al aire 2003, 32–33)

In other words, in addition to denouncing gender-based violence committed against women in the healthcare system, the NGOs in Rosarios pushed for a transformation of gendered reproductive healthcare, roles, and responsibilities.

The report triggered an earthquake amongst the city's community of health professionals and Socialist elected officials.[477] For most healthcare practitioners in Rosario, abortion was until then simply taboo, ignored, or unknown—many had with the report, "discovered" the violence associated with this practice in the city hospitals and healthcare centers. By presenting the report through a theatrical performance in the main space of the UNR's Faculty of Medicine, the women's movement had indeed sought to reach the future generation of health professionals.

Students and professors of health sciences, many of whom were already connected to the public healthcare system, were now confronted with the shocking reality of clandestine abortions in their city. This participant, who was then a student of Medecine at the Faculty, recalled:

> The report was a scandal because all the heads of gynecology and obstetrics services in the city were present. […] Along with a colleague who was a social worker and was key to this investigation we asked, 'So, what are we going to do about this?' That was the question. And then, we did an internal work to say, "We are not going to report women anymore in any way, and we are going to treat them with care [amorosamente].[478]

The timing for diffusing the report was not accidental: the Socialist Party was then re-elected at the municipal level in Rosario under Miguel Lifschitz (2003-2007; 2007-2011), with

---

[477] The report's conclusion, also transformed into an academic publication, even reached the national government, influencing both the scientific literature on abortion criminalization, and the politics of reproductive rights and GBV in Argentina, through the inclusion of the figure of obstetric violence in the 2009 GBV law (Interview with Director of CLADEM. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020). This speaks to the epistemological and political role of feminist knowledge production on the politics of reproduction (Haraway 1988; Hawkesworth 2010).

[478] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.

access to legal pregnancy termination in the party platform.[479] Shortly after the report's release, the executive department demanded an investigation around sexual and reproductive health attention in public healthcare centers, calling for improvements in attention of clandestine abortions and to "overcoming discrimination against women in accessing reproductive and sexual health care."[480] For the ex-President of the NGO Insgenar, the report constituted a challenge to the informal institution of maternalism in reproductive healthcare:

> And somehow, like, now they take better care. In the municipality, in the province... of how they treat women. The maternalization of the patient, 'little daughter, little mommy' ['hijita, mamita'][481]... With Everything Exposed 1 and Everything Exposed 2, we threatened them with going to the [UN] torture committee. That we were going to go, directly. But they said, 'No! It's not necessary!' the Ombudsman said, he was a gynecologist, 'We don't need you to tell us to investigate anything. I don't need to investigate. What you are saying is real.' And there, we managed to get the Medical School to change the curricula, too. They set up a committee to introduce gender into all subjects.[482]

The city's Secretary of Health, responding to the report's shocking assessment of violence committed against women who abort, convokes *Mujeres Autoconvocadas* to discuss a potential protocol of attention.[483] When the national government adopts its first Guide for the improvement of post-abortion care in 2005, Rosario immediately adheres. The adoption of protocols for post-abortion care, in turn, could be seen as constituting a first institutional step towards de-criminalizing abortion, re-problematizing it through a logic of health and care. However, by emphasizing *post* abortion care, the protocol also freed the state of abortion care itself, still leaving the practice to clandestinity once again. If medical doctors in Rosario would

---

[479] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.
[480] Decree 22.957.
[481] These are common expressions used in Argentina, affectionate and diminutive forms used to express endearment, often conveying a sense of closeness or tenderness—but also diminishing and tying the patient to maternity.
[482] Interview with Director of CLADEM. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.
[483] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.

start accompanying their first abortions in public hospitals, they still operated in total secrecy.[484] Abortion was now "on the table" in Rosario—occupying an unprecedented space in public discussions that would quickly reach the provincial level.

Following the opening of a political opportunity with the Supreme Court F.A.L Ruling in 2012, between 2007 and 2015 in the PSF takes place a discursive shift towards the incorporation of the right to unpenalized pregnancy termination, foregrounded by Rosario's bottom-up push to incorporate a sexual and reproductive rights approach to healthcare. Indeed, in 2007, as per the Cairo and Beijing Programmes of Action, Rosario institutionalizes sexual rights and reproductive rights as distinct but inter-related components of their approach, adopting a "gender perspective" in the reproductive health agenda. Providing information on birth control methods, menstrual and vital cycle, sexuality and rights, sexual violence, and pregnancy interruption, Rosario institutionalizes an approach that is "integral: because the approach does not focus on a specific body part ("the reproductive system") but on the whole person. Also, because the intervention combines a rights-based perspective with a gender approach."[485] The vocabulary of "responsibility" disappears for access to rights, personal autonomy, equality, diversity, and bodily integrity, modifying structures of power in healthcare systems with regards to men and women, girls, boys, and teenagers who use the services. Similarly, two years later, when the national government adopts its *First Protocol on the Care of Non-punishable Abortions*, Rosario adopts its *Comprehensive Care Protocol for Individuals with the Right to Legal Interruption of Pregnancy*.[486]

---

[484] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.
[485] Ordinance 9310.
[486] Ordinance 8.186/2007.

Moreover, in addition to the adoption of new instruments, feminists pushed for access to abortion care. In 2012, the municipality of Rosario starts purchasing Misoprostol to offer abortions in the public healthcare system, always for the three circumstances provided in the criminal code. The city also ensures the participation of civil society organizations and communities, through the creation of the *Comprehensive Sexual and Reproductive Health Counseling* under the administration of the Municipal Women's Institute, to be held in Municipal District Centers, schools, community and civil society organizations. Primary healthcare was, once more, seen as at a more human scale than hospitals, reflective of a rights-based, patient-centered approach, and therefore more appropriate for abortion care. As an Ex-Minister of Health told me in an interview:

> We initially defined that this policy should be universal. That is, all health centers could have this possibility. It wasn't complicated because the health center professionals' profile, the teams in the health centers, is more open to rights. […] 80% of health problems can be resolved in primary care. So, the legal abortion strategy is strong in primary care. With counseling, where the person who receives you can know what's going on with you, what you need, and what your history is. Otherwise, we believe that, in the hospital, it is very depersonalized. Because the hospital is a level of care where the woman does not know who is attending to her[487].

Yet, outside of Rosario, resistance to abortion was still high in the healthcare system. Despite the existence of networks of abortion access, most healthcare professionals a wide understanding of the right to conscientious objection was prevalent amongst healthcare workers. A strategy adopted at the time by the Health Ministry to guarantee access to legal abortions—which lasted about two years—was to define and thus, limited the right to conscientious objection permitted under the law. That way, it sought to delimit the right to not directly practice abortions, constraining it through professional responsibility to ensure access to the practice.

---

[487] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

Through a Ministerial resolution, the provincial program started to monitor conscientious objectors through a register that would allow re-orienting patients more easily towards the appropriate resources—an initiative that lasted two years due to its limited role in changing practices amongst conscientious objectors.[488]

This strategy, qualified as an attempt to "set the rules of the game"[489] by one participant who worked in the Provincial Program during that period, reflected a comprehensive, rights-based understanding of abortion rights not only as an individual choice, but placed abortion access being a core component of integral, humanized healthcare:

> In that hospital, almost all the professionals were conscientious objectors. So, at the beginning, we tried to refer women to that place. What did we find? They were treated badly, made to waste time, or even shown the ultrasound with the fetal heartbeat, when you were already decided to have a legal abortion. So, we asked ourselves, "Why refer them to a place where everything was against them?" [...] And also what we tried to push, which also needs to be discussed in Argentina, is: I can be a conscientious objector, I won't participate in this practice, but I can't abandon the person. [...] There must be people who can guarantee the practice.[490]

PUBLIC MISOPROSTOL AS RIGHT TO HEALTH

One year after Rosario, in 2013, Santa Fe starts purchasing Misoprostol from a private pharmaceutical laboratory and healthcare professionals start familiarizing with both the technical and legal components of legal abortion as a medical practice. When I interviewed her in 2022, this medical doctor tells me:

---

[488] Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Online, March 5, 2021.
[489] "*marcar la cancha.*" (Interview with coordinator of the Directorate of Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020). However, according to the healthcare professionals and bureaucrats involved whom I interviewed, monitoring and seeking to control conscientious objectors had limited effects beyond reaffirming the provincial state's positioning in favor of unpenalized abortion access; the strategy is even considered by some to have backfired, as more and more healthcare professionals would sign the form without changing their practices.
[490] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

Since 2013, we have had misoprostol available in public health centers. So, now it's something that is quite well established. People are familiar with it, there were many meetings held at the time to disseminate information... to discuss the technical and legal aspects of legal pregnancy termination. [...] Informed consent, ultrasound, misoprostol, medical history... that has been done here for many years.[491]

Meanwhile, with the expansion of contraceptive methods available to the Santa Fe population, public health sectors saw an opportunity to position the province as front runner in reproductive health and rights in Argentina.[492] In the years following the adoption of the PNSSPR, interest for the public production of contraceptive methods emerged among the province's public health sector, as the national provision experienced frequent shortages and interruptions. Since 1947, the PSF has had a public medical laboratory, the *Laboratorio Industrial Farmaceutico* (Industrial Farmaceutical Laboratory, LIF).[493]

Discussions amongst the public health sector thus emerged, and some started exploring the possibility of producing Misoprostol in the LIF, to insure more stable provision at lower costs and improve access to legal abortions in the healthcare system.[494] An ex-member of directive committee of the LIF I interviewed, recalls how these discussions, in a context in which Misoprostol was still associated with illicit behaviors and the clandestine drug market, occurred in total secrecy.[495] Unsurprisingly, feminist sectors supported the development of the public

---

[491] Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Online, March 5, 2021.

[492] As an ex-Member of the laboratory's Directory Board told me in an interview: "The province of Santa Fe positioned itself for the first time to have a laboratory producing its own branded contraceptive [...] And politically, as a health signal, it was a way of saying that Santa Fe was the first to come out with a state-produced contraceptive. Up to that point, it didn't exist" (Interview with Member of the Board of the Pharmaceutical Industrial Laboratory, State Corporation (LIF). In person, in Rosario, February 20, 2020).

[493] In 2010, Santa Fe produced the first hormonal contraceptive methods, at a much more affordable price than the private sector, to alleviate the shortages of the National Government provision stocks, when they occurred.

[494] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.

[495] "In 2012-2013, we had to speak almost in a whisper, in some basement and in hiding [...] it was almost like we couldn't even name it, except for those people who knew and understood." As my interlocutor explained, misoprostol in Argentina was then available in combination with another drug (Diclofenac), for stomach ulcers, bud used off-label for medical abortions. To gather information on the safe medical uses of the pill, public health authorities reached out to international women's rights NGOs, who provided crucial information on Misoprostol and a network of contact (Gynuiti Concept Foundation, IPAS, and CEDES) (Interview with Member of the Board of the Pharmaceutical Industrial Laboratory, State Corporation (LIF). In person, in Rosario, February 20, 2020).

provision of Misoprostol, who produced its first batch in 2015—and many organizations in the province even visited the LIF's installations. According to this feminist activist:

> I think it's a very positive measure, and it was also the women's movement that pressured for it. The LIF is the only one in our country that produces misoprostol and will sell to other places. So in that sense, Santa Fe is seen as one of the provinces with the greatest progress.[496]

In addition to feminist movements, the public production of Misoprostol was also seen favorably by the public health authorities then, as a social good and as a key component of the right to health. As the ex-Minister of Health told me, "One of the strongest lines of thought for us was that the public production of medications is a right. Medication is a social good. Therefore, being able to produce it guarantees this right for access and controls prices."[497]

In all, in this second section I have shown how feminist movements in Rosario and in the PSF have, since 2003, progressively re-problematized abortion criminalization as a form of gender-based institutional violence in the local healthcare system. Previously-built alliances with socially-oriented public health sectors—then with a strong presence in the Socialist municipal government and the FPCS at the provincial level—have transformed the PSF's institutional approach to abortion, displacing it as a being a criminal issue to being a health issue. These negotiations have led to a significant transformation of the province's gender justice regime, by providing institutional means for the inclusion of impoverished women. Yet, the "nonconformist feminists" had greater ambitions; this is what the next and last section of the chapter explores.

---

[496] Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020.
[497] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

BUILDING BODILY AUTONOMY IN THE EVERYDAY: FEMINIST NETWORKS FOR ABORTION ACCESS (2015-2020)

With the first congressional debates taking place in 2018 and the large-scale street mobilizations known as the "green tide" raging throughout the country, between 2015 and 2018 Santa Fe witnesses an intensification of political battles in the healthcare system around access to legal abortions. In this last section, I show that despite the growth of anti-abortion sectors, the pre-existing synergetic networks between public health and feminist sectors, amplified by the growth and democratization of feminist movements between 2015-2020, led to the re-problematization and re-institutionalization of the right to abort as what feminists call a "non-reproductive right" in the PSF. Despite the ongoing illegality of abortion on-demand, the rise of feminist-health networks of legal abortion care that center the pregnant person as subject of right will contribute to the making of bodily autonomy rights everyday healthcare practices.

In 2015, along the election of Center-Right Mauricio Macri under the coalition *Cambiemos*, in the PSF, the FPCS remains in power, under the governorship of the socialist Miguel Lifschitz.[498] The case of Ana María Acevedo in the capital city of Santa Fe—a young woman who died in 2006 following the denial of a legal abortion in a public hospital of the city—had led to growing feminist mobilisations in the city and the province in the last decade.[499] Between 2015-2020, legal abortions became increasingly accessible in the public healthcare system, and a well-rounded circuit of abortion care had emerged between healthcare centers, the provincial program, and feminist networks.[500] Instead of targeting conscientious objectors, the

---

[498] As I explore in more details in Chapter 3, feminist movements during this period experience unprecedented expansion throughout the country. The Ni Una Menos movement had organized its first march following the murder of Chiara Páez in a small town in the south of Santa Fe, and the issues of femicide and GBV gains immense attention in the streets and the media.

[499] I discuss this case in greater details in Chabot (*forthcoming* 2024).

[500] As research participants explained to me, legal abortions of under 12 weeks of pregnancy became increasingly available in primary healthcare centers in "ambulatory" form, that is, using misoprostol. Abortions practiced beyond

provincial program now turned to focus on supporting the health teams who were, in fact, practicing and/or facilitating access to legal abortions.[501] Informal and more formal groups offering support and assistance to those seeking abortions emerge,[502] often a part of *Socorristas en Red – Feministas que abortamos* (Socorristas Network – feminists that abort, Socorristas) organized since around 2016 in Santa Fe. Shortly after, under the impulse of the Socorristas, the regional branch of the *Red de Profesionales de la Salud por el derecho a decidir* (Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide, RPSDD) starts increasing access to abortion care in the healthcare system.[503] These networks, while challenging maternalist institutional practices and discourses, have also transform meanings surrounding abortion not as a practice *of* the State but of State *responsibility*, and most importantly, as one *of* women and persons with reproductive capacities, for the plain exercise of their bodily autonomy rights.

THE RISE OF SOCORRISTAS EN RED AND THE NETWORK OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS FOR THE RIGHT TO DECIDE IN SANTA FE

In Santa Fe, the creation of groups of Socorristas and later, the RPSDD, who coordinate with the provincial program, formed what many of my interlocutors consider a strong, although not uniform, network of abortion access that reached even some remote parts of the province. The F.A.L Ruling in 2012 had provided at least some institutional support for the

---

12 weeks of pregnancy, usually performed using manual vacuum aspiration, were however rarely available, with the exception of few centers, the SEMAFEs.

[501] Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022; Interview with coordinator of the Directorate of Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

[502] Groups of abortion accompaniments in Santa Fe were *Las Ana María* and *Acción Mariposa*—part of *Socorristas en Red*—and *Foro contra la Trata*. Countless other groups were active in the city of Rosario and other smaller towns in the province.

[503] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, May 15, 2021; Interview with coordinator of the Directorate of Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020. In addition to accompanying self-managed abortions, Socorristas actively recruited who they labeled "friendly" healthcare professionals, or allies, in public *salitas* and hospitals to ensure abortion-seekers' safe access to pre and post-abortion care, if needed and desired. I discuss this in more details in Chapter 3.

implementation of unpenalized abortions and incentivized provinces to train more healthcare professionals in the subject matter. In the quest to transform norms around abortion and problematize abortion as a healthcare practice, the RPDD had the UNR's Faculty of Medicine in sight, just like feminist NGOs had previously with the report "Con todo al aire." Despite the F.A.L Ruling, the Faculty had not yet included abortion in its curricula and still embraced a criminalizing approach to the practice.

> Because abortion was not taught, they would say, "it is prohibited!" within the gynecology and obstetrics curricula. This allows us to think and reflect on the main cause of maternal death, the leading cause of maternal death in Argentina! And the Faculty of Medicine, all they had to say was, this does not exist and should not be done. Not even in cases allowed by the penal code since 1920, right? However, even after the F.AL ruling in 2012, which clearly states, health professionals must do this, cannot resort to justice, and so on, however, the Faculty of Medicine, 'CriCri!' [mimicking the sounds of crickets] They didn't seem to notice, so to speak![504]

As this gynecologist member of the RPSDD and ex public servant in the provincial program tells me in an interview, medical doctors' training on abortion sustained the institutionalized criminalization of women, what he identified as a "system of torture":

> And the only thing we started to see about abortion was when I did my specialization in gynecology and obstetrics, [...] we studied abortion as an entity, biologically, how it could present itself, like complete abortion, incomplete abortion, threatened abortion. But now, a rights perspective is now possible.[505]

---

[504] Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

[505] As he continued, "The first news about abortion was when doing the specialization, working or looking at abortion more closely and encountering in practice with women who came for what we called at that time incomplete abortions, infected abortions, threatened abortions with suspicion, not that they had caused the abortion and with the idea always of the crime and with a structure of torture services, those women and a torture that also did not make the clinic, not because the woman told us if she had caused the abortion, it did not change what we would have done, but it was part of the torture system" (Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022).

In 2017, under the leadership of the RPSDD the UNR's Faculty of Medicine incorporates the first elective course on abortion in Argentina, named "Abortion as a health problem." The course constituted the first training granted to students of medicine on abortion, from a healthcare and human rights perspective. But the course also sought to challenge maternalistic norms in public health approaches to abortion, by de-maternalizing obstetric care and particularly, pregnancy—by changing the way the health sector refers to abortion-related mortality. For María Paula Botta, one of the lecturers in charge of the course cited in the local newspaper La Capital: "we understand that it is the main cause of death of *women in pregnancy*. That is why we talk about that concept, and not about *maternal mortality*". With the use of the words "death of women in pregnancy" instead of "maternal mortality", the course re-conceptualized "women" as a political subject separate from motherhood, emphasizing women's agency in deciding over their pregnancies and status as mothers. Thus, more than a public health problem, abortion was to be approached by future medical doctors as a right to bodily autonomy. She added, "above all, it's a matter of rights, because it involves a woman's right to decide about her own body."[506] As I show next, growing public debates surrounding abortion in universities, households, schools, hospitals, streets, and media in Argentina—and particularly in Santa Fe— led to increasing challenges to barriers to legal abortion rights as patriarchal medical institutions in medical professionals' healthcare practices.

---

[506]Fucaraccio, Aníbal. "La Facultad de Medicina Incorpora La Problemática Del Aborto En Su Currícula." *La Capital*, June 5, 2017.

Healthcare professionals, even those entering the RPSDD, for the most part did not have

a path of militancy with feminist activism and most of them had very little medical knowledge of

and experience with abortion. As this generalist doctor tells me, she was contacted by the

provincial program and accepted to start accompanying abortions initially, not out of a particular

political motivation, but out of a perceived necessity of the program and her initial openness to

the practice.[508] Over time, this growing network of healthcare professionals, grassroots feminist

activists, and the provincial program, would, as I argue in this section, increasingly challenge

residual maternalistic practices in the province's healthcare system, and generate institutional

openings for change.

As they begun supporting and practicing abortions, healthcare professionals' members of

the RPSDD whom I interviewed became increasingly aware of the barriers to abortion access

they encountered in their practice—barriers they perceived as systemic and rooted in patriarchal

and class representations of pregnant persons. If the right to conscientious objection had been

formally entrenched in the provincial and national programs on sexual and reproductive health,

my interlocutors pointed towards something else; they identified an illegitimate use of medical

power to obstruct access to legal abortions, often through violent practices. Many of them,

including this medical doctor, differentiated what they perceived as unfair, problematic, and

illegitimate practices from the right to conscientious objection:

---

[507] "*Encontrar la fisura a un elefante celeste.*" The color blue refers to the anti-abortion movement and sectors, who have adopted a blue handkerchief in response and opposition to the pro-abortion rights movements' green handkerchief.

[508] As she told me in interview: "One of the coordinators in the region had a case that had been referred to him by abortion support networks, and well, they needed a professional to guarantee the procedure and he called me. Maybe he thought I could do it, and yes, I'm actually not opposed to this" (Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, May 19, 2021).

Something that seems really interesting to me is the difference between objectors and obstructors. Because there are people who are objectors but who do not obstruct. These are the ones who, well, request the study, sign the consent, make the referral. And then there are the people who are obstructors, who use conscientious objection as an obstacle.[509]

Similarly, some healthcare professionals problematized these barriers to abortion access as part of a patriarchal and classed system of oppression that punishes women, especially impoverished women for exercising their sexuality and bodily autonomy rights. They also saw these barriers, particularly in hospitals outside of Rosario, as reflective of power inequalities within socially oriented primary care medicine and specialized hospital healthcare:

Here in Rosario, let's say the woman goes to the first level [primary care], SEMAFE talks to the corresponding hospital and there is no complication. Now, in the rest of the province, the woman arrives at the health center, and the health center cannot get this woman into the hospital. That's where the barrier is, because it comes from below, because it's rejected, because they don't agree, because the place is violent, because they don't want her to go to that place. The difficulty lies in the hospitals.[510]

While they problematized barriers to abortion as a form of patriarchal institutional violence, my interlocutors also understood their own experience with abortion within the healthcare system as gendered.[511] For this generalist doctor, for example:

I always feel belittled. The general practitioner is the doctor who knows the least, the "doctor of the poor." [...] So, how can I question an obstetrician-gynecologist, right? In that situation, it was very difficult for me to stand up to them. It's still something I had to work on a lot, but sometimes I had to leave and didn't know how to avoid facing the gynecologist of the day and presenting the patient and saying it

---

[509] For this generalist medical doctor, obstructive conscientious objection was mostly frequent in third-level complexity hospitals, often more conservative: "Yes, the issue of conscientious objection seems to have been wielded by conservative sectors, primarily within hospitals, yes, by the most conservative sectors and by the medical corporation in general, to hinder access to the practice. [...] the tertiary level hospitals here in Santa Fe, saying absurd things like they don't see why to sacrifice a child just because the woman says it doesn't fit into her life plan, so they don't see the point of sacrificing a child" (Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Online, March 5, 2021).

[510] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

[511] Merve Erdilmen and I discuss this elsewhere (Chabot and Erdilmen 2023).

was because it generated discomfort in me due to the power dynamics they had over me. It was very difficult.[512]

Experiencing belittling by her specialist colleagues as "doctor of the poor," my interlocutor told me how she learned to act within the system despite her relative marginalization within it. For each person she accompanied in their abortion involved finding a crack in a generally anti-abortion system, from which she could accompany women in their right to abort—often through the primary healthcare system. The provincial program was also aware of gender power dynamics in the healthcare system, which they tried to mitigate by supporting generalist doctors and non-medical healthcare professionals in their abortion practices. As the ex-Minister of health told me:

> In many places, you have a very strong structure where the doctor is the director, the director says, 'This is how it's done,' and the nurse's opinion doesn't matter even if they disagree. Not even the nurse's opinion is respected. That's why we also work very hard to regain access to positions of management and power for women, not necessarily for men. And for women who are not doctors.[513]

Most interlocutors adapted their strategies according to their perceived positionality within the healthcare system, circumventing the barriers imposed to their patients, as well as unequal power dynamics within the system:

> Meanwhile, we have accompanied 110 women, I believe, with second-trimester hospitalizations, which for what the Provincial Hospital was, is a huge achievement. Each one of them for us was like finding a crack in a blue elephant, I mean, right?[514]

In all, healthcare professionals who entered feminist-health networks of abortion care, through experience with abortion-seekers and communication with Socorristas and the provincial

---

[512] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.
[513] Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.
[514] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

program, identified obstructive conscientious objection as a patriarchal informal institution to be challenged, on two dimensions. First, they perceived it as rooted in maternalism enforced on impoverished women. Second, they saw it as part of gendered power inequalities within the healthcare system itself, in which male-dominated medical specialties such as gynecologists, mostly found in third-level hospitals, enforced their professional power over female-dominated, primary healthcare centers.

FROM "UNPENALIZED" TO "LEGAL" ABORTION

While feminist-health networks allowed for the dismantling of healthcare practices now problematized as a patriarchal component of the province's gender justice regime, during the 2015-2020 period new institutional practices also emerged—both intra and extra state—putting in practice abortion as a bodily autonomy right. Outside of the healthcare system, Socorrista collectives, abortion hotlines providing phone support for abortion-seekers, centered their actions on accompanying persons in their decisions. Whether self-managed or through the healthcare system, informal ties with the RPSDD allowed expanding the possibilities with regards to safe and caring abortion access:

> We started creating circuits of care and care networks that were initially informal and then, we followed up with the provincial management so that they would know where the support was provided [...] If women came to us, then we would ask in the network, 'hey, I have a woman who needs this, who can receive her? She lives in that place.' Right? So, we improved the care network. The network also became a political actor, raising certain difficulties to the management and scheduling meetings.[515]

In fact, many feminist activists and health care professionals with whom I spoke referred to the counseling offices as spaces for the plain exercise of reproductive autonomy. As a medical

---

[515] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, May 15, 2021.

doctor who practices abortions told me in an interview: "abortion is, for me, signals the guarantee of rights."[516] But abortion was seen as different than other reproductive rights—it was seen as particularly strong challenge to maternalism. To emphasize the political and dissident power of abortion, many participants I interviewed referred to abortion as a "non-reproductive right."[517] Healthcare professionals, particularly those of the RPSDD, perceived their role as one of supporting in their patients in their decision not to reproduce as particularly political and challenging to the gender regime. During this period, abortion increasingly became a possibility and a right as much as birthing, for many women in the PSF. Pregnant persons' autonomy in realizing their reproductive needs and desires were increasingly centered as reproductive and "non-reproductive" rights.

Yet, accompanying abortions in maternalistic institutional environments—with, in addition, difficult working conditions—also had important psychological and emotional costs on the healthcare workers and activists with whom I spoke. As this generalist doctor tells me:

> I hardly ever called on nursing because I didn't know who was a conscientious objector and who wasn't. Who would be uncomfortable and who wouldn't. Who would report me. I was afraid someone might be recording. It was so hard to get into a place where the head of the hospital presented himself as anti-rights, and being there was like walking into the lion's den, and besides, not knowing that, since I had never worked, everything was threatening to me.[518]

Ensuring the abortion seeker's abortion care in a violent system involved additional, unpaid, care work to avoid their patients' victimization in other services:

> Mistreatment from other institutions drives me crazy. It's something we always talk about with colleagues, because the truth is, the hospital is quite repulsive. But in

---

[516] Interview with coordinator of the Directorate of Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Province of Santa Fe. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.
[517] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.
[518] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

this situation, in this department, with these issues, the concept of women's care and rights remains very limited. So that really upset me. Personally, it was distressing to me, and as a professional, I tried to avoid mistreatments. So, well, it may sound silly, but for the girls who scheduled an abortion and were planning to take the pills the following day, I would give them my phone number so they can let me know when it starts, how they feel... They have the number there for anything, to let me know. Yes, and that way, we can see together if they really need to go to the hospital.[519]

If the development of informal relations between the provincial program, Socorristas, and the RPSDD allowed improving access to safe and accompanied abortions as a right and healthcare practice, feminist-health networks involved a set of dilemmas and tensions between activists outside the state and healthcare professionals within. often, roles in these networks would overlap, blurring the boundary between state and civil society activism. One public servant part of the provincial program, who also happened to be Socorrista, found this double position challenging to navigate but eventually, defined her role as one of mediation and translation, between what she named "different spaces of belonging":

I see my role as a place of mediation. [...] It is a position very... a position traversed by different affiliations, by different spaces of belonging. Everyone has their interests, sometimes even conflicting interests, let's say, those from the state, those from the organizations. Of course, I'm quite clear that... like, it's my job, my job from the state is for the organizations. Like, my... greater belonging is towards the organizations. That's where I come from. [...] I've had discussions with militant colleagues, 'Well, but no, you're in the state, you can't say that...' Yes, but... let's see, right now I'm speaking to you from the organization. And as an activist, I have to raise this, this, this, and this with you. Then we'll see what's possible, with whom, the alliances... [...][520]

While this person in particular occupied what she considered a double function of feminist critique and construction—sometimes contesting the state, sometimes working with and through the state—others found the state's mechanisms, logics, and processes as inherently

---

[519] Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, May 19, 2021, published in Chabot and Erdilmen (2023).
[520] Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Online, March 5, 2021.

limiting. For example, this Socorrista activist tells me about the dilemma she faced when orienting patients who had abortions towards healthcare services they knew would be violent towards them:

> Sometimes, a girl who was fine for four days suddenly develops a fever, is bleeding in a very strange way, I don't know, and you have nowhere else to take her but to an emergency room where she might be treated poorly. So, it's these things that aren't yet smooth, and that comes, let's say, from the previous administration as well. It's something that persists and persists due to a lot of resistance within health institutions, like hospitals...[521]

This feminist activist adopted a more critical posture towards the state and the institutionalization of abortion as a medical practice. For them, abortion meant much more than what a medicalized practice could capture, as a complex embodied experience of "exercising your desire... and this idea of inhabiting desire[522]" This resignification of abortion involved a deeper, prolonged, and meaningful accompaniment that a state, through medicalization and bureaucratization, could ever provide:

> We want to redefine [the autonomy of the individual] and not have the state totally appropriate the decisions of people who want to have an abortion, so to speak. Because if not, we fall into a medicalization, into a very strange thing that happens when it is state-controlled...We wanted a practice that is more about desire, that is more about the autonomy of the person who decides to have an abortion. It was as if we wanted it to be much more accompanied, so that the person could take away much more than just a misoprostol pill, some medical instructions, and nothing else, so to speak.[523]

To conclude, between 2015 and 2020 in the PSF, feminist movements, while working with public health sectors, developed networks and spaces where abortion acquired a more feminist and political flavor. These gendered networks—mostly between women "in" and "out"

---

[521] Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, March 30, 2021.
[522] Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, March 30, 2021.
[523] Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, March 30, 2021.

of the state[524]—indeed emphasized pregnant person's right to bodily autonomy, to empathetic care and support in that decision.

CONCLUSION

This chapter traced the transformation of the PSF's gender justice regime, between 1990 and 2020. Through this three-decade long process, important shifts indeed took place in the problematization of reproductive health and rights in policy, from constituting criminal practices, to being seen as legitimate expressions of women's reproductive autonomy and particularly, impoverished women who tend to attend the public healthcare system. Feminist movements in Santa Fe indeed centered on denouncing the gendered violence of abortion criminalization and since 2015, on building pragmatic, on-the-ground networks of care for popular-sector women's re-subjectification as persons with reproductive autonomy.

In this chapter, I argued that this transition unfolded through the everyday work of both autonomous and institutionalized feminist movements, in developing synergetic relations linking grassroots feminist, NGOs, social public health sectors, and Socialist femocrats and politicians since the 1990s. In Santa Fe like the rest of Argentina, neoliberal reforms involved the decentralization of healthcare and an increased participation of civil society actors in the realm of reproductive healthcare and gender equality policy, including feminist organizations. Yet, the historical presence of a strong social health sector in the city of Rosario since the 1920s centered on integral health and access, a Socialist local government opened to the international women's rights agenda, as well as dynamic local feminist movements, provided a key environment for the inclusion of feminist voices amongst ally political elites, and limited the state's ability to coopt

---

[524] Although not only women were part of these networks, most members of the RPSDD and the Socorristas are women and members of the LGBTQI+ community.

the feminist agenda—much to the contrary of what I observed in the context of the Province of Tucumán, for example.[525] If Santa Fe also had strong maternalistic institutions in place, these neoliberal reforms paradoxically allowed for feminist movements' "nonconformist insistence" to negotiate the problematization of reproductive health and rights, and their institutionalize them into unique policy experiments.

Moreover, gendered discourses of individual responsibility propelled by neoliberal approaches, which frame women as the sole responsible for and indeed destined to biological reproduction, were progressively challenged and replaced by feminist movements throughout the Left Turn. Then, between 2015 and 2020, when feminist mobilizations for abortion rights reached a historical peak in Argentina, the above mentioned historically built ties empowered healthcare practitioners, activists, and persons seeking abortions on the ground to transform the province's gender justice regime in practice. Therefore, through everyday discourses and practices in institutional and extra-institutional spaces, feminists have negotiated the discursive frontier of legality and illegality, by contesting gendered problematizations of health risk, responsibility, and autonomy in the law and the practice. These changing social representations of the reproductive health policy problem have de-institutionalized women as policy subjects naturally tied to motherhood—driving the transformation of the provincial gender regime from maternalism to bodily autonomy.

***

---

[525] See Chapter 6.

Chapter 6: Contesting an Interlocked Gender Justice Regime in the Province of Tucumán

"*En la Nueva Argentina los únicos privilegiados son los niños*"[526]

Juan Domingo Perón (1951)

"*Si un hijo quieren de mí, para matarlo, para matarlo*
Prefiero decir un 'no', alto y sagrado, alto y sagrado"[527]

Mercedes Sosa, "*Si un hijo quieren de mi*" (1973)

INTRODUCTION

The Province of Tucumán, situated in the North-West of Argentina, is commonly known as "The cradle of the Homeland"[528] due to its geopolitical importance during the 19th century and its leading role in the Independence Wars (1810-1818).[529] Yet on August 9, 1990, Dr. Enrique Riarte, director of the Maternity Hospital *Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes*[530] situated in the capital city of the province, demanded urgent action for the province to stop being the "Republic of the dead children."[531] This declaration, published in the local newspaper *La Gaceta*, was formulated in response to the alarming statistics on child and infant mortality which placed the province amongst the deadliest for children in the country. Situated in the capital city of San Miguel de Tucumán, the province's main maternity hospital had published its most recent

---

[526] "In the New Argentina, the only privileged ones are the children."
[527] "If they want a child from me, only to kill him, only to kill him, I prefer saying 'no', loud and sacred, loud and sacred.
[528] "*La Cuna de la Patria*"
[529] San Miguel de Tucumán was, between 1814-1816, the capital of the United Provinces of the River Plate.
[530] "Our Lady of Mercy."
[531] "*la República de los niños muertos*"

numbers: "of every 1,000 children, 27 die during the pregnancy or during the first 28 days of their lives."[532]

These numbers provoked a shock in the province's legislature, where Dr. Riarte had been invited by the small opposition Left-wing provincial coalition People's Front.[533] For local academic and public health experts, children and particularly infants, died at a young age due to a lack of healthcare, sufficient nutrition, and poor living conditions—but also due to mistreatments and negligence in the family. After the return to democracy in 1983, public health data returned under the control of civilians and the main provincial media outlet in Tucumán had started publishing statistics produced by the SIPROSA, which were increasing at alarming rates, particularly in the capital's periphery. While discussions on child mortality date back to the 19th century in the province (Rodríguez Marquina 2012), in the 1990s, they took a different shape. Indeed, debates on child mortality in Tucumán took place as transnational women's and feminist movements were bringing attention to the issue of violence against women in the household and beyond, and institutionalizing a international women's rights agenda (Vargas 1992).

In Tucumán, the debates surrounding domestic violence the 1990s emerged during the neoconservative, authoritarian provincial government of Antonio Bussi (1995-1999) and while his political party was in opposition, holding strong presence in the legislature (1999-2003). Ex-military general responsible for crimes against humanity committed during the last military dictatorship (1976-1983), the political and social predominance of *Bussismo* during the 1990s, I

---

[532] *La Gaceta*. "Estadística Muy Dramática. Elevada Mortalidad Infantil En Tucumán," August 9, 1990.
[533] *Frente del Pueblo* (FREPU). This small opposition group was composed of deputies of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) and sectors of the Justicialist Party (PJ), and the Communist Party (PCR). To the conference in the Legislature were invited a French perinatologist, the Dean of the National University of Tucuman's Faculty of Medicine, along with top civil servants of the provincial public health sector (SIPROSA).

argue in this chapter, profoundly shaped the problematization of violence against women and reproductive health in the province enduring throughout the Left Turn.

In the first part of this chapter, following a brief contextualization of the province's history, I explore the interlocked problematizations of family violence and reproductive health policy in the PT, from the neoliberal decade to the "post-Left Turn." I begin by showing that during the 1990s, the conservative and authoritarian provincial government controlled the problematization and coopted the domestic violence policy agenda, instrumentalizing it towards the enforcement of an interlocked maternalist-familialist gender injustice regime. In the context of neoliberal democratization, infant mortality, particularly stringent amongst impoverished sectors, revived as a major problem for the province's social and economic development. Consequently, the subjectification of "poor mothers" institutionalized them as *suspicious subjects* of maternal-infantile health programs and family violence policies implemented in the province.

Then, during the Left Turn, as the province entered the national Peronist coalition, the government performed a selective incorporation of national gender equality policies. This incorporation centered on minimalist assistance and the economic empowerment of impoverished women victims of violence, mostly mothers, while retaining the regime's repressive apparatus against their sexual and reproductive autonomy. The gender injustice regime in the province thus continues to incorporate poor, racialized women to citizenship solely as workers and reproducers of the labor force. In Tucumán, the problematization of reproductive rights and GBV institutionalized policy objects, subjects, and places that build on historically constructed classed, racial, and gendered logics of exclusion—which can be traced back to 19th

century Liberal state formation. Yet, under neoliberalism governance they have acquired new instruments and forms.

The second part of the chapter explores challenges, negotiations, and forms of resistances posed by feminist activists, movements, and women to the provincial gender injustice regime. Particularly since the 2018 Green Tide, local feminist activists, women's movements, and feminist street-level bureaucrats in the province have challenged the gender injustice regime by re-problematizing its discourses and practices as forms of gender-based institutional violence. By challenging gender exclusionary discourses and violent practices from within and from the outside the state, feminist abortion health networks have built, though at the very small scale, alternative spaces where marginalized women can be reconstructed and treated as agentic subjects of bodily autonomy. "Gendered institutional violence" has thus become a discursive tool to shift the policy problem and begin transforming the interlocked maternalist-familialist regimes in Tucumán.

Building An Interlocked Neoconservative Gender Justice Regime during the 1990s
During the 1990s, child welfare, maternal-infantile health, and family violence reached mainstream discussions in Tucumán's media and political class. The local women's movement, including through the 1993 National Women's Encounter organized in the province, increasingly demanded the province to tackle patriarchal violence within the family. In a context where the women's movement was pushing for a legal instrument on domestic violence at the national level, in 1995, the Bussi government adopts a first child protection law and in 2000, the first legal instrument on domestic violence is finally adopted, protecting *all* family members *since the moment of conception*. As I will argue in this first section of the chapter, these early institutions

entrenched a gender injustice regime in which domestic violence and foetal "protection" operate as two-part mechanisms of an interlocked maternalist-familialist regime.

The peak of *bussismo* occurred whilst poverty reduction and child health became core components of development agendas in Latin America. While Argentina was generally considered as a middle-income country by international funders, the poorer province of Tucumán was still the target of international maternal-infantile health programs. Child mortality in the North of Argentina was seen by the Menem government in Buenos Aires as an impediment to the economic development of the "interior," a threat to population growth and ergo, an issue of national security (Debora Lopreite 2012). Throughout the 19th century, high rates of child mortality due to extreme poverty and poor working and sanitary conditions in sugar plantations had been of concern to local authorities in the North of the country. In the 1990s, the Northern provinces of Chaco, Formosa, Misiones, Jujuy, Salta, and Tucumán, increased Argentina's infantile mortality rate—a situation seen as shameful by political and medical elites, given Argentina's relatively high social development indicators.[534]

THE 1993 NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENCOUNTER

It was in this context that discussions around violence against women emerge in Tucumán, propelled by a small women's movement active mostly in the capital city. As the National Congress was debating a domestic violence law, the 1993 ENM organized in the city of San Miguel de Tucumán brought together 7,000 women from all over the country. Lower-class

---

[534] *Página/12*. "Los Únicos Privilegiados. Las Estadísticas de Mortalidad Infantil Que El Gobierno No Quería Revelar." May 1997, sec. Society.

women, including Indigenous and Afro-descendent women in the North-West, had started entering progressively the ENMs, bringing to the forefront their demands. [535]

The organizing committee, mostly women involved in local women's organizations and through the PCR branch in Tucumán, had planned different workshops on "woman and family" and on "woman and violence", to which one workshop on violence prevention was added as a self-convoked debate. Grounded in women's lived experience and testimonies, the workshops on violence against women in the ENM served as spaces of support and sharing, as much as venues to discuss, negotiate, and debate over these issues and sometimes, policy demands to be formulated by the women's movement.[536] At the time, violence against women was discussed as connected to rising unemployment and women's increased caretaking responsibilities in a context of neoliberal reforms.[537] The conclusions highlight an overall agreement over the need for victim-centered policies for women: protection from their abuser, emancipation from patriarchal oppression (Alma and Lorenzo 2009). Policy demands for protection to women experiencing violence, in many workshops, included emergency phone lines, women's police stations—though subject to disagreement—state-funded temporary shelters, and judicial measures of exclusion from the household in all provinces (beyond the province of Buenos

---

[535] Indigenous women, particularly in the encounters in the Province of Jujuy (1995) and northeastern Province of Chaco (1998), discussed issues related to their racial and class identities, including colonialism and the space they wanted to and could occupy in the women's movements.

[536] The organizing committee, mostly composed of women involved the Communist Revolutionary Party branch in Tucumán, had planned different workshops on "woman and family" and on "woman and violence," to which one workshop on violence prevention was added as a self-convoked debate. The workshop conclusions included demands for popular education and institutional training, access to contraception, abortion, sexual education, HIV/aids care and medication, daycares, and opposition to the retirement privatization and labor flexibilization reforms. Yet, reproductive issues had not yet entered the Organizational Commission's agenda, and only one workshop on contraception and abortion was self-convoked by participants. Highly taboo, abortion did not yet have its own space for discussion and remained a marginal topic in the encounters. It is only two years late, in the 1995 ENM in San Salvador de Jujuy, that two workshops on abortion would be added by the Organizational Committee.

[537] Women denounced how they suffer a "double oppression": one caused by their disadvantaged positioning in a capitalist society, and the other, stemming from patriarchal oppression. ("Taller 'Mujer y Violencia.'" In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993).

Aires, which had adopted such measures in 1988). But beyond immediate protection for victims, discussions challenged, to some degree, the traditional patriarchal family model and demanded to "To rethink the traditional family model, since we are upholding 'The Institution,' even though its members are being mistreated."[538]

Feminists who discussed in self-convoked workshops on reproductive rights, saw abortion and contraception as gendered-classed issues. One workshop conclusion stated that, "In our country, the basic human right to decide the number of children is restricted to sectors with access to information and contraceptives (middle to upper class). Meanwhile, we know that there are 400,000 abortions performed each year, but it is the poor women who die from infected abortions."[539] In addition, abortion had to be freely accessible for women to free themselves from imposed reproductive labor.[540] During the self-convoked workshop on contraception and abortion, it was argued that capitalist, religious, and authoritarian oppressions worked together in constraining women's reproductive autonomy:

> Implementing moral terrorism that doubly blames the woman who aborts, 'The law prohibits and the church punishes.' This promotes women as producers of future armies of unemployed to increase exploitation rates. The double discourse of the church claims to defend life but forgets the complicity of the ecclesiastical hierarchy when it remained silent during the military dictatorship about the torture and death of pregnant women in captivity.[541]

---

[538] "Taller 'Mujer y Violencia.'" In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993.

[539] "Taller 'Mujer y Salud.'" In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993.

[540] The workshop conclusion stated that, "women should have the right to decide on their own pregnancy so that they are not merely breeding forces and ideologies" ("Taller 'Mujer y Familia.' Sub-Taller N3." In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993).

[541] "Taller Autoconvocado 'Contracepción y Aborto,' SubTaller N1." In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993.

Another workshop went further and claimed, "the right of women to take ownership of our bodies and to freely choose motherhood, even though we have been raised to be reproducers," and demanded a redistribution of the reproductive labor between men and women.[542] However, most workshop conclusions show an ambiguous normative take regarding pregnancy interruption. By reaffirming the slogan "Legal abortion not to die. Effective contraception not to abort", through these solutions the "problem of abortion" remained morally unresolved and polarized the women's movements.

Despite being largely covered by the media as a major event in the province,[543] demands formulated through the ENM in Tucumán were largely ignored by the provincial government. The adoption of the Convention of Belen do Para and the national law on family violence in 1994 had little repercussion in Tucumán, and the legislature ignored, unlike many other provinces, demands to create a provincial instrument to address it. Between 1993 and 1995, only the Municipality of Tucumán, through its Women's Department in the Community Development Office had small scale assistance services.[544] Thus, civil society organizations and small-scale municipal initiatives implemented limited assistance services, with scarce resources and no political support from the province. Two years later in 1995, the election of the ex-military general Antonio Bussi as governor of the province would close the small discursive space

---

[542] "Taller 'Mujer y Sexualidad.' Sub-Taller N1." In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993. This workshop lasted two days and counted with the participation of around 80 women.

[543] In one workshop, the news coverage of *La Gaceta* was highly criticized by participants, as the sentence of the day for the newspaper edition of the 13th of June, 1993 stated, "...At the Women's Meeting some do not know the agenda, but the 6,000 know what clothes the other one is wearing..." ("Taller 'Mujer y Feminismo.' Sub-Taller N1." In *Conclusions of the VIII National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 1993).

[544] The Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) had indeed funded the creation of local women's office in San Miguel, thought of as institutions to democratize policy and adapt international frameworks to local environments (Interview with ex-President of Consejo Nacional de la Mujer (CNM). In person, in Buenos Aires, February 25, 2020).

initially available to the local women's movement, limiting even more opportunities for feminist policy development.

FAMILY VIOLENCE UNDER BUSSISMO: BETWEEN PATERNALIST PROTECTION, MATERNALISM, AND AUTHORITARIANISM

During the second half of the 1990s, debates over family, motherhood, and social policy became the almost exclusive terrain of public health and legal sectors—as women's movements were sidelined during the conservative government of Bussi. The only NGO addressing domestic violence in Tucumán, the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation for Non-Family Violence,[545] was created in 1996 to assist women and children twice a week, 2 hours per day.[546] Yet, as the provincial political environment became unfavorable for women's movements to formulate their claims, the agenda on violence against women would be completely overshadowed by the new governor's top health priority. In 2000, under the Peronist government of Julio Miranda (PJ) the province adopts laws 7.029 and 7.044 on family violence, instituting its first provincial-level protection regime focused on "any family member since the moment of conception."

Debates amongst the scientific expertise over infant and child mortality in Tucumán since the 1980s were largely driven by healthcare professionals—mostly pediatric doctors from local maternity hospitals—public servants from the provincial healthcare system (SIPROSA), and academic expertise from the National University of Tucumán. As statistical systems were developing in the provincial healthcare with the first maternal-health programs in the early 1990s, public health sectors had now more precise information on infant mortality rates, which were now known to affect in great part the newborn. An ex-asesor of the Panamerican Health

---

[545] *Fundación Por la No Violencia Familiar Mahatma Gandhi.*
[546] Composed of psychologists, lawyers, and social assistants—some of them with experience as public servants in the provincial Secretary of Family and Minority), this organization provided psychological and judicial counselling and put in place the first training on family violence for police forces.

Association in Central America and pediatric doctor in Tucumán, Marta Niñas de Rodríguez

Rey, in an interview with *La Gaceta*, viewed child mortality as "silenced deaths," since, as she

argued "It would seem that it is normal for these things to happen, and nobody puts in the

newspaper that a neighbor's child died because they didn't receive proper prenatal care or a six-

month-old child because their family couldn't afford to buy the necessary food."[547]

San Miguel de Tucumán and particularly the Tucumán National University became,

starting from the mid-1990s, a scientific hub in the Northwest for pediatric and neonatology

medicine.[548] Along with the Ministry of Social Affairs, the newly created Perinatal Center of

Tucuman[549] of the Faculty of Medicine was mandated to develop perinatal maternal-infantile

care policies aimed at "reducing drastically," in Governor Bussi's terms, infantile mortality.

Whilst neoliberal reforms decentralized healthcare system to the province and partly privatized

healthcare coverage throughout the country, health programs developed in the province were

mostly implemented with the financial and technical support of international organizations and

funders. From 1990 to 1993, the National Ministry of Health had implemented the World Bank

funded the national Maternal-Infantile Plan, focused on obstetric care amongst women and child

nutrition for poor populations. In 1994, the program PROMIN was implemented, with the goal

of reducing "maternal and infantile mortality by 30%" and infant malnutrition. The plan targeted

---

[547] Alvarez Sosa, Arturo. "Silenced Deaths." *La Gaceta*, October 5, 1990.

[548] In 1997, Tucumán hosted the 5th International Symposium on Updates in Pediatrics and Neonatology, where local and international medical specialists from the University of California, as well as the Argentine Pediatric Society, discussed maternal-infantile health policy in the province with the goal of having the province "take initiative in the fight for the most rapid reduction in morbidity and mortality of the recent born and in the planning of sanitary policies" (*La Gaceta*. "Cómo Reducir La Mortalidad Infantil. Tucumán Será La Sede de Las V Jornadas Internacionales de Actualización y Neonatología," October 7, 1997).

[549] *Centro Perinatológico de Tucumán.*

the poorest areas of the province, by increasing pre-natal care and the decentralization of maternal healthcare.[550]

But maternal-infantile health was not the only policy area mobilized to tackle infant mortality. Another key area, the justice system, dealt with violence committed against them in the family. The year of Bussi's election as Governor in 1995, bill 6.518 is adopted by the provincial legislature, incorporating to the criminal code the obligation from state authorities to denounce real or suspected acts of violence committed against children in their families. In a context where public healthcare, education, and social service workers would be criminally sanctioned if they did not denounce observed violence against children, caretakers of young children, mostly women, fell under specific scrutiny. As I observed in the archival evidence, since 1995 more cases of intrafamily violence against children would reach the judicial system and would be reported to the media, bringing to light the pervasiveness of a then hidden social problem.[551] In this context, poorer families who attended public services, including the public healthcare and education systems, would thus be exposed to such control to a greater extent that families who did not, that is, middle and upper classes.

By the late 1990s, advances in maternal-infantile health programs had been accompanied with the simultaneous retrenchment of the already limited services available to women who experienced violence at home. In 1998, attention centers for domestic violence within the

---

[550] The program targeted the peripheral areas of San Miguel de Tucumán, Banda del Río Salí and Yerba Buena (*La Gaceta*. "Evalúan El Plan Materno-Infantil," July 20, 1995).
[551] *La Gaceta*. "Proceso Por La Muerte a Golpes de Una Criatura. Un Terrible Caso de Violencia Familiar Se Ventila En Concepción." August 4, 1998. *La Gaceta*. "Violencia. La Escuela: Un Ámbito de Prevención." August 30, 1998.

Direction of Family and Minority[552] stopped operating, due to a lack of funding.[553] The only remaining institution to officially receive formal complaints was the Victim's Orientation Center,[554] a provincial police station which, like many others, had operated as a clandestine detention center during the last military dictatorship.[555] Moreover, due to the absence of a provincial legal framework around family violence, police only treated violence considered as a criminal offense—thus restricting their interventions to physical or sexual aggressions.[556]

The urgency of addressing family violence as a gendered issue in the province was voiced by the few overwhelmed assistance services, women's organizations, and NGOs, as Bussi's governance was reaching its final years. On August 30th, 1998, a special edition on family violence in the newspaper La Gaceta had a significant impact on local NGOs[557] and the few assistances services, that reported having received a significant amount of phone calls and visits subsequently, to denounce experienced or witnessed domestic violence against women.[558] While embracing a health-based and child-centered approach to family violence, their demands for legislation and resources often included women as victims. For November 25th, Tucuman's Women's Multisectoral[559] organized a panel on violence against women, in which participated feminist lawyers and union leaders.[560] Feminist academics from the civil association increasingly raised their voices to denounce the lack of assistance and prevention-oriented public policies in

---

[552] *Dirección de Familia y Minoridad.*
[553] Some municipal governments opened their own centers, but the absence of a provincial law impeded them to benefit from provincial funds. (*La Gaceta*. "El Flagelo de La Violencia Familiar. Las Estadísticas Reflejan Una Gran Indefensión." August 25, 1998).
[554] *Centro de Orientación a la Víctima* (COVI).
[555] Human Rights Secretary of the Nation (2010).
[556] *La Gaceta*. "Violencia Familiar, 'Epidemia Social' En Expansión." August 30, 1998.
[557] Those include the Gandhi Foundation and Antígona Association.
[558] *La Gaceta [Página/12]*. "Las Denuncias Por Violencia Familiar Aumentaron Un 50%." September 2, 1998.
[559] *Multisectorial de Mujeres.*
[560] *La Gaceta*. "Violencia Contra La Mujer." *La Gaceta*, November 25, 1997.

the province, as well as revictimization within the police and judicial systems.[561] Pressure was

thus increasing on the provincial government to act.[562]

In 2000, the provincial Legislature finally debates family violence, adopting Law 7.029

on "Family Violence: protection and assistance regime for victims."[563] The law protected

persons in married couples or in civil unions, as well as family members "from the moment of

conception" (Law 7044). With this law, the domestic violence law adopted in Tucumán

institutionalized familialism and maternalism as its founding principles. In the following section,

I further unpack this claim by unveiling the discourses and practices that shaped the

problematization of domestic violence and reproductive health as interlocked policy objects.

SUBJECTIFYING THE "POOR MOTHER" IN THE GENDER JUSTICE REGIME

The combined development of family violence laws oriented on child security and

maternal-infantile health policies focused on child (and foetal) health in the province of

Tucumán, occurred at a moment of closure of the provincial democratic space through the rise of

conservative, authoritarian political forces. Policy development took place through the state

problematization of family violence as not traversed by unequal gender relations and as an issue

in which caretakers—predominantly the mothers—were subjectified as *responsible for* infant

mortality rates. Violence protection and maternal health policy responses thus installed in the

province a gender justice regime in which poor women were institutionalized as undeserving of

---

[561] *La Gaceta.* "Tucumán: Sin Ley Específica. Dos Especialistas Tucumanas Exponen Las Falencias Del Sistema."
September 7, 1998.
[562] The following year, in 1999, Association Antigona petitioned the legislature to adopt a provincial law.
[563] The initial law's article 2, which initially limited the victims to individuals over 18, caused significant outrage
amongst the provincial Victim Assistance Center, NGOs, and lawyers, due to its exclusion of children. Twelve days
later, legislators amended the law to include under its jurisdiction *all* family members, including women and
children.

protection in the traditional family, while being scrutinized in their reproductive and caretaking

behaviors, since their pregnancy.

As the women's movement in Tucumán problematized violence within families and

workplaces as gendered and classed issues, the state's weak family violence responses instead

embraced the more dominant psychological approach. This approach centered on violence as a

pathology, held by both the victim and the perpetrator as non-gendered family members. Just like

major newspaper in Buenos Aires, La Gaceta's news coverage overwhelmingly illustrated

"women-victims" as white and middle-class. Dramatic photographs and sensationalist depictions

of bruised eyes and bloody faces often portrayed women as powerless, pathological victims of

physical violence, incapable of any resistance due to psychological trauma, "addiction to pain,"

and their own naturalization of violence. Representations focused on physical violence

committed in the household, and its psychological consequences—while male perpetrators were

only rarely mentioned in the archives I consulted. This silence about male violence has been

theorized as an "absent presence," that is directly linked to the problematization of domestic

violence, obscuring its patriarchal logic (Hearn and McKie 2009). Thus, the gendered workings

of violence within families, its causes and mechanisms, were ignored and self-help groups for

"women-victims" were presented as spaces for individualized therapeutic treatment (See Figure

9).

Figure 9: Newspaper article "The battered woman is an addicted to pain. Self-help groups as a solution for a social flagellum." La Gaceta. November 25th, 1988.

Yet, by the second half of the 1990s, under Bussi's government, the agenda on children's health overflowed discussions on family violence, transforming its problematization. As the root causes and consequences of child mortality were intensively debated, assumptions underlying family violence, poverty, and motherhood, changed as well. While state authorities, public health sectors, and the traditional media initially portrayed family violence as an issue affecting all members equally, children were increasingly presented as "more legitimate victims," instead of pathologized. Children being considered the most vulnerable victims of family violence,

additional efforts were made to displace the focus of public attention from women to "the other face, most defenseless of intrafamily violence." Mobilized around children's health and wellbeing, public health sectors demanded the provincial state to sanction criminally violence committed against children by their caretakers (see Figure 10).[564] Discussions on family violence were therefore centered almost exclusively on parental violence over children, rather than on patriarchal violence. While initial debates illustrated essentializing representations of middle-class, white "women-victims," the turn to child mortality as main health concern shifted the

Figure 10: Newspaper article "An increasing social flagellum: consultations for cases of violence at the Police doubled. Today is the commemoration of the international day against aggressions in the family." La Gaceta, November 25, 1999.

---

[564] Scholars have noticed the centering of children in domestic violence in other contexts beyond Tucumán, Argentina, and Latin America (Andrea Krizsán 2007; Bailey, n.d.; Hearn and McKie 2009). In most cases, these efforts to elude the gendered aspects of violence have undermined feminist efforts to make visible violence against women in the private sphere; they are broadly considered as anti-feminist and racist policy instruments. As argued by Iris Marion Young (2003), discourses of paternalistic protection of women and children in the United States are linked with the enforcement of the security state (in the homeland and abroad) in ways that seek to reinforce women and children's subordination within the private sphere.

blame towards poor mothers. "Women-victims" became subjects of direct perpetration or complicity in violence—while men remained, once more, entirely absent from problematization. As Berns (2001) argues, child and family-centric approaches to domestic violence tend to constitute ways of *degendering* the policy problem, while *gendering* the blame (and consequently, the policy solution); in other words, gender-blind approaches to domestic violence elude gender inequalities within intimate couples when problematizing violence, while blaming women for their failures in maintaining family harmony.

In addition, in the local newspaper, cases of women committing infanticides or child mistreatment frequently made the headlines. Infanticides committed by women indeed captured social attention and challenged core gendered assumptions about women's "natural" values related to nurturing, care, and motherhood. Through this process, "women" as constructed by judicial and government authorities were seen as subject-positions deprived of any rational thinking. In some cases, violence committed by women against children was considered so abnormal that only madness could explain it. In these cases, the women benefitted from leniency by the court, due to a "violent emotion" that reduced their criminal responsibility (Di Corleto 2018). But madness could not always be defended and in other cases, *La Gaceta* exposed women who committed infanticides were sanctioned without leniency, as form of punishment for stepping out of their "natural" role in "irrational ways."[565]

---

[565] It is indeed the case of Deolinda Vera de Siqueiros, a 26-year-old from the municipality of El Churqui, Tafí del Valle, accused of killing her two-year-old niece of which she was the main caretaker since her birth. As explained in the newspaper article, the defense argued that the accused suffered violence on the part of her husband, faced economic issues, and had learned the same day that she was pregnant of an unwanted child, was not criminally responsible of her acts as these factors have contributed to the emotional distress leading to her acts. This argument was rejected by the judges, who claimed that these issues were unrelated to the accused "cruel and violent attack" (La Gaceta 1999a).

At the end of the 1990s child mortality was then clearly seen as connected to child mistreatment within families. On November 25, 1999, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, La Gaceta's news coverage was focused on violence against children as a social flagellum.[566] As the President of the fourth room of provincial criminal courts Maria del Pilar Prieto mentioned in the interview, "Parental violence causes higher infant mortality rates than leukemia and polio." Moreover, public health specialists associated poverty, as well as the lack of access to health services by women during pregnancy and in the first year following birth, as a major risk factor for child development—and economic development in general. Dr. Elsa Moreno, professor of medicine at the National University of Tucumán denounced that child mortality, particularly in the North-West, affected the poorest sectors and "remained too high in relation to Argentina's level of development" and compared to other countries of the region, such as Cuba, Chile, and Costa Rica.

According to the National Health Subsecretary, deaths in the first 30 days after birth were linked to the mothers "sociocultural level," to be addressed through education, prenatal and postnatal health controls.[567] Rodríguez Rey pediatric from PAHO, emphasized the developmental consequences of poor nutrition during pregnancy, claiming that there is a "quantity of disabled generated by poverty, malnourishment, ignorance, and inaccessibility of services. Still today, 11% of childbirths take place in private homes, generally assisted by midwives, and 4% do not receive any type of attention".[568] Hospitals were thus to replace the

---

[566] *La Gaceta*. "An increasing social flagellum: consultations for cases of violence at the Police doubled. Today is the commemoration of the international day against aggressions in the family". November 25, 1999.

[567] Debesa, Fabian, and Monica Galmarini. "Polémica Judicial: Mato a Su Mujer y Le Bajaron La Condena." *Clarín*, November 10, 2011.

[568] Alvarez Sosa, Arturo. "Silenced Deaths." *La Gaceta*, October 5, 1990.

private home as a space to manage women's reproductive health, if child mortality was to reduce in the province.

To conclude, this first section of the chapter focused on the partial and controlled neoliberal democratization process in the PT. Amid radical market reforms that dramatically increased unemployment and poverty, early debates on domestic violence and violence against women in Tucumán would be accompanied by an almost ritualized, relentless race to numbers on infant mortality rates led forward by the dominant local media, public health, academic, and development expertise, as well as politicians. Each trimester, the evolution of child mortality rates would be reported in local news, which became a top health priority for the provincial government. In all, during the peak of *bussismo*, Tucumán's family violence policies centered primarily on addressing development targets set by an agenda on infant and child mortality—rather than addressing patriarchal violence. As a result, multiple, contradictory gendered objects, such as victimhood, perpetration, and violence have coexisted in the PT's gender injustice regime: on the one hand, women were portrayed as defenseless, irrational victims of their husbands' violence (i.e. suffering an "addiction"). On the other hand, when problematizing violence against children, impoverished women were institutionalized as simultaneously, suspiciously complicit and agents individually responsible for protecting themselves and their children, insuring their survival and health. Thus, while the state problematized family violence as supposedly gender neutral, responsibility and blame remained attributed to women, shaping Tucumán's interlocked maternalistic-familialist regime.

By the end of the 1990s, the public health sector in Tucumán had become increasingly critical of the health policies led forward by the Bussi government. As the Argentine Pediatric

Society (SAP) published independent data on the gravity of child mortality, the provincial government's credibility was tarnished.[569] The following section centers on the Left Turn in Tucumán, exploring how national-level changes in women's rights have manifested locally.

WHICH LEFT TURN IN TUCUMÁN? CONSERVATIVE POLITICS AND THE SELECTIVE INCORPORATION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS (2003-2015)

In this second part of the chapter, I show that the women's rights agenda adopted during the Left Turn partly altered the problematization of violence against women in Tucumán, including through the 2009 ENM in Tucumán, in which GBV was highly discussed, and abortion strongly divided local feminist and women's movements. During the Left Turn in Tucumán, GBV policies begun adopting state protection, assistance, and economic empowerment approaches. However, as I argue in this section, these policy solutions have remained attached to specific, gendered and classed representations of victimhood: being a poor mother experiencing intimate-partner violence or being sexually exploited through sex trafficking. On the contrary, women who exercised sexual and reproductive agency remained excluded and even penalized in the provincial gender injustice regime, through the strict criminalization of lawful abortions and the non-adoption of the PNSSPR.[570]

Tucumán's traditional political class was, by the early 2000s, already facing important challenges.[571] Child mortality remained a deep concern, but a major scandal involving the

---

[569] The SAP denounced that child mortality was first and foremost, due to "total poverty and marginalization, to severe forms of malnutrition that lead to death, to incomplete vaccine plans, to the closure or discontinuity of child feeding programs, to the increase of street children in complete abandonment, and to the lack of a responsible health plan that prioritizes primary care and prevention" (*La Gaceta*. "Cómo Reducir La Mortalidad Infantil. Tucumán Será La Sede de Las V Jornadas Internacionales de Actualización y Neonatología." October 7, 1997).

[570] I discuss the National Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation (*Programa Nacional de Salud Sexual y Procreación Responsable*, PNSSPR) in more details in Chapter 3.

[571] When condemned, Bussi had over 600 cases opened in the province for crimes against humanity (CIJ-Centro de Información Judicial 2010).

presumed statistical manipulation of infant mortality rates shed light on the close control of the governing party over the workings of the provincial healthcare system. When Bussi died in 2011, Fuerza Republicana, now led by the ex-general's son Ricardo Argentino Bussi, was in downfall.[572] In 2003, the Justicialist Party would come back to power with the election of José Jorge Alperovich at the governorship,[573] inserting the local Peronist elites in the national governing Center-Left coalition of the Front for Victory.

It is only by the second half of the 2010s that violence against women policies started reflecting a re-subjectification of women as victims rather than perpetrators, complicit, or responsible for violence committed in their families. Indeed, the province made what appeared to be some important steps forward, with the growth of a network of assistance services that connected state and non-state organizations in the realm of protection and assistance, and victims' access to justice—particularly in the context of intimate-partner violence. These new measures included psycho-social and legal assistance and the implementation of programs of economic empowerment for victims, including victims of sex trafficking.

Throughout this period, however, Tucumán's legislature blocked the adherence to national laws and protocols or the adoption of provincial laws and programs on sexual and reproductive health, including the PNSSPR, sex education, legal abortion regulations, and gender identity—thus significantly limiting the reach of women's and LGBTQI+ rights and national-

---

[572] The party preserved 14.41% of the seats in the legislature between 2003-2007, a percentage that fell to 4.63% between 2007-2011 until a low 2.87% between 2011-2015 ("Atlas Electoral de Andy Tow" 2023).

[573] *Bussismo* was mostly losing support in the population due to a fiscal scandal involving a bank account in Switzerland and in 2008, the ex-general was condemned to life imprisonment for the disappearance of the Senator Guillermo Vargas Aignasse during the last military dictatorship. In 2019, José Alperovich faced 6 charges for sexual assault on his niece and ex-assistant, who denounced him for acts committed between 2017 and 2019 (Vallejos 2022). In an unprecedented ruling in Buenos Aires delivered a few weeks before this dissertation was published, in July 2024, Alperovich was condemned to 16 years of prison for sexual assault (Di Nicola 2024).

level policies in the province. Thus, the 'assistantialist turn' in violence against women policy and a concern for poor women's economic empowerment through their insertion in the formal labor market occurred while state support and protection remained denied for women who demonstrated sexual and reproductive agency, specifically, women seeking birth control or abortion—or women voluntarily engaging in prostitution.[574] The recentering of poor women during the Left Turn, in all, preserved the maternalistic and familialist grounds on which the province's gender injustice regime is constructed and enforced paternalist protection grounded in neoliberal sexual morality, especially towards poor women.

This section begins by an analysis of the transformations in local feminist and women's movements in Tucumán, as they increasingly debated women's sexual and bodily autonomy rights. I then turn to the state's new problematization of violence against women, and how it relates to the previous gender injustice regime institutionalized in the 1990s. Last, I return to the province's reproductive health approach, centered on maternal-infantile health coupled with a strong social and institutional criminalization of abortions, including lawful abortions.

THE 2009 NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENCOUNTER

Since the 2001 crisis and the massive entrance of popular-sector women to the ENMs, the events had grown in its number of participants, for the 2009 ENM in Tucumán was attended by around 20,000 persons, under a climate a high tension around the question of abortion. The national socioeconomic context had radically changed in the last decade, and new topics had

---

[574] Here, I am not claiming that all women engaging in prostitution do so voluntarily—nor do I claim that women who are voluntarily (whether temporarily or permanently) engaging in sex work are "free" of other constraints that inform their decision to engage in this precarious informal employment (socioeconomic exclusion or gender and sexual discrimination, for example). What I am arguing is that by making no distinction between sex trafficking and sex work, the province's problematization of GBV assumes and enforces a specific sexual moral order and "preferable" sexual practices, that is, heterosexual, procreation-oriented sexuality confined to the traditional family model. I return to this part of the argument later in the chapter.

made their appearance in the ENMs' agendas, including "Women heads of households."[575] Along the growing issue of abortion and ongoing discussions surrounding violence against women and reproductive rights, at the 2009 ENM emerged intense debates around motherhood, victimhood, sexuality, and the traditional family model that shook the local women's movement and forged a clearer division between religious and non-religious sectors.

During the three days of the ENM, it was reported that organized religious sectors—as well as police officers—infiltrated the workshops, particularly those on abortion, disturbing the atmosphere of discussion and debate that usually characterized the encounters. Large counter-protests were also organized in front of the Cathedral, leading to numerous altercations in the between workshop participants surrounding the types of debates that were to be held in the encounters. Some believed that organized religious sectors must be excluded from the workshops, and others believed that their participation remained fundamental to preserve the ENMs' inclusive and democratic nature.[576]

If the 2009 ENM in Tucumán was a highly conflictive event, it also marked a step towards the development of strategies to push for the legalization of abortion amongst an increasingly massive feminist sector. In one of the 10 sub-workshops organized with this

---

[575] "*Mujer sosten de familia*".

[576] An activist part of the local *Ni Una Menos* whom I met in a coffee shop of the capital city, attended the event. She believed in the necessity to protect the majority from aggressions and harassment from a minority religious group by excluding them from the encounter. This, she believed, would have offered a space where productive discussions on abortion rights advocacy could take place, but the organizing commission was not yet ready to make such as strong and "divisive" decision. She tells me, "They didn't want to take that position, under the excuse that the meeting is for all women. No, we are not all women together. The organized church women who come to this are against the rest. No, we are not all women" (Interview with a feminist activist Ni Una Menos, from the Workers' Plenary. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 25, 2022).

purpose, it was decided that anti-abortion sectors would not be able to participate in the debates.[577]

If abortion had always had a place in the ENMs, though relatively marginal, since 1996 it had been increasingly debated as part of workshops organized on "contraception and abortion" and since 2003, in a workshop exclusively dedicated to it.[578] The National Campaign for legal, safe, and free abortion had been growing since 2005 and the green scarf was now more widely used amongst feminists who attended the event, clashing with the conservative local environment. Discussions that dealt with reproduction and sexuality revealed opposing, polarized conflicts over the relationship between motherhood and womanhood. On the one hand, feminist challenges to the ongoing restriction on reproductive rights questioned dominant gender norms that attached motherhood to women's identity.[579] They questioned the existence of a "maternal instinct," and understood motherhood as socially constructed and that does not inherently begin with pregnancy and childbirth but is rather a learned experience, that has taken different forms across history and cultures.[580] The most revolutionary perspectives, such as those discussed in

---

[577] The conclusions stated, "A new coordination was agreed upon, and those who do not specifically address the strategies, that is, those who do not agree with the legalization of abortion, cannot participate in debating and developing strategies for its legalization" ("Taller 'Estratégias Para El Acceso al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito.' Sub-Taller 1." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

[578] That year, a total of 20 workshops and sub-workshops were organized on sexual and reproductive rights, while 5 sub-workshops were exclusively dedicated to the development of strategies of advocacy for the legalization of abortion on-demand. One workshop was titled "contraception and abortion" and included 19 sub-workshops, while another workshop titled "Sexual and reproductive rights" did not have any sub-workshop.

[579] The conclusions of a workshop stated that, "A woman's identity is not defined by being a mother. Being a woman does not imply being a mother. Motherhood should not be a mandate, nor should it overshadow or suppress other aspects of identity. Is being a mother an option or an obligation? It is an option, but there are social pressures, social and economic conditions, family, religious, cultural, and historical factors that limit the option" ("Taller 'Estratégias Para El Acceso al Aborto Legal, Seguro y Gratuito.' Sub-Taller 1." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

[580] The conclusions state, "Motherhood is a socio-cultural construct that varies over time. Child-rearing is not necessarily the responsibility of the mother; there is no maternal love as a maternal instinct. Motherhood does not begin with pregnancy or childbirth. Women experience motherhood in multiple ways" ("Taller 'Mujer y Familia.' Sub-Taller N7." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

the workshop on women and sexuality, put forward the human right to a fulfilling sex life beyond that with the purpose of procreation, including through non heterosexual relations.[581]

Behind the reclaiming of sexuality for emancipation rather than for the instrumental purpose of human procreation, feminists in the ENM challenged dominant familialist and maternalistic norms and reframed themselves as subjects of rights: "Women are not objects of desire; we are subjects of desire, rights, and power."[582] Along these challenges to the gendered social and political order was more fiercely attached a broad agenda for reproductive rights, in which both the state, healthcare professionals, and the feminist movements appeared as major actors:

> To be free, it is necessary to have access to sexual education, contraception, and legal, free, and safe abortion. […] It is essential to guarantee women's rights concerning sexual health, and it is the responsibility of the state to ensure this, while it is our responsibility to fight to demand it. We must have access to counseling and commitment from healthcare workers, and their professional training must recognize our sexual rights to ensure real sexual health.[583]

During the encounter, the case of Romina Tejerina also occupied a central role as a banner of the pro-abortion rights advocates. Incarcerated in the province of Jujuy in 2005, Tejerina is a young woman who was condemned to 13 years of imprisonment after committing infanticide, following an unwanted pregnancy resulting from a rape.[584] Since the 2006 ENM in the northern Province of Jujuy, feminists argued that Tejerina's acts had to be situated in a broader context of restrictions on women's reproductive rights, framing her case as a direct

---

[581] "Taller 'Mujer y Sexualidad.' Sub-Taller 4." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009.
[582] "Taller 'Mujer y Sexualidad.' Sub-Taller 3." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009.
[583] "Taller 'Mujer e Identidad.' Sub-Taller 2." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009.
[584] Dillon, Marta. "El Encuentro de Mujeres 2006 será en Jujuy, por la libertad de Romina." *Página/12*, October 11, 2005. https://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/sociedad/3-57736-2005-10-11.html.

consequence of the criminalization of abortion and widespread sexual violence. They denounced

the impunity and unfair treatment of her case by the justice system, given that her aggressor's

case was dismissed. But feminist positions on abortion, while growing, remained far from

unanimous, and the presence of religious sectors in the ENM made it so that a vast proportion of

participants attached motherhood to womanhood as a natural consequence of "their reproductive,

biological condition."[585] Evidently, essentialist views on women's reproductive and caretaking

roles propelled by an important number of participants formed an important anti-abortion block

within the ENM. Grounded in the language of science, human rights, and responsibility,

arguments generally placed in opposition the right of the foetus to live, and the "mother's"

freedom.[586]

While debates in the ENM over women's identity were divided between opposition views

of womanhood, abortion embodied an ontological point of tension. For conservative women,

abortion threatened the natural social order because of its challenge to sexuality for reproductive

purposes and thus, to the traditional family unit as a pre-political, foundational institution. Anti-

abortion sectors problematized it as the murder of a living human being and left the education of

children as a co-responsibility between parents and the state. For feminists, abortion liberated

women from the mandate of reproduction imposed by society, the traditional family, and the

Catholic Church. They emphasized women's right to decide over their bodies through abortion

---

[585] The conclusions stated, "[...] motherhood is a natural vocation for women: to procreate, generate life, and this implies taking on the responsibility to care for, protect, and educate it" ("Taller 'Mujer y Familia.' Sub-Taller N7." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

[586] For example, "A woman, in her own condition as a woman, has motherhood embedded in her genetic makeup; her entire body, her cells, and her organs are prepared for motherhood. A woman is free and must exercise that freedom with responsibility. Once pregnancy is confirmed, freedom does not mean choosing whether or not to continue that new life. That child is a genetically distinct life from the mother, and as such, has the right to live" ("Taller 'Mujer y Familia.' Sub-Taller N7." In *Conclusions of the XXIV National Women's Encounter*. San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

and contraception and emphasized the state's responsibility to implement sex education and insure the accessibility of reproductive health services.[587]

Moreover, taking place the same year as the adoption of the national law on violence against women, discussions on GBV deepened and broadened the debates on women's autonomy. The term "femicide" made a discrete appearance, often as a critique to the terms of "family violence" and "crimes of passion." Women, in all, problematized violence against women as a gendered issue and the workshops showed a significantly wider conceptualization of the phenomenon, beyond the domestic sphere, than during the 1990s. Through different workshops, participants discussed violence both in terms of its different expressions (economic, sexual, "environmental") and of the spaces where it occurs (intimate relations, the workplace, the media, the state). Though the term gender-based violence was used widely to problematize violence, most discussions still centered on intimate-partner violence among heterosexual couples and families.

Beyond conceptual definitions, for most women existing services were not only insufficient but also contributing to the patriarchal culture they sought to dismantle. Women who were re-victimized while seeking assistance from the police testified. For instance, the conclusions of the workshop stated that:

> Women reported that they made complaints and were not heard. They complained about the lack of legal advice and the absence of shelters to protect themselves and their children. It was said that there are no laws, and those that exist are neither known nor publicized. That no one respects them and the processes are slow, which endangers women's lives.[588]

---

[587]"Conclusiones del XXIV Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres." San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009.
[588] Conclusions of the ENM Tucumán 2009, Workshop Mujer y Violencia, Sub workshop N3, p. 76.

For existing laws to become effective, women believed both a political and a cultural change should operate amongst the public servants, lawyers, police, health professionals, involved in victims' protection and assistance, as well as access to justice.[589] The incorporation of a gender perspective to the discussions involved the expansion of protection and victim-centered assistance approaches, to demands for broader educational and preventive solutions that could eventually, eliminate violence at its roots.[590]

At the same time, the uncovering of a major, transnational network of sex trafficking in the region through the highly mediatized care of Marita Verón, a young woman who was kidnapped and disappeared—most probably in sex trafficking criminal networks—since 2002, further connected the topic of GBV with a state-led system of impunity. The struggle to find her led by her mother Susana Trimarco led the issue to the forefront of debates within the women's movement. Following Verón's highly mediatized case, the 13 men suspected of being responsible for her kidnapping and sexual exploitation were put to trial in February 2012, but the defendants were found non-guilty, for a lack of incriminating evidence.[591] In another case that marked the 2009 ENM in Tucumán, the femicide of "Paulina," the movement shed light on the systemic patriarchal workings of provincial political elites and the impunity that shielded them from state-led processes of accountability. The movement denounced the numerous flaws in the investigation of this young woman's femicide, involving the son of the then Governor

---

[589] For example, the conclusions stated that "We worked on the issue of violence against women as a state policy. The state legitimizes the violence that women suffer. Budgets are not allocated, nor are the laws that have been regulated. There are no prompt responses to legal actions that end victimization, failing to recognize that women are survivors of various situations of violence. There is a need for training of personnel to ensure they are qualified to support victims" ("Conclusiones del XXIV Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres." San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

[590] This meant, "Review daily practices to understand the different types of violence (physical, psychological, sexual, economic). Change and modify learned behaviors as social constructs, starting with gender constructions" ("Conclusiones del XXIV Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres." San Miguel de Tucumán: CeDInCI, 2009).

[591] Marita Verón remains disappeared until today.

Alperovich. Overall, a multitude of complex sociopolitical problems emerged in the discussions, connecting GBV and femicide with a widespread system of impunity in which the state is an active participant, along transnational criminal organized groups.[592]

In all, abortion and the violence against women agenda forcefully shaped the 2009 ENM in Tucumán. Abortion in particular generated strong divisions within the national and local women's movements, between religious and secular sectors. By displacing power over reproduction from the institutions of motherhood and the family to women, feminists demanded a profound shift in political subjectivity; they demanded the centering of women as subjects of rights and attributed responsibility to the state for the denial of national-level legislations on GBV, sex education, contraceptive methods, and abortion. Yet, these demands would only be partially addressed by the provincial government, a selective incorporation I explore in the following sub-section.

BETWEEN PROTECTION, EMPOWERMENT, AND CONTROL DURING THE LEFT TURN (2003-2015)

Starting in 2007, the small network of assistance institutions in the province—mostly situated in the Capital—had grown progressively, under the impulse of the *Observatorio de la Mujer* (Women's Observatory, OM). The OM had been created in 2005 within the provincial Ministry of Social Development; the office was situated in a public hospital in Tucumán's city center,[593] and the office assisted women victims of violence by offering psychosocial and legal assistance, and by articulating with other state services in the provincial capital city. With the 2009 ENM, pressure on the provincial state had grown to increase resources and services for assistance and protection. A year later, the province put in place a Domestic Violence Office

---

[592] See Marcela Lagarde (2006) and Rita Segato (2010) for a similar analysis in the Mexican context.
[593] The Health Care Center-Hospital Zenón J. Santillán.

(DVO) in the judiciary branch, to improve women's access to justice.[594] But in addition to increasing the number of service points, the incorporation of a gender perspective in the provincial policy framework since the adoption of the national law in 2012, is believed to have significantly changed the province's protection, assistance, and access to justice policy approach.

In this section, I show that building on the previous maternalistic-familialist gender justice regime, since 2012 the violence against women agenda in Tucumán reflects a double pattern of problematization. First, by incorporating programs such as Women Make, assistance services have increasingly focused on the economic empowerment of poor women experiencing violence, mostly unemployed mothers working in the informal labor. As part of this transition, impoverished women, often racialized, became for the first-time subjects of violence against women policy as *victims* rather than as complicit or perpetrators.[595] Second, to tackle the problem of sex trafficking increasingly made visible in the North-West of Argentina, a combination of protection services for victims and stronger crackdown on prostitution were implemented—subjectifying women as powerless, and in need of state protection on the grounds of their real or assumed sexual exploitation.

As I sat in the small office space of the OM, two employees explained how the state's approach to violence had dramatically changed in the recent years. Following the adoption of the 2009 national law on violence against women to which Tucumán adhered—replacing its previous law on family violence—the OM begun incorporating a gender perspective, a human

---

[594] The DVO has one office in the capital city, one Banda Rio Sali, Trancas, and in two other judicial centers of the province.

[595] This is an important contrast with the Province of Buenos Aires, where men were incorporated to preventive policy approaches since 2015 officially, through group discussions for men convicted in cases of GBV.

rights perspective, and humanized care in their approach to assistance of women experiencing violence against women:

> For example, the provincial law referred to family and spouses. So, the [new] law expanded this concept to include other relationships, dating, and a gender perspective from the ground up. But the approach and perspective that the observatory has taken in addressing the issue of violence is one of human rights, gender perspective, network approach, and humanized care. Primarily, we said that a patient is not a file, nor a number. She is a person, a woman who seeks help and needs support. She is a subject of rights, who needs the state to accompany her.[596]

The state, finally, offered women experiencing violence a place where to seek help and, most importantly, a place where they would be treated as subjects of rights—assisted, protected, and supported in their journey out of a violent relationship. Yet, as I conducted fieldwork in Tucumán in 2020 and later in 2022, I discovered a complex web of organisms, offices, and procedures centered on assistance and protection, access to justice, and violence prevention—a web of resources that most of those experiencing violence must navigate in solitude. Through those different institutions, I observed different meanings and degrees of incorporation of a "gender perspective."

First, the DVO that started operating in 2010, pushed for violence against women to be recognized by the justice system, understood as part of a patriarchal system that extends way beyond the family, and taken more seriously. As per what the coordinator of the DVO revealed during an interview in their office situated in the ostentatious provincial Justice Palace, previous approaches eluded perpetrators' role in women's experiences with violence, especially when no criminal offense was involved:

> This very legalistic, partial view did not allow for the recognition of other situations that previously did not exist, right? They were made invisible; they always existed

---

[596]Interview with worker of the Women's Observatory. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, October 3, 2020.

but were not visible. For example, if a woman died, it was said, 'She died... she burned!' It wasn't acknowledged that she was burned. […] The biggest difficulties initially were... trying to make this a topic of real legal concern, because crimes like violence itself did not constitute a crime unless there were injuries or more concrete evidence. They were not given the importance they deserved. It was a very difficult path to create a mentality that, although violence itself is not a crime, it leads to criminal situations and, moreover, to death. So, this is not an exclusively family issue […] It was very hard to emphasize the importance of intervention, as these are serious crimes that end in femicide, which fortunately has been called femicide for a few years now; before, they were simply considered homicides.[597]

The change in mentality that was observed in the judicial treatment of violence cases revolved around gender norms of police officers and justices, regarding women's behaviors and attitudes. The street-level bureaucrat believed that by changing those gendered assumptions, femicides and disappearances would be investigated in ways that better consider unequal gender relations in which violence against women is immersed.[598] By giving importance to the psychological state of the victim, and their state of vulnerability when recurring to unresponsive or harmful state agents while seeking protection, the judicial system would have begun reframing women's experience with violence. By recognizing victims' gendered, class, and racial vulnerability to violence they were, according to the public servant, increasingly adhering to the Convention of Belem do Para.[599]

---

[597] Interview with a psychologist from the Domestic Violence Office, Judiciary of the Province of Tucumán. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2021.

[598] She also commented, "Incluso a veces la mujer desaparecía y directamente ni se la buscaba. Se daba por hecho que había abandonado la familia, que había dejado por problemas de pareja, pero nunca se la ligaba a situaciones de violencia donde a veces se iban porque eran víctimas de violencia y no tenían como modificarla y otras porque habían sido realmente asesinadas y por eso no aparecieron nunca más" (Interview with a psychologist from the Domestic Violence Office, Judiciary of the Province of Tucumán. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2021).

[599] Article 9 of the Belem do Para Convention states that: "With respect to the adoption of the measures in this Chapter, the States Parties shall take special account of the vulnerability of women to violence by reason of among others, their race or ethnic background or their status as migrants, refugees or displaced persons. Similar consideration shall be given to women subjected to violence while pregnant or who are disabled, of minor age, elderly, socio-economically disadvantaged, affected by armed conflict or deprived of their freedom" (Belem do Para Convention 1994, article 9).

Yet, according to the public servants whom I interviewed, high resistances in institutions still impeded the full incorporation of a gender perspective. Interdisciplinary teams composed of legal and health professionals working on access to justice understood women's experience with the state as potentially contributing to their revictimization. As this lawyer from a Women's Assistance Secretary tells me, revictimization through bureaucratization was seen as particularly problematic when women had multiple social problems—including housing and poverty issues.[600] Thus, the incorporation of a gender perspective, which also required generating a space where victims would feel safe, was not seen throughout the victim's journey across state law enforcement and judicial institutions, as women were constantly revictimized by the police.[601]

Second, for the assistance service workers I interviewed, assistance involved increasing women's economic empowerment, through two programs: the national program "Women Make," and the provincial program *Mujeres de Pie* ("Women Standing"). Both programs adopted a similar logic; they relied on the central idea that addressing GBV requires improving impoverished women's self-esteem, social networks, skills, and eventually, their employment status.[602] Group therapies, discussions, and skills trainings were seen as ways to empower

---

[600] Interview with worker a at the Secretary for Women. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 13, 2020.
[601] For example, this psychologist working at the OM tells me, " In the last case we had, this girl comes with a situation of violence that has been going on for a long time, and when she gets to the police, the aggressor also arrives at the police station, and the police officer who handles them wants to make both of them pass through, even though she was in a situation of violence! So she identifies that situation and since she was with her aunt, the policewoman files the report. The aunt argues with the police officer and says, 'How could you think of making her and him both pass through?' […] In these public institutions, the gender perspective is not incorporated; they don't take these fundamental details into account. That's why we insist a lot there" (Interview with worker a at the Secretary for Women. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 13, 2020).
[602] One public servant at the OM tells me, "For five years [since 2015], a group that has self-named as Women Standing has been functioning. There are approximately 40 women who work on resilience, empowerment, and self-esteem, not specifically on violence itself" (Interview with worker of the Women's Observatory. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, October 3, 2020).

women and eventually, for them to reach economic independence through formal employment.

As those assistance workers told me during the interview:

> This program relates to those women who engage in informal work, and sometimes they don't even recognize it as such. For example, 'I don't work, but I sell empanadas.' There isn't a formal recognition of it as income, but it is still done, right? So the idea of this project, which is related to economic violence, is that someone who experiences or has been in a violent relationship for a long time often sees their autonomy affected. This project aims to promote a certain level of autonomy and economic independence. It focuses on strengthening those who have chosen to pursue these activities, providing them with tools, such as training… making projects, training in marketing, social networks, and other areas is offered.[603]

The Women Standing Program group sessions indeed involved, for example, sales and commercialization training for small-scale entrepreneurship in domains more traditionally feminine associated, such as cooking and sowing, but also in other domains such as photography—to reduce women's financial dependency to their partners and to the state. She continued:

> The idea is that women who come to the office can, within the realm of possibilities, be given a comprehensive solution so that they don't always have to rely on the state. So, if you provide them access to work... I'm not saying we create or guarantee the jobs, but at least facilitate that access so that they can achieve some level of employment.[604]

Therefore, from looking at "violence alone," the provincial state turned to a more holistic approach to women's human capital, aiming their eventual insertion in the formal labor market and economy. In all, the growth of a network of assistance and protection in Tucumán—particularly in the capital city—reflected a partial incorporation of the national agenda on gender-based violence centered on women's economic inclusion. If poor women, mostly

---

[603] Interview with worker of the Women's Observatory. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, October 3, 2020.
[604] Interview with worker b at the Secretary for Women. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 2, 2020.

mothers, were being for the first time produced and treated as victims of GBV in assistance

policies, their incorporation to citizenship still occurred through the strengthening of their human

capital and economic empowerment.

Around the same time, another subject made its appearance in the local policy landscape:

the trafficked woman. Since 2002, the highly discussed case of María de los Angeles, "Marita"

Verón, the provincial government also adopted several measures to crack down on prostitution

and human trafficking.[605] The Foundation María de los Angeles, created by Marita's mother, led

forward investigative actions leading to raids of brothels across the province and became an

important actor in pushing for governmental action.[606] While usually associated with poverty and

marginalization, the disappearance of Marita Verón, a middle-class young woman, challenged

common imaginaries surrounding sexual exploitation, which was then still associated with

extremely marginalized women, often Peruvian, Paraguayan, or Bolivian migrants or racialized,

poor Argentine women. As pressure was increasing on the provincial legislature to tackle this

issue,[607] April 3rd was established as the "Provincial Day of the Fight Against Human

Trafficking" and the Law of Zero Brothel[608]—which prohibited the installation, functioning,

sustaining, promoting, and administrating of any establishment where acts of prostitution or

sexual offers were "carried out, tolerated, promoted, managed, organized, or in any way

---

[605] As I mentioned previously in this chapter, the case of Marita Verón had in the early 2000s, shocked the country and brought the issues of sex trafficking and prostitution—particularly that taking place in the provinces of La Rioja, Tucumán, Salta, and Jujuy. In response to what was seen as yet another system of impunity in the province, women's and feminist movements organized in the province had also increasingly denounced the state's participation in these criminal networks.
[606] Among them, the political organization Mumalá started operating, with a main focus the issue of sex trafficking (Interview with member of Mumalá. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, December 3, 2020).
[607] Human trafficking is, according to Argentine Constitution, a federal crime—unlike prostitution, which it not federally criminalized in this country. The regulation of procuring and "prostitution facilitation" is, however, provincial, and municipal governments can also adopt contravention codes that explicitly target sex workers.
[608] "*Ley de Prostíbulo Cero*", Law 8.518.

facilitated" and this, "whether or not the exploited and/or prostituted individuals have consented to it."[609]

In theory, this penal approach did not target those identified as "exercising prostitution voluntarily" and "victims of sex trafficking"; under the law they would instead receive "protection and contention", after seeing their work establishments shut down.[610] But to crack down on brothels and people engaging in prostitution, practically undistinguished from sex trafficking, the provincial police's contravention code was amended, incorporating maximum sanctions of 60 days of arrest for anyone involved in any of the circumstances mentioned above—thus targeting clients, pimps, and other facilitators, but inevitably affecting and endangering women exercising prostitution.[611]

The Foundation María de los Ángeles would receive, in 2013 and 2014, state funding to offer assistance services to the "rescued" victims of sex trafficking.[612] As I walked towards their offices one morning, I found instead an organization that seemed close to power, both politically and geographically. Their offices were indeed situated in an ex-military building, right beside the provincial legislature.[613] As one of the social workers whom I interviewed told me,[614] their work goes beyond assisting victims of human trafficking and also includes victims of other forms of GBV and sexual abuse, and prostitution. In brief, the foundation does follow-ups with the

---

[609] Law 8.519, article 1.
[610] Article 4 mentions that, "The rights of individuals who are present at the location engaging in, offering, or intending to engage in prostitution voluntarily must be comprehensively safeguarded. When they cannot provide proof of their identity and residence, they will be considered victims of human trafficking and must be given protection and support while their situation is reported to the competent judicial and administrative authorities" (Law 8.519, article 4).
[611] Law 5.140, article 19(bis).
[612] Law 8.612; and Law 8.739.
[613] Those offices were ceded to the Foundation in 2014 by the Kirchner government (Fieldwork Notes, 28-05-2022).
[614] The interview was not recorded, as per my interlocutor's preference.

victims, offers interdisciplinary assistance (of mostly cis women and recently—not without tensions—trans women) which includes legal, psychosocial, and health counselling, and articulates with state services. As the worker told me, the Foundation maintains a distance with the women's and feminist movement; since as she reminded me, they did "assistance, not politics."[615] To receive assistance, the foundation requires persons to follow certain "institutional requirements": mandatory health checks, attending the psychological appointments, and to not consume any drugs."[616] Thus, one can conclude that the most socioeconomically marginalized women who cannot sustain such conditions, remain excluded from assistance services.

In all, the incorporation of a gender perspective to violence against women assistance policy, despite some clear resistances in the police and judicial systems, signalled some changes in the province's gender justice regime. For the first time, poor women and mothers, women victims of sex trafficking or those seeking assistance while engaging in sex work, finally became entitled to humanized attention and care, at least the few of which could access the limited assistance and legal services available. However, looking beyond the surface of these policy efforts reveals the sustainability of a two-sided neoliberal moral regime. Indeed, if policy efforts geared at these women's empowerment was mostly directed towards the development of their "human capital" for employment, their sexual and reproductive empowerment remained severely curtailed. I focus on this second issue in the following sub-section.

---

[615] Interview Notes: Interview with social worker, María de Los Ángeles Foundation. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, January 6, 2022.
[616] Fieldwork Notes: Interview with social worker, María de Los Ángeles Foundation. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, January 6, 2022.

Despite the 2003 adoption of the PNSSPR at the national level, reproductive health and rights faced important resistances in the northwestern province of Tucumán throughout the Left Turn and beyond. The provinces' political elites indeed remained centered on maternal-infantile health while blocking the implementation of birth control and family planning in the SIPROSA.[617] In the early days of the Left Turn, infant and child mortality still made headlines in Tucumán and in Buenos Aires.[618] The adoption of the national *Plan Nacer* in 2004, involved a 1.300$ million pesos investments over the next 10 years to reduce infant mortality by 25% in the North of the country.[619] By 2007, Tucumán seemed to have made significant progress in lowering its infant mortality rate, and the province was now reaching the country average. Both the provincial and national governments—as well as the province's Archbishop[620]—celebrated this success, attributing it to the successful implementation of the reinforcement of primary healthcare, pregnancy checks, and neonatology services.[621] For Governor Alperovich, who claimed the province had saved the lives of more than 400 children, this success allowed a

---

[617] The then-provincial health minister Juan Manzur announced the National Plan for the Reduction of Maternal-Infantile Mortality on the International Day of Action for Women's Health (*La Gaceta*. "Buscan reducir la mortalidad materna y la infantil." May 29, 2010). As I was told on multiple occasions during interviews, a sex education law was introduced on many occasions to the provincial legislature between and systematically removed from the agenda.

[618] A 2004 documentary directed by the prolific political journalist Jorge Lanata, from Buenos Aires, had brought to the capital's eyes the brutal consequences of hunger and poverty in the North-West of Argentina, by following the story of a poor young girl named Barbara Flores ("Deuda," Lanata 2004).

[619] *La Gaceta*. "Buscan reducir la mortalidad infantil. El Gobierno nacional lanzó el Plan Nacer Argentina, que beneficiará inicialmente a las regionales NOA y NEA." October 16, 2004.

[620] *La Gaceta*. "Villalba destacó la baja en la mortalidad infantil. El arzobispo de Tucumán se reunió con el ministerio de Salud." February 21, 2007.

[621] *La Gaceta*. "Bajó la mortalidad infantil en el país." July 4, 2005; *La Gaceta*. "'El legislador Cano es un infame', aseveró Alperovich." January 29, 2008.

humiliated province to gain back its pride: "President [Kirchner] is helping us lift our self-esteem and regain the pride of being Tucumanians."[622]
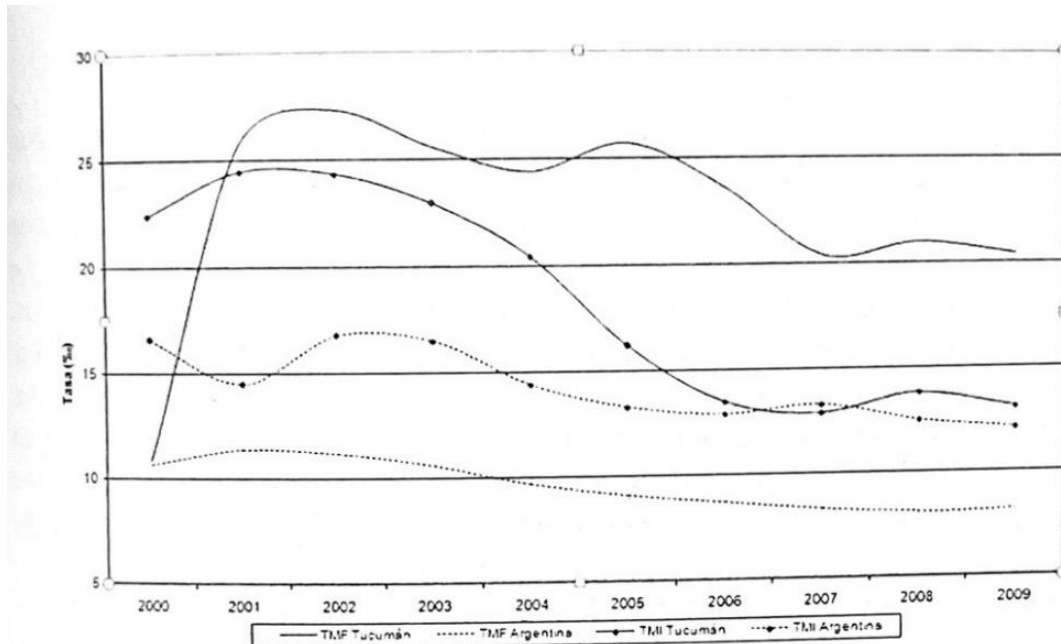

Figure 11: Infant (taza de mortalidad infantil, TMI) and fetal (taza de mortalidad fetal, TMF) mortality rates in Argentina (country average) and Tucumán. 2000-2009. Retrieved from: Rodríguez Marquina (2012, 201), with data from the Direction of Health Statistics and Information of the Province of Tucumán.

This impressive result, however, came with another, symmetrical statistical shift that soon raised suspicion by public health experts and the political opposition in the province.[623] As it was discovered, fetal death rates had spiked since the early 2000s—more than doubling the national average (see Figure 11). Based on news reports, a methodological change in the statistical recording for infant mortality explained such rapid change in numbers—a strategy that the media and the political opposition attributed to political manipulation by the provincial

---

[622] *La Gaceta*. "'Salvamos de la muerte a 400 niños.' Alperovich señaló que en dos años de gestión se redujo en 10 puntos la mortalidad infantil." October 25, 2005.
[623] *La Gaceta*. "Polémica Por Las Cifras de Mortalidad Fetal. Elsa Moreno Afirmó Que Se Triplicó El Índice." August 20, 2008. *La Gaceta*. "Polémica Sobre La Mortalidad Infantil. Las Autoridades Des Radicalismo Plantearon a La Nación Que En Tucumán Se Falsearían Estadísticas." May 30, 2008.

government.[624] The news reached national newspapers, significantly eroding trust in the provincial government. What, if not the successful implementation of Plan Nacer, could explain this sudden change in statistics?

Politicians, and public health experts foregrounded different interpretations: on the one hand, the political opposition denounced a sudden change in the methodology of classification of diseased newborns under the threshold of viability ex-utero, as fetal deaths—along miscarriages, stillbirths, and abortions.[625] In other words, politicians denounced the on-purpose, political "transfer" of infant mortality to another, less scrutinized indicator, for the government to claim the success of the health policies.[626] But on the other hand, as the provincial government argued, this sudden change could also indicate that many deaths previously classified as infant mortality were in fact, misclassified; that part of the inflated rates in the 1990s and early 2000s reflected the previous erroneous recording of miscarriages, stillbirths, or abortions as *postnatal* deaths.[627] The government argued that by considering "viable fetuses" as persons, medical doctors would have recorded in their clinical histories, late-stage miscarriages and abortions as cases of infant mortality.

---

[624] As highlighted in the National Pediatric Congress organized in 2007 in San Miguel de Tucumán, maternal mortality—which usually fluctuates along infant mortality rates—did not seem to have dramatically improved in the province (*Clarín*. "La mortalidad infantil es muy alta en relación al desarrollo económico." September 26, 1997; *La Gaceta*. "Refutan Estadísticas Oficiales Sobre Salud. Cano Objeta El Índice de Mortalidad Infantil." May 24, 2008).

[625] According to the WHO, a miscarriage corresponds to the death of a fetus in the first 19 weeks of pregnancy, while a stillbirth refers to the death of a fetus following 20 weeks of pregnancy. Fetal viability—the ability of a fetus to survive ex-utero, is considered to be at around the 23rd-24th week of pregnancy (500g on average). Here, politicians argued that the provincial healthcare system had begun classifying premature newborns of under 500g who died at birth, as fetal deaths rather than postnatal deaths.

[626] The (dissident) Peronist legislator Oscar López brought the case to the Federal Justice arguing that the statistical manipulation in the Maternity Hospital had violated Argentina's human rights obligations and more precisely, the human right to life. The case was finally brought to provincial courts.

[627] *La Gaceta*. "Yedlin Defiende La Legitimidad de La Tasa de Decesos Infantiles. Sogún El Ministro, Mejoró La Sobrevida de Niños Que Nacen Pesando Entre 1 y 1,5 Kilo." December 27, 2009.

Whichever of these two scenarios is true, this statistical shift—and the scandal it triggered—revealed an ongoing feature of reproductive health policy in the province: pregnant women had remained, since the earlier debates in the 1990s, at the center of a historical political battle over provincial health and social development performance. Particularly, when and why an abortion, a stillbirth, or a miscarriage becomes infant mortality for the state—beyond the scientific delimitation of fetal viability or the letter of the law—constitutes a political conflict over citizenship and personhood itself and a key component of the provincial gender regime.

To conclude, as reproductive rights remained severely constrained in Tucumán throughout the Left Turn, the maternalist-familialist gender injustice regime was preserved, despite relative advances in policies, institutions, and resources attributed to address GBV. Yet, the statistical manipulation event I detailed above revealed an important element about the gendered politics of reproduction in Tucumán: that subjectification also takes place in everyday medical practices and encounters with patients, in clinical histories that later become statistics, and that later on inform policy debates (Peck 2003; Rodabough 2003). The next section of this chapter turns to the politics of reproductive health in practice, highlighting the role of feminist abortion networks which, in articulation with grassroots feminist activists outside the state, in challenging the gender injustice regime in Tucumán.

FEMINIST CHALLENGES TO THE GENDER JUSTICE REGIME (2015-2020)

After a morning at the hospital, two healthcare workers members of Tucumán's regional branch of the *Red de Profesionales de la Salud por el Derecho a Decidir* (Network of Health Professionals for the Right to Decide, RPSDD) and myself were sitting at a café in downtown San Miguel. Clara and Laura were taking advantage of this interview to update themselves and

exchange practices, as they occasionally do; after all, they were then among the few healthcare workers in the province to guarantee the practice of legal abortions.[628]

As I was franticly taking notes and trying to follow their fast-paced conversation, the two public healthcare workers, one medical doctor and the other, health technician, were discussing the case of a 12-year-old girl who attended the hospital with her mother, wanting a legal abortion. The girl had been raped and her pregnancy was already advanced—her abortion had to be surgical—as it is the case for pregnancies of more than 20 weeks and given her young age. Clara related how instead of completing the abortion as demanded by the patient and her mother, the gynecologist in charge proceeded with a c-section and the newborn was placed in neonatology. I asked, "And what will happen?"—asking about the young girl, but also, about the baby—to which they both responded:

> Clara: It's in the hands of the State.
>
> Laura: It's to the State. We also have a baby like that.
>
> [...]
>
> Clara: That child is not going to leave the hospital. We have a patient like that too, who has been in the hospital for five years already.[629]

The child was thus abandoned and placed in adoption. As I learned throughout my fieldwork, this case illustrated a generalized pattern in the province, where women and girls seeking abortions were denied their rights, forced to continue with undesired pregnancies and to

---

[628] Based on my interviews, there were then approximately 20-50 workers and healthcare professionals active in the network at the time. It is probable however that more healthcare professionals were in fact guaranteeing legal abortions in the province, without being connected to the network.
[629] Interview with a gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 31, 2022.

give birth, through which they were, in the words of many of those I spoke with, tortured and mistreated.

Until 2020, second-trimester legal abortions[630] in the provincial healthcare system were held in three third-level hospitals.[631] In those hospitals, most medical doctors and healthcare professionals have signalled their right to conscientious objection but in addition, according to the numerous testimonies I have received, a large proportion also actively sought to *impede* abortions to take place. In public hospitals, pregnant persons thus became at the center of gendered negotiations surrounding bodily autonomy rights—taking place between women, feminist healthcare professionals, and conscientious objectors who actively placed obstacles in women's attempts to abort, even when these abortions were lawful.[632]

In Tucumán, during the government of Mauricio Macri between 2015-2019, conflicts over the delimitation of policy subjectivity intensified, amid growing feminist and anti-feminist movements. While feminist networks of access to abortion, working with pregnant persons sought to re-problematize abortion criminalization as gendered institutional violence, they faced important conservative resistances that pushed back against bodily autonomy rights, to continue enforcing the province's maternalistic regime. Pregnant persons, particularly women from poor sectors who attend the public healthcare system—thus became the center of gendered conflicts for their recognition as subjects of rights. Unveiling these gendered conflicts surrounding the

---

[630] As my interlocutors told me throughout fieldwork, late-stage abortions are often those needed by women in girls from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged sectors. Usually, these persons have had no prior access to healthcare or were impeded to access it by the system itself or family members, which is generally why they reach the system later in their pregnancies.

[631] To decentralize the system and give some loose to the Maternity Hospital, where most childbirths take place in the province, patients were distributed between the three hospitals by georeferencing. Most of them were held in the Maternity, and later, in the Hospital Avellaneda, the Hospital del Este, or the newer Hospital Eva Peron (Interview with a psychologist member of the RPSDD. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 27, 2022).

[632] That is, abortion requests that correspond to the exceptions specified in the 1921 criminal code.

construction of political subjectivity in reproductive health and GBV policy is what this last section of the chapter aims to accomplish.

THE GREEN TIDE AND THE RISE OF FEMINIST ABORTION ACCESS NETWORKS (2018-2020)

Between 2016 and 2020, local feminist movements politicized abortion like never before in the streets, the media, and the hospitals of the province. During this period, the province indeed witnessed unprecedented legal and street mobilizations related to the cases of "María Magdalena," "Belén" (2016-2018), and "Lucía" (2019),[633] led by a multisectoral alliance of human rights organizations, feminist NGOs and activists, unions, legislators, and journalists. All three had suffered severe human rights violations when they sought assistance from the provincial public health system, which were under the increased scrutiny of both local and national feminist movements.[634] These three cases generated significant debates on the right to abortion, institutional gender violence, sexual violence, and child sexual abuse in Tucumán. In a context of heightened feminist mobilizations across the country, known as the Green Tide, those cases would become emblematic of the feminist movement and generate a reconfiguration of local women's and feminist movements (see Chabot [forthcoming] 2024).

It is through these processes of mobilizations that the RPSDD emerged in Tucumán, as one small group of Socorristas was still active in the capital city, articulating with members of

---

[633] María Magdalena and Belén were judicially prosecuted for spontaneous abortions, while Lucía was denied a lawful abortion.

[634] While María Magdalena was acquitted in 2015, her plea for justice regarding the violations of her rights remains unanswered (Mujeres por Mujeres 2023). By the end of 2018, after extensive social and legal mobilization, Belén was finally acquitted of criminal charges, and her case became a landmark issue in the National Campaign, even reaching international hearings. Finally, in Lucía's case, after being raped by her uncle, the eleven-year-old girl requested a legal abortion, which health professionals initially denied until feminist mobilization enabled her to access her right. Along with other members of the now well-established Ni Una Menos Collective in the province, the women's and feminist movement demanded the proper implementation of the national protocol for legal abortion, framing child pregnancy as a form of torture (Vignoli et al. 2022).

the RPSDD and the provincial program since 2014.[635] The initial groups of Socorristas en Red appeared in the capital city of San Miguel, along with smaller groups in the province's interior. Additionally, from the creation of the RPSDD in 2018, a regional branch in the province emerged, explicitly advocating for the legalization of voluntary abortion without restrictions. Thus, starting from 2018, the first activist groups and healthcare professionals began to support pregnant individuals in their abortions, amidst strong social and institutional resistance to reproductive rights—providing a new space for the contestation and challenging of the gender justice regime. Consequently, new collaborations between national and provincial networks of health professionals, sexual and reproductive health programs, and Socorristas en Red have allowed legal abortions to be performed for the first time in provincial hospitals.

THE CONSERVATIVE REACTION

Yet at the same time, the provincial government strengthened its anti-abortion stance. In August 2018, in the aftermath of the debates on abortion legalization in the National Congress, the provincial legislature declared Tucumán a "pro-life" province and refused to adopt protocols for the implementation of legal abortions in the province (Navarra 2003). Legislators argued that, "Under no circumstances does the right of the mother to her psychophysical integrity contradict the right to life of the unborn child," and that "any external interference, particularly from the state, aimed at inducing or convincing a pregnant woman to undergo an abortion, will be condemned as a case of violence against women."[636] The declaration continued, "the promotion of adoption will be a guiding principle of the social policy of the Provincial State."[637] Ni Una

---

[635] Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, June 30, 2022; Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022.
[636]*El Día*. "A víctimas de violaciones. Rechazan proyecto antiaborto en Tucumán." November 13, 2018.
[637] *El Día*. "A víctimas de violaciones. Rechazan proyecto antiaborto en Tucumán." November 13, 2018.

Menos Tucumán, along both local and national organizations, strongly denounced the declaration, following which a march was organized in front of the legislature in San Miguel.

Then, three months later and despite the now clear existence of unpunishable abortions in the Argentine criminal code,[638] twenty-nine legislators in Tucumán presented, in November 2018, a bill to criminalize abortions, even in cases of rape. Legislators indeed argued that, "We prohibit discrimination against the unborn child as 'wanted' or 'unwanted,' and we consider inducing an abortion as 'violence' committed by the woman."[639] The Bill was, despite its high popularity, rejected for its obvious unconstitutionality. Yet, these declarations constitute clear examples of enduring discourses from the previous regime, in which women are subjectified as responsible for the violence committed against children. They also illustrated yet another form of cooptation of the violence against women agenda against women's bodily autonomy rights.

While having no legal impacts, these discourses still had strong repercussions in the healthcare system, with material and symbolic impacts on the problematization of reproduction in health policies.[640] An example mentioned in interviews related to a woman with a desired pregnancy, but nonetheless seeking an abortion due to health complications with the fetus, which was anencephalic and had no chances of surviving after birth. My interlocutor, a member of the

---

[638] I discuss the F.A.L.s Constitutional Ruling, who establishes the state's obligation to implement unpenalized abortions, in Chapter 3.

[639] . The feminist and human rights NGOs Mujeres X Mujeres, Católicas por el derecho a decidir, Amnistía International, CELS, ELA, Red de Acceso al Aborto Seguro (Redaas), CEDES, and the Espacio Intercátedra of the UNT's Law Faculty, denounced the Bill for its inconstitutionality (*La Nación* 2018).

[640] In 2018, the Asociación de Médicos de Familia of Tucumán publishes online a video called "Don't count on me" ("*No cuentes conmigo*"), in which they explicitly stated their opposition to the legalization of abortion in the context of the debates taking place in the National Congress, as well as the enforcement of their right to conscientious objection. In response, the RPSDD published another video called "You can count on me", in which they affirmed the responsibility of healthcare professionals to assist persons in their health decisions.

RPSDD, told me that anti-abortion attitudes amongst medical doctors leading to forced

pregnancies were frequent, and particularly so amongst gynecologists and obstetricians.[641]

These systemic impediments to practicing lawful abortions—Paola Bergallo (2014b)

qualified as informal institutions—were inserted in a context of active anti-abortion policies

adopted by the provincial government since the green tide. Anti-abortion healthcare

professionals had more institutional support to deny[642] and to hinder access to legal abortions, in

disregard of the law. As it was reported during an interview, some hospitals were actively

seeking to judicialize abortions, actively monitoring patients and healthcare professionals.[643] As

this healthcare professional tells me, "In a pro-life province, what they're telling you is that

they'll put all the possible obstacles in your way [...]. So, no, it's not easy."[644] Yet, I argue that

these discourses and practices did impede the due enforcement of the "formal institution" of

unpenalized abortions, they did more than that; they *enforced* an interlocked familialist-

maternalist gender injustice regime, through two mechanisms. I briefly unpack these two

dimensions.

First, the regime's enforcement took place through the violent control and coercion of

pregnant women into child birth and/or motherhood, and a complete denial, if not criminalization

---

[641] Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022.

[642] This denial can take different forms, including direct refusal, but also endless pushes and references to other health centers, professionals, or state institutions, referred to by participants as "kicking around" ("*pateo*") (Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, June 30, 2021).

[643] For example, as this healthcare professional tells me: "The hospital with which I have to work, quite significantly, has a profound lack of knowledge about the law, procedures, regulations, and other laws that connect with the law, like sexual and reproductive health, patient rights, and clinical records. There were two male lawyers that were there, originally from private legal practice, and this was also an initial obstacle [to abortion]. This is why they always worked against it [...] Basically, they want to prevent the law from being implemented because they are against it" (Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, June 16, 2022).

[644] Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, June 30, 2021.

of their reproductive rights.[645] According to a study conducted by the NGO Mujeres X Mujeres, between 2003 and 2012, approximately 282 judicial cases were opened in relation to abortion, including those classified as "abortion," "incitement to abortion," "induced abortion," "spontaneous abortion," and "incomplete abortion" (Deza, Alvarez, and Iriarte 2014, p. 109). Members of the RPSDD indeed reported, during interviews, mistreatments committed by anti-abortion healthcare professionals on patients, including violations of women's intimacy and right to medical confidentiality, as well as lack of adequate pain management care, intentionally leading to unnecessary suffering. For example, during our meeting at the café, Clara related to her colleague how a patient who attended the hospital with her sports trainer after fainting while experiencing an abortion in process, was forced to undress in front of him and threatened by the medical doctor to not receive adequate care. As Clara relates, "The doctor told her she wouldn't give her anything for the pain. No, she could do anything at this point. She could go back and do the same to another patient. She already has a complaint against her, that doctor."[646]

Second, the regime's enforcement took place through the violent harassment of feminist healthcare professionals and activists who support women in their bodily autonomy rights. The healthcare professionals and workers who assisted them in their demands for a legal abortion, as I was told, experienced frequent threats and forms of violence from their colleagues and bosses. In the next sub-section, I unveil the discourses and practices employed by women and healthcare professionals to challenge this regime.

---

[645]According to the lawyer Soledad Deza, interinstitutional collaboration between healthcare, political, and judicial actors has been crucial in establishing an interpretative framework in the provincial government whereby any obstetric event is potentially subject to criminal penalties (Deza 2015).

[646] Interview with a gynecologist member of the RPSDD. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 31, 2022.

Healthcare professionals and workers part of the RPSDD, as well as women seeking abortions, have resisted the enforcement of the gender injustice regime in different ways. As street-level bureaucrats committed to the enforcement of women's reproductive rights, members of the RPSDD have coped with, and at times strategically confronted, harmful and illegal practices of hindering lawful abortion access. Yet, ensuring that women's decision to abort would be respected involved risks, and required taking additional precaution and care in navigating the healthcare system. This other professional tells me, for example, how access to abortion without violence required keeping colleagues accountable and signalling their own oversight of the process, when referring them patients:

> Unfortunately, I believe that the level of institutional violence in the provincial health system means that you need a lot of recommendations to access it, you know? It's like you have to come recommended, show that you're being observed, you understand? [...] Personally, I've never experienced it myself, nor have many of the women I'm monitoring, fearing arrest, for instance. But mistreatment or more public issues, you understand? I don't know, being publicly shamed, you know... if they find out.[647]

Others, for example, did not register clinical histories of abortions, keeping the practice undercover to protect the patient and themselves.[648] Thus, while operating within the healthcare system and working in network to minimize institutional violence, healthcare professionals of the RPSDD also accompanied women in their decisions to abort outside healthcare institutions,

---

[647] Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022.

[648] For example, this participant tells me: "At the hospital, it was like a clandestine practice. I had to be careful of one of the surgeons who wore the blue scarf and all the pro-life merchandise, which is quite aggressive. So, I had to be absolutely cautious about everything, you know. […] it was like a walk-in appointment that was not even recorded, not in the records, and it didn't stay in the system" (Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022).

through Socorristas or independently,[649] diffusing information to allow women with a difficult

access to the healthcare system to have abortions:

> There are other women who get tired and after the third attempt, they give up. They fear anguish, telling themselves, 'I'll end up in jail,' or they stop searching, they stop trying. That's why perhaps today we focus much more on outreach and networking, because it seems to us that the most important thing is effective access, for those we don't have phone numbers for those that don't reach the Socorrista networks, nor us, nor the healthcare system... I mean, that they access information on abortion before they are exposed, so to speak. That is our priority nowadays, given the conditions under which we are working.[650]

Facing such levels of institutional violence, women seeking abortions have also

developed ways to avoid mistreatments, or hospitals altogether, when it comes to managing their

reproductive health, including their abortions but also when giving birth. Indigenous women in

remote villages for example, would wait until the very last-minute to reach the healthcare center,

to ensure they would not be transferred to a San Miguel hospital where they were frequently

mistreated.[651] Others who could afford it would also purchase Misoprostol on the informal

market and opt for self-managed abortions with, sometimes with a post-abortion care.[652] Clara

also knew many of her patients hid or silenced their in-course and previous abortion stories when

going to the hospital.[653] During interviews, the healthcare professionals of the RPSDD often

presented these behaviors as 'strategies,' thus simultaneously recognizing women's agency in

deciding over their own bodies, and denouncing the public healthcare system as an environment

---

[649] One Socorristas active in a rural, largely Indigenous area, told me, the majority of women reaching out for abortions do not attend their local clinic at all, due to fear of social repercussions (Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Online, June 30, 2021). Another one emphasized the crucial role of the Socorristas in calling attention to the situation in the healthcare system, training healthcare professionals, and improving quality, violence-free access to abortions (Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022).
[650] Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022.
[651] Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 5, 2022.
[652] Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022.
[653] Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 5, 2022.

of systemic gendered institutional violence.[654] As I understood them, these strategies worked as coping mechanisms to survive within a highly violent institution.

To conclude, this fieldwork has revealed the ongoing, if not increased enforcement of a maternalist gender injustice regime between 2018 and 2020 in Tucumán, on pregnant persons and street-level bureaucrats who practice abortions. The enforcement of this (illegal) regime involved targeted threats, harassments, and violence that affected mostly women healthcare workers and patients. Yet, this regime was also gendering, in that it sought to discourage any medical action that would challenge the subjectification of women-mothers as subordinated, fearful, and disciplined. For patients, mostly impoverished and racialized, this regime enforced maternalism and for healthcare workers who practiced abortions, often working in precarious working conditions, these discourses and practices sought to limit their participation in the plain exercise of the bodily autonomy rights of their patients with reproductive capacities, mostly women.[655]

CONCLUSION

This chapter explored the social and political debates that took place between 1990 and 2020 in the province of Tucumán, and continuities in the gender justice regime grounded in interlocked maternalism and familialism. While the initial insularity of the *Bussista* provincial

---

[654] This other medical doctor, for example, tells me that, "It seems fundamental to me that whenever a woman needs to have an abortion, she should be able to do so under safe conditions, not just anywhere, in a grim place, and that she should be supported in such an important decision, right? So, I tried to stand by the side of women who suffer during that moment of anguish, which is distressing for many people to make that decision, but I found it very important to put myself in their shoes, to try to empathize with that situation, and to offer my knowledge so that it can be as safe as possible, avoiding suffering from the harm and serious consequences of complications." (Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022).

[655] One healthcare professional, for example, tells me, "We have a system of labor precariousness that makes many afraid of losing their jobs. So, those of us who take the lead are the ones who already have permanent positions, who won't be fired, who won't face disciplinary actions. There's a real fear of persecution. Many people are convinced in theory, but when it comes down to it..." (Interview with member of the RPSDD. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022).

government eroded under the Left Turn as it entered the national coalition, Tucumán remained shielded from many national-level policy changes in the realm of sexual and reproductive rights above all. Political and social debates in Tucumán reveal how the controlled problematization of domestic violence and violence against women by conservative elites can lead to the institutionalization of a gendered and classed moral regime that strongly delimits who is to be protected, assisted, or blamed.

During the 1990s, social representations of popular sector-women, coupled with an increased pressure to address child and infant mortality through targeted maternal-infantile health policy, subjectified poor mothers as either accomplice, responsible, or ignorant with regards to violence committed within their families. The state's interventions within the private sphere of the family under the guise of social and economic development institutionalized when it comes to poor, mostly racialized families.[656] Targeted by child protection laws and as part of maternal-infantile health initiatives during pregnancy and following childbirth, women—and particularly poor women—remained unprotected in the context of violence within their households. Those representations led to the institutionalization of children to some extent, but mostly fetuses, as main policy subjects and entrenched an interlocked familialist-maternalistic logic within maternal-infantile health and domestic violence policies.

Following the entrance of Tucumán's government in the Front for Victory, poor mothers gained a new protagonism in GBV policy approaches, that hinted a move away from the previous neoliberal model. In the north-western province, however, the delayed and limited

---

[656] The blurring of the public/private divide in social policy targeted at poor and racialized women has been observed in a number of contexts throughout the Americas, including Peru and Bolivia (Levy, Martinez, and Nagels 2019; Nagels 2013), the United States (Abramovitz 2017; Fraser 1987), and Canada (Dyck and Lux 2016).

adoption of assistance policies with a gender perspective, was coupled with a focus on women's economic empowerment and a paternalistic approach to sex trafficking and prostitution. In absence of significant progress in the realm of sexual and reproductive health and rights, policy changes in the realm of violence against women during the Left Turn thus did not challenge the pre-existing institutionalized gendered moral order in Tucumán.[657] If networks of assistance and protection for women experiencing violence now problematized gender inequalities as being at the heart of violence against women, the state's repression of women's sexual and reproductive autonomy reduced their empowerment to a specific neoliberal form, ultimately geared at facilitating their employment as mothers, and reducing their "dependence" on the state.

However, since 2018 particularly, persons seeking to abort, feminist grassroots networks, and healthcare workers have created a space to challenge, and cope with the gender injustice regime in the province. In their daily practices and discourses, they work towards the highly resisted re-subjectification of impoverished women as subjects of reproductive rights.

***

---

[657] Delphine Lacombe (2018) makes a similar claim for the Nicaraguan case.

Conclusions and Looking Forward

Re-interpreting Women's Rights from the Subnational

This dissertation opened with a dilemma. Since the third wave of democracy in the 1980s, the state has been viewed by important sectors of Latin American feminist movements as a site in which to redress women's historical exclusion from citizenship regimes. Yet, at the same time, in both historical and contemporary feminist mobilizations, the state often appears as a violent actor toward women and members of the LGBTQI+ community, including through its participation or complicity in increasing gendered precarity. In an essay on current debates among Latin American feminists, Rita Segato illustrates this tension well, suggesting a movement away from the state and toward another politics (*otra politicidad*):

> It's not that the state doesn't have a role or that efforts in the governmental sphere are not important, but we have realized that these efforts have not always been successful. [...] This leads us to think that we have neglected this other form of politics that I am discussing here, a politics present in the very management of life, which moves in the opposite direction as it moves from the home to the street and follows a path that does not necessarily align with the state machinery, a machinery that clearly has not been able to protect us.[658] (Segato 2021, 15–16)

This dissertation has reaffirmed the political nature of women's intimate lives. It has shown how for the past four decades, feminist movements in Argentina have struggled to politicize intimate issues that affect women's lives, health, and ability to participate as equal citizens in democratic politics. During the Left Turn, from 2003 to 2015, important steps were taken toward feminist ideas being incorporated into social policy areas at the national level. But, as this dissertation has shown, this politicization has not resulted in a homogeneous institutionalization and implementation of feminist issues and ideas within the country.

---

[658] Translation from the Spanish by author.

This thesis has addressed three main sets of questions, as stated in the introduction: (1) Why have the radical transformations of Argentina's gender regime—characterized by a combination of maternalism and familialism, and also by the increased incorporation of the international women's rights agenda to legislation and policy since the 1990s—not led to substantive social inclusion for women? How have gendered exclusions persisted and evolved since the 1990s? (2) What roles have Argentine women's and feminist movements played in institutionalizing feminist issues between 1990 and 2020? How are women, particularly socioeconomically marginalized women, included in this process? (3) What is the relationship between the Argentinian state and feminist and women's movements? In what ways has this relationship transformed the state?

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that the neoliberal reforms that have been instituted in Argentina since the 1990s have had profound and enduring consequences on gender justice regimes. These consequences can be conceptualized as the everyday practices and discourses emerging within, across, and against a web of policy institutions, feminist movements, conservative actors, and citizens that together negotiate social recognition and power redistribution among members of society. Along with the emergence and domestic incorporation of the international women's rights agenda into Argentina's Constitution and national laws, decentralization and state-shrinking reforms have scaled down to the subnational and out to civil society, how women's rights are defined and implemented—inserting them in situated power struggles between historically unequal sectors of society.

Through these reforms, the gendered institutional and social instruments of control and coercion have become fragmented throughout the country, shaping the local institutionalization

of international women's rights frameworks that were mandated by the United Nations in the 1990s. This dissertation has exposed that neoliberal economic, political, and social reforms in Argentina have led to heterogeneous patterns of integration—including both co-construction and cooptation—of feminist issues within the country, as well as different possibilities for local feminist movements and women to challenge and transform earlier gender justice regimes. In other words, neoliberal reforms have rescaled the structural locus of women's rights politicization, policymaking, and mobilization in ways that endured throughout the Left Turn and beyond. As a result, the local implementation of women's rights has occurred through what I have called subnational gender justice regimes, shaped by different public/private divides rooted in historically entrenched familialist and maternalistic institutions.

Each chapter of this dissertation has opened a different window from which the local political contention around gender justice can be seen as exemplified by anti-gender-based violence and reproductive health and rights policies. The case of the province of Santa Fe shows that significant moves toward greater gender justice took place through more institutionalized approaches to feminism, which nonetheless did not shy away from practices associated with autonomous sectors. What Vargas and Wieringa (2019) qualified as a "triangle of empowerment," in which women's movements, feminist politicians, and femocrats advance women's rights and gender justice agendas, seems to apply in the context of Santa Fe. However, importantly, this province already had weaker colonial and post-independence legacies of exploitation and, thus, relatively lower levels of class and racial political and social exclusions to dismantle from the start.

In the province of Tucumán, the provincial state's cooptation, filtering, and partial incorporation of women's rights since the 1990s, indicates a form of state cooptation of feminist agendas to reinforce a maternalistic-familialist regime in the province. Still, even in Tucumán, feminists working within the state, such as healthcare workers of the *Red de profesionales de la salud por el derecho a decidir* (Healthcare professionals' network for the right to decide) in collaboration with grassroots feminists *Socorristas en Red*, have developed coping and challenging practices in ways that expose, denounce, and circumvent the gender justice regime in the province.

In the province of Buenos Aires, despite an increased access to justice and psychosocial assistance for women experiencing violence during the Left Turn, a logic of judicialized assistance and legacies of previous familialistic norms still constitute barriers to eradicating gender-based violence in the province, particularly for socioeconomically marginalized women. Popular feminists working toward the eradication of violence against women in both public and private spaces and women themselves are, therefore, differently positioned in relationship to the state and other social organizations; they are situated in what I have conceptualized as a "purple area," in reference to Javier Auyero's concept of "grey area" of democracy and the colour purple, symbolizing feminist struggles to end gender-based violence. In this marginalized area of citizenship, gender-based violence shapes women's relationships to their families, partners, communities, and different state institutions. In this epistemological and political space, women think, feel, and act with, against, and between male-dominated social organizations, feminist movements, and the state to support women in their communities to live a life without gender-based violence.

The dissertation's interpretive comparative framework, centered on different subnational territories and feminist issues, has allowed gaining key theoretical insights into the politics of intimacy in the Latin American context and beyond. Geographical and issue comparison unveiled sometimes surprising forms of neoliberal resistance mapping differently across feminist issues, actors and institutions involved in their politicization, and a plurality of meanings associated with women's rights. On the one hand, while the eradication of violence against women is sometimes seen as receiving greater support across the political spectrum than reproductive rights (see Htun and Weldon 2020), on-the-ground problematization reveals a more complex set of social and institutional pushbacks. Feminist challenges to the heteropatriarchal family model are indeed curtailed by different neoliberal legacies—including the ongoing presence of judicialized assistance models that tend to make women individually responsible for their own and their children's safety (province of Buenos Aires) or the familialist-maternalistic cooptation of the domestic violence agenda that make women responsible for their family's integrity while being deprived of any sexual and reproductive autonomy rights (province of Tucumán).

On the other hand, while reproductive rights are usually perceived as facing important resistance in Latin America due to their direct challenge to the Catholic religious doctrine (see Htun 2003), this research shows how these resistances are not territorially homogeneous nor insurmountable. The province of Santa Fe demonstrates that historical legacies with strong community health and feminist movements, along Socialist political allies in the city of Rosario, have since the 1990s increasingly institutionalized impoverished women as subjects of reproductive rights in the province. Neoliberalism's "scaling out" effect has here provided these actors the opportunity to transform maternalistic institutions by pushing for reproductive rights

362

approaches into primary healthcare policy. These key contextualized differences thus strengthen the claim that under neoliberalism, women's rights are constituted by multiple fronts that each face a unique and situated set of challenges as they strive for gender justice (Fregoso 2014; Zwingel 2013).

A comparative analysis of the three sites of focus in this dissertation also reveals that feminist activists and women in the so-called interior of Argentina have, before and during the last wave of feminist movements (2015-2020), re-problematized women's rights from their subnational context. They have done so deploying different discourses and practices that politicize and transform the seemingly "neutral" pillars of the Argentine state and society, such as the traditional family model, heterosexual intimate relations, and motherhood—exposing their situated gendered and classed nature and effects. By navigating fragmented policies and institutions infused with legacies of neoliberalism, women and feminist movements have carved themselves different modes of political engagement that sometimes combine working with, between, and against state policies, communities, and civil society. In turn, the discourses and practices they deploy and the meanings they attribute to women's rights are grounded in their subnational historical contexts; the form, direction, and intensity they take varies according to the historical relationships between patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism. It is in those fluctuating subnational spaces that women's rights come to be, come to mean, and intervene in the construction of gender justice regimes. Yet, these modes of action are also a reminder that gender justice regimes are sustained and transformed through unpaid and gendered labour, to fill the institutional gaps generated by neoliberal approaches to social policy.

By bridging the feminist neo-institutionalist scholarship on citizenship regimes with post-structural critical policy studies, this dissertation has offered important theoretical contributions to political science and public policy.

First, the concept of the subnational gender justice regime developed in this dissertation has expanded the study of gender citizenship and neoliberalism, by challenging dominant understandings of political power in our discipline, which tend to centre on political institutions and movements in capital cities. The approach adopted in this dissertation has allowed us to place an analytical lens on the situated discursive and practical negotiations that shape social representations, forms of participation, and power redistribution toward socioeconomically marginalized women. While political scientists, including those contributing to the reproductive politics and the feminist policy literatures, have generally tended to remain centred on national-level institutional changes to assess progress toward greater gender equality, this dissertation has illustrated more subtle patterns of change and continuity operating on the ground. In other words, perhaps we have not been looking in the right place or using the correct unit of analysis to evaluate in more tangible ways the transformative power of women's rights.

Together, the gender justice theoretical approach and the subnational interpretive analytical lens offered in this study allow us to challenge thin assessments of "success" or "failure" regarding the incorporation of women's rights. In a context of ongoing gender-based violence and femicides as well as unmet sexual and reproductive health needs—particularly amongst specific population groups such as impoverished and racialized women, adolescents, and LGBTQI+—a binary categorization may elude the often messy and contradictory effects of the neoliberal legacies embedded in "feminist policies" on gender justice. This dissertation has

shown, for example, that the adoption of laws and policy instruments is not a culminating point that successfully stabilizes women's rights, but another starting point for feminist movements to struggle for the institutionalization of new practices and discourses that will make them meaningful in the everyday. It has also revealed that even an increased access to those policy instruments in marginalized neighborhoods, does not alone solve some of the gendered, class, and racial exclusions that are embedded within them since their inception. In some cases, behind formal policy gains can hide different institutional resistances, including state window dressing (García-Del Moral 2019) or the reinforcement of a patriarchal social and institutional order (see Lacombe 2018).

Second, by centring on women's experiences—and on how they negotiate the meaning of rights through networks, practices, and discourses that cut across states and society—this dissertation has generated new insights on women's situated agency. It is by looking at the peripheries of statehood (Brenner 1999), in hospitals, domestic violence offices, courts, and ministries situated in different parts of the interior of Argentina—as well as in the media, universities, women's organizations and feminist movement gatherings, that women's perspectives have shown how the boundary between states and society often becomes blurred and subject to negotiation (Mitchell 1991). This blurred boundary has rendered the conceptual distinction between autonomy and institutionalism less clear; in all three provinces, different sectors of feminism have contributed to the politicization of feminist issues, their re-problematization, and their institutionalization, although in different ways, under different constraints, and following different trajectories. Again, binary assessments associating institutional feminism with detrimental neoliberalism on the one hand and autonomous feminism with more radical projects of emancipation on the other—fall short to capturing the complex,

365

constantly-moving flow of networks, approaches, and relations that animate feminist and women's movements in post-neoliberal Argentina. These insights are thus coherent with Virginia Vargas and Saskia Wieringa's argument that:

> Redressing the multiple sites of oppression encountered by women cannot be achieved through legislation or the recognition of civil rights alone. Women's struggles subvert too many sites of power and upset too many political, social and personal interests. It is not enough to do politics differently in our autonomous spaces. Nor is it sufficient to focus exclusively on the formal political arena, where there is a real risk of remaining subordinate. To struggle to have a presence and yet to continue questioning that presence are part and parcel of feminist strategies. An engagement with both autonomous and formal space is necessary and mutually strengthening. (Vargas and Wieringa 2019, 19)

Thus, this dissertation has joined the scholarship that highlights the importance of fieldwork research that is grounded in comparative methodologies, centred on women's experiences, and that offers interpretive insights into the practical workings of citizenship rights (see Brockbank and Greene 2022; McGlynn 2022; Simmons and Rush Smith 2021).

Third and last, this dissertation has warned scholars and analysts against uncritical reliance on seemingly "neutral" or "apolitical" tools of governance, such as statistical indicators, to assess progress in the realm of reproductive rights and gender-based violence. Scholars should indeed critically assess health or criminal statistical data as neither objective representations of reality, nor as unequivocally indicative of progress or regress—but as types of knowledge that are components of the political struggle for problematization. As this dissertation has shown, feminist knowledge production efforts, for example through abortion-related mortality data or femicide and transfemicide statistics, has been a powerful strategy employed by feminist movements to push for the transformation of patriarchal norms and institutions.

Yet, under neoliberal governance, individual-level indicators may also be used by state actors to de-politicize feminist claims or even be instrumented against feminist objectives, having contradictory effects on gender justice. For example, policymakers and political elites exclusively concerned with femicide statistics may unintentionally contribute to obscuring certain manifestations of violence and thereby reinforcing or displacing gender inequalities (provinces of Buenos Aires and Tucumán). Thus, attempts to assess the gap between rhetoric and reality only using state statistics alone may be misleading, since the evidence employed to measure progress reflect more strongly the political battles and negotiations taking place every day on the ground—than "reality." In other words, analysts should account for contextualized power inequalities between feminists, women and LGBTQI+ actors, public health, security, and NGOs, involved in defining and measuring policy problems, subjects, objects, and places (Bacchi 1999a; Cook 2014).

This dissertation has some limitations that are worth mentioning, and that could be addressed in future research. First, the study remains exploratory and focuses on largely understudied topics in only three Argentine provinces. Therefore, the theoretical insights developed herein could be transferred to other settings within and beyond Latin America to assess their ability to travel across contexts and issues. Second, this dissertation's analytical focus has remained centred mainly on place, gender, class, race and sexuality. Future studies could focus on other defining features and systems of oppression, such as ability or age.

Just like the rest of the world, Latin America has recently seen the rise of radical right governments and movements with socially and economically conservative agendas, notably in Brazil (2019-2022) and Argentina (2023-2027). The pendulum effect and institutional instability

observed within the region may indicate that policy gains obtained during the Left Turn were more fragile than anticipated (Biroli and Caminotti 2020; Montambeault, Furukawa Marques, and Nagels 2024). Current alliances between neoliberalism, populism, and moral conservatism in Latin America and beyond are sometimes interpreted as the response of elites to the feminist movements' destabilizing of sexual, gender, and neoliberal orders and as disciplinary mechanisms for capital accumulation and social reproduction (Gago 2020a; Graff and Korolczuk 2022; Reis Brandão and Cabral 2019). Yet, this dissertation's subnational focus has reached a more nuanced assessment of the sometimes-paradoxical effects of neoliberalism on gender justice regime trajectories.

The return of neoliberalism at the national level may indeed intensify its residual impacts and structural legacies in different ways within countries; exploring this heterogeneity in a changing national and regional contexts will require more scholarly scrutiny. In all, while optimistic assessments about the weakly enforced gender equality laws' "symbolic power" (Htun and Jensenius 2022) should not be overstated, especially at a moment in which their existence is threatened, this dissertation has shown that there is, in some cases, room for change and transformation from the local. Therefore, feminist issues and policies should be seen as contentious political and normative processes taking place at distinct levels, at different steps of the policy-making process, and between unequally powerful actors. Therefore, solving the feminist dilemma of the state requires asking not whether or not the state can have substantial positive impact, but rather, about asking, in situated ways, with whom, when, and how can women's rights be meaningfully re-interpreted and their substantial impacts on women's lives, deepened.

References

Abramovitz, Mimi. 2017. *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present*. 3rd ed. London: Routledge.

Abramowitz, Sharon, and Mary H. Moran. 2012. "International Human Rights, Gender-Based Violence, and Local Discourses of Abuse in Postconflict Liberia: A Problem of 'Culture'?" *African Studies Review* 55 (2): 119–46.

Ackerly, Brooke, and Jacqui True. 2018. "With or without Feminism? Researching Gender and Politics in the 21st Century." *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 1 (1–2): 259–78.

Adamson, Erin, Cecilia Menjívar, and Shannon Drysdale Walsh. 2020. "The Impact of Adjacent Laws on Implementing Violence Against Women Laws: Legal Violence in the Lives of Costa Rican Women." *Law & Social Inquiry* 45 (2): 432–59.

Agostino, Hilda Noemí, Analía Yael Artola, Mirta Natalia Bertune Fatgala, Gabriel Ledesma, Raúl Pomés, Pablo José Reid, and Gabriela Silva. 2014. "Historia sociocultural de la salud en el Partido de La Matanza, a través de las instituciones y protagonistas (siglo XX)," *Carta Informativa de la Junta de Estudios Históricos de La Matanza*. no. 7. Buenos Aires: Secretaría de Extensión Universitaria Universidad Nacional de la Matanza.

Agustina Luna, Inés. 2023. "Mujeres y militancia: rol político y social en la última dictadura cívico-militar en Tucumán (1976): Women and militancy: political and social role in the last civil-military dictatorship in Tucumán (1976)." *Caminhos da História* 28 (2): 144–61.

Alma, Amanda, and Paula Lorenzo. 2009. *Mujeres Que Se Encuentran. Una Recuperación Histórica de Los Encuentros Nacionales de Mujeres En Argentina (1986 a 2005)*. Buenos Aires: Feminaria Editora.

Almond, Gabriel A. 1988. "The Return to the State." *The American Political Science Review* 82 (3): 853–74.

Alvarado, Mariana, Delmy Tania Cruz Hernández, and Lisset Cobra Mejía. 2019. "Feminismos En Movimientos En América Latina y El Caribe Intersecciones Entre Pensamiento y Acción Política." *Revista Digital de Ciencias Sociales* 1 (11): 11–24.

Alvarado, Mariana, Natalia Fischetti, and Valeria Fernández Hasan. 2020. "Epistemologías Feministas: Conversaciones (in)Terrumpidas." In *Feminismos Del Sur. Recorridos, Itinerarios, Junturas*, edited by Mariana Alvarado, 190. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros.

Álvarez Minte, Gabriela. 2020. "Resistance to Sexual and Reproductive Rights: Maternalism and Conservatism." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 123–44. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Álvarez, Sonia E. 1990. *Engendering Democracy in Brazil: Women's Movements in Transition Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 1999. "Advocating Feminism: The Latin American Feminist NGO 'Boom.'" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1 (2): 181–209.

———. 2014. "Beyond NGOization? Reflections from Latin America." In *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*, by Victoria Bernal and Inderpal Grewal. Durham: Duke University Press.

Álvarez, Sonia E., Claudia de Lima Costa, Veronica Feliu, Rebecca Hester, Norma Klahn, and Millie Thayer. 2014. *Translocalities/Translocalidades: Feminist Politics of Translation in the Latin/a Américas*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Álvarez, Victoria. 2022. "Abordajes de la violencia sexual en los juicios por delitos de lesa humanidad en Argentina." *Revista Estudos Feministas* 28 (3). Accessed March 30, 2022. https://www.redalyc.org/journal/381/38165536011/html/.

Álvarez, Victoria, Fabricio Laino Sanchis, Victoria Álvarez, and Fabricio Laino Sanchis. 2020. "Maternidades En Cautiverio. Experiencias de Maternidad, Embarazo y Parto En Centros Clandestinos de Detención Durante La Última Dictadura Militar Argentina." *Mora (Buenos Aires)* 26 (1): 1–10.

Anthias, Floya. 2013. "Social categories: Embodied practices, intersectionality: Towards a Translocal Approach." In *Interdependencies of Social Categorisations*, edited by Daniela Célleri, Tobias Schwarz, and Bea Wittger, 27–40. Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert.

Araneda-Urrutia, Carlos. 2022. "The Invention of the 'Weird' Southern Child: Mapping Coloniality in the Political Problematization of Disadvantaged Children's Lives in the Global South." *Childhood* 29 (3): 292–306.

Arce, Moisés, and Jorge Mangonnet. 2013. "Competitiveness, Partisanship, and Subnational Protest in Argentina." *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (8): 895–919.

Arcidiácono, Pilar, and Ángeles Bermúdez. 2018. "'Ellas hacen'. Programas sociales y exigencias a las mujeres en Argentina." *Revista Estudos Feministas* 26 (June): e45297.

Arriagada, Evelyn. 2020. "'Las Madres Del Plomo': Women's Environmental Activism and Suffering in Northern Chile." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 145–65. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Arza, Camila, Rossana Castiglioni, Juliana Martínez Franzoni, Sara Niedzwiecki, Jennifer Pribble, and Diego Sánchez-Ancochea. 2022. "The Political Economy of Segmented Expansion: Latin American Social Policy in the 2000s." *Elements in Politics and Society in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Published October. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108772092.

Arza, Camila, and Juliana Martínez Franzoni. 2018. "A Long Decade of Gendering Social Policy in Latin America: Transformative Steps and Inequality Traps." In *Handbook on Gender and Social Policy*, edited by Sheila Shaver, 408–29. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Atienzo, Erika E., Verónica Cruz, Sofía Garduño, Stephanie Lomelí, Milena Meza, Ruth Zurbriggen, Sofía L. Carbone, and Alexandra Wollum. 2023. "Safe Abortion in Latin America: A Look at Abortion Accompaniment Collectives from the Perspective of Their Activists." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 25 (1): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2023.2174747.

"Atlas Electoral de Andy Tow." 2023. Online. [https://www.andytow.com/access/index.php]

Auyero, Javier. 1999. "'From the Client's Point(s) of View': How Poor People Perceive and Evaluate Political Clientelism." *Theory and Society* 28 (2): 297–334.

———.2004. "When Everyday Life, Routine Politics, and Protest Meet." *Theory and Society* 33 (4): 417–41. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:THES.0000037854.43077.2f.

———. 2007. *Routine Politics and Violence in Argentina: The Gray Zone of State Power*. Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2011. "Patients of the State: An Ethnographic Account of Poor People's Waiting." *Latin American Research Review* 46 (1): 5–29.

Bacchi, Carol Lee. 1999a. *Women, policy, and politics : the construction of policy problems*. London: Sage.

———. 1999b. *Women, policy, and politics: the construction of policy problems*. London: Sage.

———. 2000. "Policy as Discourse: What Does It Mean? Where Does It Get Us?" *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 21 (1): 45–57.

———. 2005. "Discourse, Discourse Everywhere: Subject 'Agency' in Feminist Discourse Methodology." *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 13 (3): 198–209.

———. 2009. *Analysing Policy: What's the Problem Represented to Be?* Melbourne: Pearson Higher Education AU.

———. 2012. "Why Study Problematizations? Making Politics Visible." *Open Journal of Political Science* 02 (01): 1.

Bacchi, Carol Lee, and Susan Goodwin. 2016. *Poststructural Policy Analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.

Bacchi, Carol Lee, and Malin Rönnblom. 2014. "Feminist Discursive Institutionalism—A Poststructural Alternative." *NORA-Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 22 (3): 170–86.

Baehr, Amy R. 2004. "Feminist Politics and Feminist Pluralism: Can We Do Feminist Political Theory Without Theories of Gender?" *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12 (4): 411–36.

Bailey, Kimberly. 2010. "Lost in Translation: Domestic Violence, 'The Personal Is Political,' and the Criminal Justice System." *The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology* 100 (4): 1255–1283.

Baines, Donna. 2010. "Gender Mainstreaming in a Development Project: Intersectionality in a Post-Colonial Un-Doing?" *Gender, Work & Organization* 17 (2): 119–49.

Balán, Manuel, and Françoise Montambeault. 2020. *Legacies of the Left Turn in Latin America: The Promise of Inclusive Citizenship*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Pess.

Ball, Stephen J. 1997. "Policy Sociology and Critical Social Research: A Personal Review of Recent Education Policy and Policy Research." *British Educational Research Journal* 23 (3): 257–74.

Banaszak, Lee Ann 1960-, Karen 1950- Beckwith, and Dieter. Rucht. 2003. *Women's movements facing the reconfigured state*. New York: Cambridge University Press. http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/samples/cam033/2002067620.html.

Bard, Christine. 2017. "Faire des vagues. Périodiser l'histoire des féminismes." In *Féminismes du XXIe siècle : une troisième vague ?*, 31–45. Archives du féminisme. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes.

Barrancos, Dora. 2006. "Problematic Modernity: Gender, Sexuality, and Reproduction in Twentieth-Century Argentina." *Journal of Women's History* 18 (2): 123–50.

———.2013. "Mujeres y crisis en la Argentina: de las Madres de Plaza de Mayo a las piqueteras." In *De los conflictos y de sus construcciones: Mundos ibéricos y latinoamericanos*, edited by Julien Lanes Marsall, David Marcilhacy, Michel Ralle, and Miguel Rodríguez, 263–78. Barcelona: Éditions Hispaniques. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7899160.

Barrancos, Dora, and Nélida Archenti. 2017. "Feminismos e Direitos Das Mulheres Na Argentina: História e Situação Atual." In *50 Anos de Feminismo: Argentina, Brasil e Chile*, edited by Eva Alterman Blay and Lúcia Avelar. São Paulo: Editorial da Universidade de São Paulo.

Barrientos, Armando. 2009. "Labour Markets and the (Hyphenated) Welfare Regime in Latin America." *Economy and Society* 38 (1): 87–108.

Barrientos, Armando, Jasmine Gideon, and Maxine Molyneux. 2008. "New Developments in Latin America's Social Policy." *Development and Change* 39 (5): 759–74.

Barroso, Carmen, and Cristina Bruschini. 1991. "Building Politics from Personal Lives. Discussions on Sexuality among Poor Women in Brazil*." In *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Bayes, Jane, ed. 2012. *Gender and Politics*. Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich.

Bebbington, Anthony, and John Farrington. 1993. "Governments, NGOs and Agricultural Development: Perspectives on Changing Inter-organisational Relationships." *The Journal of Development Studies* 29 (2): 199–219.

Beck, Erin. 2021. "The Uneven Impacts of Violence against Women Reform in Guatemala: Intersecting Inequalities and the Patchwork State." *Latin American Research Review* 56 (1): 20–35.

Bedford, Kate. 2013. "Gender, Institutions, and Multilevel Governance." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Beer, Caroline. 2017. "Left Parties and Violence against Women Legislation in Mexico." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 24 (4): 511–37.

———. 2019. "Multilevel Causation in Gender Policy: Abortion and Violence against Women Laws in the Mexican States." In *Inside Countries: Subnational Research in Comparative Politics*, edited by Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada, and Richard Snyder, 156–78. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108678384.005.

———. 2020. "Womens Policy Agencies and Federalism: INMUJERES in Mexico." In *Handbook on Gender, Diversity and Federalism*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bellucci, Mabel. 2019. *Historia de una desobediencia: Aborto y feminismo*. 1st ed. Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual.

Benstead, Lindsay J. 2021. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Patriarchy: The Importance of Feminist Theory." *Mediterranean Politics* 26 (2): 234–46.

Bergallo, Paola. 2014a. "7. The Struggle Against Informal Rules on Abortion in Argentina." In *Abortion Law in Transnational Perspective*, edited by Rebecca J. Cook, Joanna N. Erdman, and Bernard M. Dickens, 143–65. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

———. 2014b. "7. The Struggle Against Informal Rules on Abortion in Argentina." In *Abortion Law in Transnational Perspective*, edited by Rebecca J. Cook, Joanna N. Erdman, and Bernard M. Dickens, 143–65. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Bernal, Marcelo. 2015. "Una lectura crítica del federalismo argentino a veinte años de la importante reforma constitucional de 1994." *Revista Extremeña de Ciencias Sociales* 7: 9-26.

Berns, Nancy. 2001. "Degendering the Problem and Gendering the Blame: Political Discourse on Women and Violence." *Gender & Society* 15 (2): 262–81.

Bernstein, Elizabeth. 2010. "Militarized Humanitarianism Meets Carceral Feminism: The Politics of Sex, Rights, and Freedom in Contemporary Antitrafficking Campaigns." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (1): 45–71.

———. 2012. "Carceral Politics as Gender Justice? The 'Traffic in Women' and Neoliberal Circuits of Crime, Sex, and Rights." *Theory and Society* 41 (2): 233–259.

Berro Pizzarossa, Lucía. 2018. "Legal Barriers to Access Abortion Services through a Human Rights Lens: The Uruguayan Experience." *Reproductive Health Matters* 26 (52): 151–58.

Bessone, Pablo Gudiño. 2017. "La Iglesia Católica en tiempos de dictadura y transición democrática (1976-1989): Discursos sobre familia, sexualidad y aborto." *Revista Pilquen*, Sección Ciencias Sociales, 20 (1): 53–64.

Biebricher, Thomas. 2019. *The Political Theory of Neoliberalism*. Stanford University Press.

Biernat, Carolina. 2005. "Las Dos Vías de La Imaginación Poblacionista Argentina: Natalismo e Inmigración Entre 1914 y 1955." *Buenos Aires: Ciclos*.

Biroli, Flávia. 2018. "Violence against Women and Reactions to Gender Equality in Politics." *Politics & Gender* 14 (4): 681–85. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X18000600.

Biroli, Flávia, and Mariana Caminotti. 2020. "The Conservative Backlash against Gender in Latin America." *Politics & Gender* 16 (1): 1–29.

Bishwakarma, Ramu, Valerie Hunt, and Anna Zajicek. 2007. "Educating Dalit Women: Beyond a One-Dimensional Policy Formulation." *Himalaya* 27 (1).

Blancarte, Roberto. 2008. "Laicidad y Laicismo En América Latina." *Estudios Sociológicos* 26 (76): 139–64.

Blofield, Merike. 2013. *The Politics of Moral Sin: Abortion and Divorce in Spain, Chile and Argentina*. New York: Routledge.

Blofield, Merike, and Christina Ewig. 2017. "The Left Turn and Abortion Politics in Latin America." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 24 (4): 481–510.

Blofield, Merike, Fernando Filgueira, Cecilia Giambruno, and Juliana Martínez Franzoni. 2021. "Beyond States and Markets: Families and Family Regimes in Latin America." In *Latin American Social Policy Developments in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Natália Sátyro, Eloísa Del Pino, and Carmen Midaglia, 255–85. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Blofield, Merike, and Juliana Martínez Franzoni. 2015a. "Maternalism, Co-Responsibility, and Social Equity: A Typology of Work–Family Policies." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 22 (1): 38–59.

———. 2015b. "Maternalism, Co-Responsibility, and Social Equity: A Typology of Work–Family Policies." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 22 (1): 38–59.

Blofield, Merike, and Michael M. Touchton. 2021. "Moving Away from Maternalism? The Politics of Parental Leave Reforms in Latin America." *Comparative Politics* 53 (2): 1–27.

Bohn, Simone. 2020. "National Law and Territorialized Public Policy Goods: The Violence against Women Law in Brazil." In *Handbook on Gender, Diversity and Federalism*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bohn, Simone, and Charmain Levy. 2021. *Twenty-first-century feminismos: women's movements in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 1 online resource. vols. McGill-Queen's studies in gender, sexuality, and social justice in the global south 4. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. http://public.eblib.com/choice/PublicFullRecord.aspx?p=6836992.

Borchorst, Anette. 2012. "Reassessing Woman Friendliness and the Gender System – Feminist Theorizing about Scandinavian Welfare States." In *Welfare State, Universalism and Diversity*, edited by Anneli Anttonen, Liisa Häikiö, and Kolbein Stefánsson, 106–120. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Bortolotti, Mariana, Noelia Eva Figueroa, and Cristina Viano. 2018. "Pioneras. La constitución del movimiento feminista en Rosario." *Zona Franca*, no. 25 (January), 36–61.

Bosio, Maria Teresa, Alejandra Domínguez, Alicia Soldevila, and Gabriela Bard Wigdor. 2019. *Demandas feministas en la argentina contemporánea : las políticas de género en el marco del neoliberalismo. Pasaron cosas: Política y políticas públicas en el gobierno de Cambiemos*. Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. https://ri.conicet.gov.ar/handle/11336/126069.

Bourcier, Marie-Hélène. 2002. "Queer Move/ments." *Mouvements* 20 (2): 37–43.

Bourke, Brian. 2014. "Positionality: Reflecting on the Research Process." *The Qualitative Report*, October 15. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1026.

Brenner, Neil. 1999. "Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies." *Theory and Society* 28 (February):39–78.

———. 2004. *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brenner, Neil, Jamie Peck, and Nik Theodore. 2010. "After Neoliberalization?" *Globalizations* 7 (3): 327–45.

Brinks, Daniel, Varun Gauri, and Kyle Shen. 2015. "Social Rights Constitutionalism: Negotiating the Tension Between the Universal and the Particular." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 11 (November):150814160300004.

Brinks, Daniel M., ed. 2020. *The Politics of Institutional Weakness in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brinks, Daniel M, Steven Levitsky, and Maria Victoria Murillo. 2019. *Understanding Institutional Weakness: Power and Design in Latin American Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brockbank, Maddie, and Saara Greene. 2022. "Beyond the Carceral/Anti-Carceral Binary: Considerations for Addressing Gender-Based and Sexual Violence." *The British Journal of Social Work* 52 (8): 5027–44.

Brown, Josefina Leonor. 2008. "Los Derechos (No) Reproductivos En Argentina: Encrucijadas Teóricas y Políticas." *Cadernos Pagu*, no. 30, 269–300.

Brown, Lori A. 2016. *Contested spaces: abortion clinics, women's shelters and hospitals : politicizing the female body*. London: Routledge.

Brown, Wendy. 1995. "Finding the Man in the State." In *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Brumatti, Natalia Lorena. 2022. "Deconstruccion de La Identidad Argentina Blanca-Europea. El Colectivo Identidad Marrón, 2022." Master's Thesis, Paris: Université Paris Nanterre.

Brunke, Laura Isabella, and Santiago Boira. 2021. "Legal Codification without Justice: Causes and Manifestations of Impunity in Latin American Cases of Femicide." *Verfassung und Recht in Übersee / Law and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* 54 (4): 485–507. https://www.jstor.org/stable/e27304161.

Brysk, Alison. 1993. "From Above and Below: Social Movements, the International System, and Human Rights in Argentina." *Comparative Political Studies* 26 (3): 259–85.

Burton, Julia. 2017a. "De La Comisión al Socorro: Trazos de Militancia Feminista Por El Derecho al Aborto En Argentina." *Descentrada* 1 (2): e020–e020.

———. 2017b. "Prácticas feministas en torno al derecho al aborto en Argentina: aproximaciones a las acciones colectivas de Socorristas en Red." *Revista Punto Género*, no. 7 (June), 91–111.

Busaniche, Mabel, Nidia Kreig, and Victoria Rodríguez, eds. 2023. *Remando. Relatos Del Movimiento de Mujeres y Disidencias de La Ciudad de Santa Fe*. 1st ed. Santa Fe: Ediciones Universidad Nacional del Litoral.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

———.2004. *Undoing gender*. London: Routledge.

———. 2015. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.

Buzawa, Eve S., and Carl G. Buzawa. 2017. "Introduction: The Evolution of Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence." In *Global Responses to Domestic Violence*, edited by Eve S. Buzawa and Carl G. Buzawa, 1–19. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Calandrón, Julieta Sabrina. 2008. "Cultura Institucional y Problemáticas de Género En La Reforma de La Policía de Buenos Aires, 2004-2007." PhD Thesis, Universidad Nacional de La Plata. https://sedici.unlp.edu.ar/handle/10915/2891.

———. 2008. "Formar y Reformar. Procesos de Formación Policial En La Reforma de La Policía de La Provincia de Buenos Aires." In *V Jornadas de Sociología de La UNLP 10-12 de Diciembre de 2008 La Plata, Argentina*. La Plata: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Universidad Nacional de La Plata. https://www.memoria.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/trab_eventos/ev.5921/ev.5921.pdf.

———. 2012. *Género y Sexualidad En La Policía Bonaerense (Adelanto)*. Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de San Martin Editorial.

Cameron, Maxwell A. 2009. "Latin America's Left Turns: Beyond Good and Bad." *Third World Quarterly* 30 (2): 331–48.

Caminotti, Mariana, and Flavia Freidenberg. 2016. "Federalismo Electoral, Fortaleza de Las Cuotas de Género y Representación Política de Las Mujeres En Los Ámbitos Subnacionales En Argentina y México." *Revista Mexicana de Ciencias Políticas y Sociales* 61 (228): 121–44.

Campana, Julieta, and Agustina Rossi Lashayas. 2020. "Economia Popular e Feminismo: articulações e novas demandas emergentes." *Otra Economía* 13 (23): 17.

Candioti, Magdalena. 2021. *Una Historia de La Emancipación Negra. Esclavitud y Abolición En La Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.

Capoccia, Giovanni, and R. Daniel Kelemen. 2007. "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism." *World Politics* 59 (3): 341–69.

Carrigan, Michelle. 2016. "Femicide Legislation: Lessons from Latin America." Master's Thesis, Criminology and Criminal Justice Policy, Guelph, Canada: University of Guelph.

Carson, Lisa, and Kathy Edwards. 2011. "Prostitution and Sex Trafficking: What Are the Problems Represented to Be? A Discursive Analysis of Law and Policy in Sweden and Victoria, Australia." *Australian Feminist Law Journal* 34 (1): 63–87.

Carter, Eric D. 2018. "Population Control, Public Health, and Development in Mid Twentieth Century Latin America." *Journal of Historical Geography* 62 (October):96–105.

Castro, Mary Garcia. 2001. "Engendering Powers in Neoliberal Times in Latin America: Reflections from the Left on Feminisms and Feminisms." *Latin American Perspectives* 28 (6): 17–37.

Celentani, Francesca Gargallo. 2022. *Feminismos desde Abya Yala: Ideas y proposiciones de las mujeres de 607 pueblos en Nuestra América*. Mexico: Ediciones Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México (UACM).

CEPAL. 2010. "Population and Health in Latin America and the Caribbean: Outstanding Matters, New Challenges." https://hdl.handle.net/11362/2946.

———. 2022. "Gender Equality Observatory." Text. Gender Equality Observatory. 2022. https://oig.cepal.org/en.

Chabot, Rose. 2021. "Incoherent Gender Citizenship: Argentina's Sexual/Reproductive Health and Gender-Based Violence Laws." *Revista Communitas* 5 (9): Jan.–Mar. 2021.

Chabot, Rose, and Merve Erdilmen. 2023. "Voicing and Silencing in Tandem: Feminist Activism on Abortion in Argentina and Turkey." In *The Politics of Silence, Voice and the In-Between*, edited by Aliya Khalid, Georgina Holmes, and Jane Parpart. London: Routledge.

Chalmers, Douglas. 1977. "The Politicized State in Latin America." In *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*, edited by James Malloy, 23–45. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Chant, Sylvia. 2008. "The 'Feminisation of Poverty' and the 'Feminisation' of Anti-Poverty Programmes: Room for Revision?" *The Journal of Development Studies* 44 (2): 165–97.

Chappell, Louise. 2001. "Federalism and Social Policy: The Case of Domestic Violence." *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 60 (1): 59–69.

———. 2002. "The 'Femocrat' Strategy: Expanding the Repertoire of Feminist Activists." *Parliamentary Affairs* 55 (1): 85–98.

Chappell, Louise, and Georgina Waylen. 2013. "Gender and the Hidden Life of Institutions." *Public Administration* 91 (3): 599–615.

Cheesman, Nick. 2021. "Unbound Comparison." In *Rethinking Comparison*, edited by Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith, 1st ed., 64–83. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chiarotti, Susana, Mariana García Jurado, Analía Aucía, and Susana Armichiardi. 2003. *Con todo al aire: Reporte de derechos humanos sobre atención en salud reproductiva en hospitales públicos*. Buenos Aires: INSGENAR: CLADEM.

CIJ-Centro de Información Judicial. 2010. "Casación Penal Ratificó Condena a Bussi y Menéndez En La Provincia de Tucumán." Centro de Información Judicial. December 5, 2010. https://www.cij.gov.ar/nota-3596-Casaci-n-Penal-ratific--condena-a-Bussi-y-Men-ndez-en-la-provincia-de-Tucum-n.html.

CIPPEC. 2024. "Índice de Progreso Social del conurbano bonaerense." Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento. 2024. https://www.cippec.org/publicacion/indice-de-progreso-social-del-conurbano-bonaerense/.

Cleary, Matthew R. 2006. "A 'Left Turn' in Latin America? Explaining the Left's Resurgence." *Journal of Democracy* 17 (4): 35–49.

Code, Lorraine. 2014. "Feminist Epistemology and the Politics of Knowledge: Questions of Marginality." In *The SAGE Handbook of Feminist Theory*, edited by Mary Evans, Clare Hemmings, Marsha Henry, Hazel Johnstone, Sumi Madhok, Ania Plomien, and Sadie Wearing. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473909502.

Coenga-Oliveira, Danielle, and Rose Chabot. 2024. "Droits Sexuels et Reproductifs: Entre Avancées et Résistances Antiavortement et Antigenre." In *L'Amérique Latine En*

Transformation: Mobilisation et Citoyenneté, edited by Françoise Montambeault, Dan Furukawa Marques, and Nora Nagels. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.

Collier, David. 1979. "Overview of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model." *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America* 12:1–4.

Collier, David, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso. 1979. "Overview of the Bureaucratic-Authoritarian Model." In *The New Authoritarianism in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Collier, David, Gerardo L. Munck, Sidney Tarrow, Kenneth M. Roberts, Robert Kaufman, Taylor Boas, Timothy Scully, Jorge Dominguez, Sebastián Mazzuca, Andrew C. Gould, and Thad Dunning. 2017. "Symposium on Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies." *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 15 (1): 1–47. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3036008.

Colombo, Pamela. 2016. "L'urbanisation forcée comme politique contre-insurrectionnelle: La vie au sein des villages stratégiques construits en Argentine (1976-1978)." *Cultures & conflits*, no. 103–104 (December), 91–110.

CONADEP. 1984. "Informe Nunca Más." Buenos Aires: Comisión nacional argentina sobre desaparición de personas. Available on: https://www.derechoshumanos.net/lesahumanidad/informes/argentina/informe-de-la-CONADEP-Nunca-mas.html.

Connell, Raewyn. 2002. *Gender: In World Perspective*. 1st edition. Short Introductions. Cambridge: Polity.

Connell, Robert William. 1987. *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics*. Cambridge: Polity in association with Blackwell.

Cook, Rebecca J. 2014. "16. Stigmatized Meanings of Criminal Abortion Law." In *Abortion Law in Transnational Perspective*, edited by Rebecca J. Cook, Joanna N. Erdman, and Bernard M. Dickens, 347–70. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Cooper, Melinda. 2017. *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación. 2012. F., A. L. s/ Medida autosatisfactiva., FA12000021 Jurídica, Sistema Argentino de Información.

Costa, Sérgio. 2013. "Entangled Inequalities in Latin America: Addressing Social Categorisations and Transregional Interdependencies." In *Interdependencies of Social Categorisations*, edited by Daniela Célleri, Tobias Schwarz, and Bea Wittger, 41–62. Iberoamericana Vervuert.

Costain, Anne N., and Steven Majstorovic. 1994. "Congress, Social Movements and Public Opinion: Multiple Origins of Women's Rights Legislation." *Political Research Quarterly* 47 (1): 111–35.

Craske, Nikki. 1998. "7 Remasculinisation and the Neoliberal State in Latin America." In *Gender, Politics and the State*, edited by Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen. London: Routledge.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1990. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43:1241–99.

———. 2017a. *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*. New York: The New Press.

Crenzel, Emilio. 1999. "Memorias de la Dictadura. Los Desaparecidos y el Voto al General Bussi en Tucumán, Argentina." *RIFP* 14(1999): 14-29.

Crittenden, Ann. 2002. *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World Is Still the Least Valued*. London: Macmillan.

Dagnino, Evelina. 2008. "Challenges to Participation, Citizenship and Democracy: Perverse Confluence and Displacement of Meanings." *Can NGOs make a difference?: the challenge of development alternatives*, 55–70. London: Zed Books.

Dahl, Robert A. 1983. *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Darwin Holmes, and Andrew Gary. 2020. "Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide." *Shanlax International Journal of Education* 8, (4): 1–10. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v8i4.3232.

Das Dores Campos Machado, Maria, and Rodrigo Freston. 2016. "Christian Churches, Reproduction, and Sexuality in Latin America." In *The Cambridge History of Religions in Latin America*, edited by Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Paul Freston, and Stephen C. Dove, 1st ed., 547–58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Beauvoir, Simone. 1989. *Le Deuxième Sexe*. Paris: Vintage.

De Zordo, Silvia. 2012. "Programming the Body, Planning Reproduction, Governing Life: The '(Ir-) Rationality' of Family Planning and the Embodiment of Social Inequalities in Salvador Da Bahia (Brazil)." *Anthropology & Medicine* 19 (2): 207–23.

Death, Carl. 2010. *Governing Sustainable Development: Partnerships, Protests and Power at the World Summit*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203847411.

Debesa, Fabian, and Monica Galmarini. 2011. "Polémica Judicial: Mato a Su Mujer y Le Bajaron La Condena." *Clarín*, November 10, 2011, sec. Información general. Archives of *La Gaceta*, San Miguel de Tucumán.

Defensoría del Pueblo. 2019. "Progresos y Desafíos de Los Derechos En La Provincia de Santa Fe: Evaluación Del Estado de Avance." Santa Fe de la Vera Cruz: Provincia de Santa Fe. https://www.defensoriasantafe.gob.ar/sites/default/files/adjuntos/paginas/progresos_y_desafios_ii_0.pdf.

deLeon, Peter, Frank Fischer, Jack Rabin, David Wayne Parsons, Gerald J. Miller, Evan M. Berman, Kaifeng Yang, et al. 2007. *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*. New York: Routledge.

Delphy, Christine. 1981. "Le patriarcat, le féminisme et leurs intellectuelles." *Nouvelles Questions Féministes*, no. 2, 58–74.

Desai, Nancy A. Naples, Manisha, ed. 2002. *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Global Politics*. New York: Routledge.

Dhamoon, Rita Kaur. 2011. "Considerations on Mainstreaming Intersectionality." *Political Research Quarterly* 64 (1): 230–43.

———. 2013. "Feminisms." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Di Corleto, Julieta. 2018. "Malas Madres. Aborto e Infanticidio En Perspectiva Histórica." *Claves. Revista de Historia* 5 (9): 395–97.

Di Marco, Graciela. 2006. "Democratización, ciudadanía y derechos humanos." *Anales de la educación común* 2 (4): 116–127. Published by the Dirección General de Cultura y Educación de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Dirección Provincial de Planeamiento. Digital version of the article published on pages 116–127 in the print edition, August 2006.

———. 2010a. "El Poder de Lo Colectivo. Los Discursos de Derechos y La Transformación de Las Identidades Feministas En La Argentina Post-Crisis." *Iberoamericana (2001-)* 10 (40): 199–204.

———. 2010b. "Los movimientos de mujeres en la Argentina y la emergencia del pueblo feminista." *Aljaba* 14: 51–67. [online] Accessed December 13, 2024. https://www.scielo.org.ar/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1669-57042010000100003&lng=es&nrm=iso.

Di Nicola, Gabriel. 2024. "Alperovich Continuará Preso Por La Condena de Abuso Sexual Por Decisión de La Cámara de Casación." *La Nación*, July 18, 2024. https://www.lanacion.com.ar/politica/rechazaron-un-planteo-de-la-defensa-y-el-exgobernador-jose-alperovich-continuara-preso-por-la-nid18072024/.

Díez, Jordi. 2015. *The Politics of Gay Marriage in Latin America: Argentina, Chile, and Mexico*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2020. "The Record of Latin America's Left on Sexual Citizenship." In *Legacies of the Left Turn in Latin America: The Promise of Inclusive Citizenship*, edited by Manuel Balán and Françoise Montambeault, 252–79. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Pess.

Dore, Elizabeth, and Maxine Molyneux. 2000. *Hidden histories of gender and the state in Latin America*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Dunn, Bill. 2017. "Against Neoliberalism as a Concept." *Capital & Class* 41 (3): 435–54.

Durose, Catherine, and Vivien Lowndes. 2024. "Gendering Discretion: Why Street-Level Bureaucracy Needs a Gendered Lens." *Political Studies* 72 (3): 1026–1049. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1177/00323217231178630.

Dutil, Carlos, and Ricardo Ragendorfer. 1997. "La Bonaerense." *Historia Criminal de La Policía de La Provincia de Buenos Aires.* Buenos Aires: Planeta.

Dyck, Erika, and Maureen Lux. 2016. "Population Control in the 'Global North'?: Canada's Response to Indigenous Reproductive Rights and Neo-Eugenics." *Canadian Historical Review* 97 (4): 481–512.

Eagleton-Pierce, Matthew. 2016. *Neoliberalism: The Key Concepts*. Routledge Key Guides. New York: Routledge.

Eaton, Kent. 2006. "Decentralization's Nondemocratic Roots: Authoritarianism and Subnational Reform in Latin America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 48 (1): 1–26.

ECLAC. 2007. *Social Panorama of Latin America 2006*. ECLAC. https://repositorio.cepal.org/handle/11362/1226.

Edwards, Erika Denise. 2017. "Slavery in Argentina." Oxford Bibliographies. Online. https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199766581/obo-9780199766581-0157.xml. Consulted on 2024/09/12.

———. 2020. *Hiding in Plain Sight: Black Women, the Law, and the Making of a White Argentine Republic*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.

Ehrick, Christine. 2005. *The Shield of the Weak: Feminism and the State in Uruguay, 1903–1933*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Elman, R. Amy. 2003. "Refuge in Reconfigured States: Shelter Movements in the United States, Britain, and Sweden." In *Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State*, edited by Lee Ann Banaszak, Karen Beckwith, and Dieter Rucht, 94–113. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Elson, Diane. 2002. "78Gender Justice, Human Rights, and Neo-Liberal Economic Policies." In *Gender Justice, Development, and Rights*, edited by Maxine Molyneux and Shahra Razavi. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199256454.003.0003.

Erdman, Joanna N. 2015. "The Politics of Global Abortion Rights Sexual Health." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 22 (2): 39–58.

———. 2023. "The Reproductive Subject: The Reproductive Subject and the Embodied State of International Human Rights Law." In *The Cambridge Companion to Gender and the Law*, edited by Stéphanie Hennette Vauchez and Ruth Rubio-Marín, 1st ed., 207–36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108634069.009.

Escobar, Arturo. 2012. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Esping-Andersen, Gøsta. 1999. *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Evans, Peter B., Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol. 1985. *Bringing the State Back In*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Eveline, Joan. 2005. "Woman in the Ivory Tower: Gendering Feminised and Masculinised Identities." Edited by Alison Linstead. *Journal of Organizational Change Management* 18 (6): 641–58. https://doi.org/10.1108/09534810510628558.

Ewig, Christina. 2010. *Second-Wave Neoliberalism : Gender, Race, and Health Sector Reform in Peru*. University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Fabris, Mariano. 2019. "Patria potestad, familia y género. Las diferentes perspectivas en el catolicismo y el debate en el Congreso (1984-1985)." *Estudios: Centro d Estudios Avanzados*, no. 42, 71–90.

Fairclough, Norman. 2013. "Critical Discourse Analysis and Critical Policy Studies." *Critical Policy Studies* 7 (2): 177–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2013.798239.

Falleti, Tulia G. 2010. "Decentralization and the Revival of Subnational Politics." In *Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America*, edited by Tulia G. Falleti, 1–30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511777813.001.

Federici, Silvia. 2004. *Caliban and the Witch*. New York: Autonomedia.

Felitti, Karina. 2011. "Parirás sin dolor: poder médico, género y política en las nuevas formas de atención del parto en la Argentina (1960-1980)." *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos* 18 (December):113–29. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702011000500007.

———. 2012. "Planificación familiar en la Argentina de las décadas 1960 y 1970: ¿un caso original en América Latina?" *Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos* 27.

Fifka, Matthias S., Anna-Lena Kühn, Cristian R. Loza Adaui, and Markus Stiglbauer. 2016. "Promoting Development in Weak Institutional Environments: The Understanding and Transmission of Sustainability by NGOS in Latin America." *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 27 (3): 1091–1122. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9713-4.

Fine, Johanna B., Katherine Mayall, and Lilian Sepúlveda. 2017. "The Role of International Human Rights Norms in the Liberalization of Abortion Laws Globally." *Health and Human Rights* 19 (1): 69–80.

Fischer, Frank, Douglas Torgerson, Anna Durnová, and Michael Orsini. 2015. *Handbook of Critical Policy Studies*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Fiszbein, Ariel, Paula Inés Giovagnoli, and Isidro Adúriz. 2003. "The Argentine Crisis and Its Impact on Household Welfare." *CEPAL Review* 79: 143–158. https://doi.org/10.18356/18751b59-en.

Flood, Michael. 2007. "Gender Order." In *International Encyclopedia of Men and Masculinities*, edited by Michael Flood, Judith K. Gardiner, Bob Pease, and Keith Pringle, 1 vol. London and New York: Routledge.

Foucault, Michel. 1972. "The Archaeology of Knowledge." In *The Discourse on Language*, translated by Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books.

———. 1977. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays andInterviews,*. Edited by D. Bouchard. New York: Cornell University Press.

———. 1980. *Power/Knowledge*. Edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books.

———. 1987. *Maladie Mentale et Psychologie*. San Francisco: University of California Press.

———. 1990. "16. Les Mots et Les Choses." In *Essays in Semiotics /Essais de Sémiotique*, edited by Julia Kristeva, Josette Rey-Debove, Donna Umiker, and John C. Greene, 230–38. De Gruyter Mouton. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110890662.230.

———. 2004. "Space, Knowledge, and Power." In *Material Culture: Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*, edited by Victor Buchli. London: Taylor & Francis.

Foucault, Michel, and Paul Rabinow. 1984. *The Foucault Reader*. First edition. New York: Pantheon Books. http://library.mpib-berlin.mpg.de/toc/z2010_882.pdf.

Franceschet, Susan. 2010a. "Explaining Domestic Violence Policy Outcomes in Chile and Argentina." *Latin American Politics and Society* 52 (3): 1–29.

———. 2010b. "Explaining Domestic Violence Policy Outcomes in Chile and Argentina." *Latin American Politics and Society* 52 (3): 1–29. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2010.00088.x.

———. 2011. "Gender Policy and State Architecture in Latin America." *Politics & Gender* 7 (2): 273–79.

Frantz, Telmo Rudi. 1987. "The Role of NGOs in the Strengthening of Civil Society." *World Development* 15 (September):121–27. https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(87)90150-1.

Fraser, Nancy. 1987. "Women, Welfare and The Politics of Need Interpretation." *Hypatia* 2.

———. 1989. "Talking about Needs: Interpretive Contests as Political Conflicts in Welfare-State Societies." *Ethics* 99 (2): 291–313. https://doi.org/10.1086/293067.

———. 2003. "Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution, Recognition, and Participation." In *Redistribution or Recognition? : A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, edited by Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth 1949-. London: Verso.

———. 2007. "Feminist Politics in the Age of Recognition: A Two-Dimensional Approach to Gender Justice." *Studies in Social Justice* 1 (1): 23–35. https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v1i1.979.

———. 2008. *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/23/monograph/book/32528.

———. 2009. *Scales of Justice: Reimagining Political Space in a Globalizing World*. Columbia University Press.

———. 2010. "Injustice at Intersecting Scales: On 'Social Exclusion' and the 'Global Poor.'" *European Journal of Social Theory* 13 (3): 363–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431010371758.

———. 2015. "Feminism's Two Legacies: A Tale of Ambivalence." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 114 (4): 699–712. https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-3157089.

———. 2021. *Justicia, redistribución, reconocimiento y participación política:: una revisión de la obra de Nancy Fraser*. Edited by Delfín Ignacio Grueso. 1st ed. Programa Editorial Universidad del Valle. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2kqx0tk.

Frederic, Sabina Andrea, and Marcelo Saín. 2008. "Profesionalización y Reforma Policial: Concepciones Sobre Las Prácticas de La Policía de La Provincia de Buenos Aires." In *Estado, Democracia y Seguridad Ciudadana: Aportes Para El Debate*, 221–244. Buenos Aires: PNUD.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda. 2014. "For a Pluriversal Declaration of Human Rights." *American Quarterly* 66 (3): 583–608.

Fregoso, Rosa-Linda, and Cynthia Bejarano. 2010. "Introduction: A Cartography of Feminicide in the Américas." In *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Américas*, 1–42. Duke University Press. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9780822392644-003/html.

Friedman, Elisabeth Jay. 1998. "Paradoxes of Gendered Political Opportunity in the Venezuelan Transition to Democracy." *Latin American Research Review* 33 (3): 87–135.

———. 2009a. "Gender, Sexuality and the Latin American Left: Testing the Transformation." *Third World Quarterly* 30 (2): 415–33. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590802681132.

———. 2009b. "Re(Gion)Alizing Women's Human Rights in Latin America." *Politics & Gender* 5 (03): 349. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X09990171.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2017. *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203756065.

Funk, Nanette. 2013. "Contra Fraser on Feminism and Neoliberalism." *Hypatia* 28 (1): 179–96. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2011.01259.x.

Gago, Verónica. 2020a. "Lecturas sobre feminismo y neoliberalismo." *Nueva Sociedad* 290 (noviembre-diciembre): 12.

———. 2020b. "Lecturas sobre feminismo y neoliberalismo." *Nueva Sociedad* 290 (noviembre-diciembre): 12.

Garay, Candelaria. 2007. "Social Policy and Collective Action: Unemployed Workers, Community Associations, and Protest in Argentina." *Politics & Society* 35 (2): 301–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329207300392.

———. 2016. *Social Policy Expansion in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316585405.

García-Del Moral, Paulina. 2019. "The 'Formally Feminist State': A Potential New Player in the Inter-American Human Rights System?" *AJIL Unbound* 113:365–69. https://doi.org/10.1017/aju.2019.69.

———. 2020. "Practicing Accountability, Challenging Gendered State Resistance: Feminist Legislators and Feminicidio in Mexico." *Gender & Society* 34 (5): 844–68. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243220948217.

Garcia-Moreno, Claudia. 2010. "Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence: The Global Picture." In *Routledge Handbook of Sexuality, Health and Rights*. Routledge.

Garrett, Paul Michael. 2019. "What Are We Talking about When We Talk about 'Neoliberalism'?" *European Journal of Social Work* 22 (2): 188–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/13691457.2018.1530643.

Geler, Lea, Carmen Yannone, and Alejandra Egido. 2023. "Afroargentinas de Villa Cartón. Racialidad, Marginalidad y Añoranzas En El Barrio Lacarra, 1948-1972." In *Nueva Historia de Las Mujeres En La Argentina*, Prometeo Libros, Third tome:61–83. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros.

Gervasoni, Carlos. 2018. *Hybrid regimes within democracies: fiscal federalism and subnational rentier states*. Cambridge; Cambridge University Press.

Gideon, Jasmine. 1998. "The Politics of Social Service Provision through NGOs: A Study of Latin America." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17 (3): 303–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1470-9856.1998.tb00127.x.

———. 2002. "Pro-Poor, pro-Gender Policies: Introduction." *Journal of International Development* 14 (6): 869. https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.931.

———. 2006. "Accessing Economic and Social Rights under Neoliberalism: Gender and Rights in Chile." *Third World Quarterly* 27 (7): 1269–83.

———. 2012. "Engendering the Health Agenda? Reflections on the Chilean Case, 2000–2010." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 19 (3): 333–60. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxs009.

———. 2014a. *Gender, Globalization, and Health in a Latin American Context*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

———. 2014b. "Latin American Social Policy: Challenging Gender Inequalities?" In *Gender, Globalization, and Health in a Latin American Context*, edited by Jasmine Gideon, 1–22. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137120274_1..

Gideon, Jasmine, Marianna Leite, and Gabriela Alvarez Minte. 2015. "What Is Hindering Progress? The Marginalization of Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Brazil and Chile." *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy* 31 (3): 255–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2015.1091784..

Gideon, Jasmine, and Gabriela Alvarez Minte. 2016. "Institutional Constraints to Engendering the Health Sector in Bachelet's Chile." In *Gender, Institutions, and Change in Bachelet's Chile*, edited by Georgina Waylen, 147–69. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137501981_7.

Gideon, Jasmine, and Maxine Molyneux. 2012. "Limits to Progress and Change: Reflections on Latin American Social Policy." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 19 (3): 293–98. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxs013.

Giles, Melinda Vandenbeld. 2019. "Mothering, Neoliberalism, and Globalization." In *The Routledge Companion to Motherhood*, 373–88. London: Routledge.

Giraudy, Agustina. 2010. "The Politics of Subnational Undemocratic Regime Reproduction in Argentina and Mexico." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2 (2): 53–84.

Girbal, Noemí María. 2015. "En la Argentina peronista 'Los únicos privilegiados son los niños' (1946-1955): La doctrina desde la Biblioteca Infantil 'General Perón'." *Historia Contemporánea* 4: 1130-2402. Universidad del País Vasco.

Glass, Christy, and Éva Fodor. 2007. "From Public to Private Maternalism? Gender and Welfare in Poland and Hungary after 1989." *Social Politics* 14 (3): 323–350. https://doi.org/jxm013.

Goertz, Gary, and Amy Mazur. 2008. "Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology Exercises." *Politics, Gender, and Concepts: Theory and Methodology*, January. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511755910.

Gogna, Mónica, and Nina Zamberlin. 2004. "Sexual and Reproductive Health in Argentina: Public Policy Transitions in a Context of Crisis." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research* 10 (2): 95–112.

Golder, Ben. 2010. "What Is an Anti-Humanist Human Right?" *Social Identities* 16 (5): 651–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2010.509570.

Goldsmith Weil, Jael. 2020. "Constructing Maternalism from Paternalism: The Case of State Milk Programs." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 69–95. Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Goldstein, Daniel M., and Enrique Desmond Arias, eds. 2010. *Violent Democracies in Latin America*. Durham: Duke University Press. https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/4/edited_volume/book/69597.

Gordon, Tuula. 1994. *Single Women: On the Margins?* New York: New York University Press.

Göttems, Leila Bernarda Donato, Luciano de Paula Camilo, Céline Mavrot, and Maria de Lourdes Rollemberg Mollo. 2021. "Health Systems Reforms in Latin America: Neoliberal Influences and Challenges to the Sustainable Development Goals." *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* 26 (October):4383–96.

Gouws, Amanda. 1996. "The Rise of the Femocrat?" *Agenda* 12 (30): 31–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/10130950.1996.9675543.

Graff, Agnieszka, and Elżbieta Korolczuk. 2022. *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*. 1st ed. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003133520.

Green Rioja, Romina A. 2024. "From 'Armies of Love' to Demanding Legal Abortion: Piqueteras and Women Workers at the Forefront of Forging New Feminist Politics in Argentina (1990–2005)." *Radical History Review* 2024 (148): 69–89. https://doi.org/10.1215/01636545-10846822.

Grosso, Belén, María Trpin, and Ruth Zurbriggen. 2019. "La gesta del aborto propio." In *Historia de una desobediencia: Aborto y feminismo*, by Mabel Bellucci, 1st ed. Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual.

Grugel, Jean, and Enrique Peruzzotti. 2007. "Claiming Rights Under Global Governance: Children's Rights in Argentina." *Global Governance* 13 (2): 199–216. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27800654.

Grugel, Jean, and Pia Riggirozzi. 2018. "Neoliberal Disruption and Neoliberalism's Afterlife in Latin America: What Is Left of Post-Neoliberalism?" *Critical Social Policy* 38 (3): 547–66. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018318765857.

Guano, Emanuela. 2002. "Spectacles of Modernity: Transnational Imagination and Local Hegemonies in Neoliberal Buenos Aires." *Cultural Anthropology* 17 (2): 181–209.

Guillaumin, Colette. 1978. "Pratique Du Pouvoir et Idée de Nature (1) L'appropriation Des Femmes." *Questions Féministes*, no. 2, 5–30.

Gustá, Ana Laura Rodríguez. 2008. "Las Políticas Sensibles al Género: Variedades Conceptuales y Desafíos de Intervención." *Temas y Debates: Revista Universitaria de Ciencias Sociales* 12 (16): 109–30.

Gusta, Ana Laura Rodriguez, and Mariana Caminotti. 2010. "Políticas Públicas de Equidad de Género: Las Estrategias Fragmentarias de La Argentina y Chile." *Revista SAAP. Publicación de Ciencia Política de La Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político* 4 (1): 85–110.

Gutiérrez, Florencia. 2023. "Más Allá Del Ingenio. Mujeres Que Trabajan, Defienden Sus Hogares y Demandan Por Derechos En Tucumán, 1943-1955." In *Nueva Historia de Las Mujeres En La Argentina.*, edited by Débora D'Antonio and Valeria Silvina Pita, 217–33. Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros Editorial.

Guy, Donna J. 1981. "Women, Peonage, and Industrialization: Argentina, 1810-1914." *Latin American Research Review* 16 (3): 65–89.

———. 1985. "Lower-Class Families, Women, and the Law in Nineteenth Century Argentina." *Journal of Family History* 10 (3): 318–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/036319908501000309.

———. 2000. "Parents Before the Tribunals. The Legal Construction of Patriarchy in Argentina." In *Hidden histories of gender and the state in Latin America*, edited by Maxine Molyneux and Elizabeth Dore. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

———. 2009. *Women Build the Welfare State: Performing Charity and Creating Rights in Argentina, 1880-1955*. New Haven: Duke University Press.

———. 2012. *Gender and Sexuality in Latin America*. Edited by Jose C. Moya. Vol. 1. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195166217.013.0013.

Gwynne, Robert N, and Cristobal Kay. 2000. "Views from the Periphery: Futures of Neoliberalism in Latin America." *Third World Quarterly* 21 (1): 141–56.

Hacker, Jacob S., and Paul Pierson. 2019. "Policy Feedback in an Age of Polarization." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 685 (1): 8–28. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1177/0002716219871222.

Hall, Peter A., and Rosemary C. R. Taylor. 1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 44 (5): 936–57. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1996.tb00343.x.

Halley, Janet, Prabha Kotiswaran, Rachel Rebouché, and Hila Shamir. 2018. *Governance Feminism: An Introduction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Handlin, Samuel. 2013. "Social Protection and the Politicization of Class Cleavages During Latin America's Left Turn." *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (12): 1582–1609.

Haney, Lynne, and Lisa Pollard. 2003. "Introduction: In a Family Way: Theorizing State and Familial Relations." In *Families of a New World*. London: Routledge.

Hankivsky, Olena, and Renee Cormier. 2011. "Intersectionality and Public Policy: Some Lessons from Existing Models." *Political Research Quarterly* 64 (1): 217–29.

Hankivsky, Olena, and Julia S. Jordan-Zachery. 2019. "Introduction: Bringing Intersectionality to Public Policy." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Intersectionality in Public Policy*, edited by Olena Hankivsky and Julia S. Jordan-Zachery, 1–28. The Politics of Intersectionality. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98473-5_1.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* 14 (3): 575. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066.

Harding, Sandra G. 1987. *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Hartmann, Christopher. 2016. "Postneoliberal Public Health Care Reforms: Neoliberalism, Social Medicine, and Persistent Health Inequalities in Latin America." *American Journal of Public Health* 106 (12): 2145–51. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303470.

Hartviksen, Julia. 2021. "Gendered Violences and Resistances to Development: Body, Land, Territory, and Violences against Women in Postwar Guatemala." *Gender & Development* 29 (2–3): 291–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2021.1979798.

Hawkesworth, Mary. 2010. "Policy Discourse as Sanctioned Ignorance: Theorizing the Erasure of Feminist Knowledge." *Critical Policy Studies* 3 (3–4): 268–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171003619691.

Hawkins, Darren, and Melissa Humes. 2002. "Human Rights and Domestic Violence." *Political Science Quarterly* 117 (2): 231–57. https://doi.org/10.2307/798182.

Hays, Sharon. 1996. *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hearn, Jeff, and Linda McKie. 2008. "Gendered Policy and Policy on Gender: The Case of 'Domestic Violence.'" *Policy & Politics* 36 (January):75–91.

———. 2009. "Gendered and Social Hierarchies in Problem Representation and Policy Processes: 'Domestic Violence' in Finland and Scotland." *Violence against Women* 16 (December):136–58.

Helg, Aline. 1990. "3. Race in Argentina and Cuba, 1880-1930: Theory, Policies, and Popular Reaction." In *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, edited by Richard Graham, 143–. LLILAS Critical Reflections on Latin America Series. Co-published with The Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin.

Helmke, Gretchen, and Steven Levitsky. 2006. *Informal Institutions and Democracy: Lessons from Latin America*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Hernes, Helga Maria, 1938-. 1987. *Welfare State and Woman Power: Essays in State Feminism*. Scandinavian Library. Oslo, Oxford: Norwegian University Press, Distributed by Oxford University Press.

Hilgers, Tina, and Laura Macdonald. 2017a. "Introduction: How Violence Varies: Subnational Place, Identity, and Embeddedness." In *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean*, edited by Tina Hilgers and Laura Macdonald, 1–36. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2017b. *Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Subnational Structures, Institutions, and Clientelistic Networks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hill Collins, Patricia. 1990. "Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination." *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* 138 (1990): 221–38.

Hiner, Hillary. 2020. "LGBTQ-IPV and the Case for Challenging Maternalist Family Violence Paradigms." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 195–217. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21402-9_9.

Hite, Amy Bellone, and Jocelyn S. Viterna. 2005. "Gendering Class in Latin America: How Women Effect and Experience Change in the Class Structure." *Latin American Research Review* 40 (2): 50–82.

hooks, bell. 2015[1984]. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. New York: Routledge.

Hoppe, Robert. 2011. *The Governance of Problems: Puzzling, Powering and Participation*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Htun, Mala. 2003. *Sex and the State: Abortion, Divorce, and the Family under Latin American Dictatorships and Democracies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Htun, Mala, and Francesca R. Jensenius. 2020. "Aspirational Laws as Weak Institutions: Legislation to Combat Violence against Women in Mexico." In *The Politics of Institutional Weakness in Latin America*, edited by Daniel M. Brinks, Steven Levitsky, and María Victoria Murillo, 1st ed., 141–60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2022. "Expressive Power of Anti-Violence Legislation: Changes in Social Norms on Violence Against Women in Mexico." *World Politics*, January, 1–36. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887121000186.

Htun, Mala, and Laurel Weldon. 2012. "The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005." *The American Political Science Review* 106 (3): 548–69.

———. 2010. "When Do Governments Promote Women's Rights? A Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Sex Equality Policy." *Perspectives on Politics* 8 (1): 207–16.

———. 2015. "Religious Power, the State, Women's Rights, and Family Law." *Politics & Gender* 11 (03): 451–77. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X15000239.

———. 2018. *The Logics of Gender Justice: State Action on Women's Rights Around the World*. Cambridge Studies in Gender and Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huber, Evelyne, and Sara Niedzwiecki. 2014. "Emerging Welfare States in Latin America and East Asia." Edited by Stephan Leibfried, Evelyne Huber, Matthew Lange, Jonah D. Levy, and John D. Stephens. *The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State*, October.

Huber, Evelyne, and Fred Solt. 2004. "Successes and Failures of Neoliberalism." *Latin American Research Review* 39 (3): 150–64.

Huber, Evelyne, and John D. Stephens. 2012a. *Democracy and the Left: Social Policy and Inequality in Latin America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Huber, John D, and Charles R Shipan. 2002. *Deliberate Discretion? The Institutional Foundations of Bureaucratic Autonomy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hunt, Kate, and Mike Gruszczynski. 2019. "The Ratification of CEDAW and the Liberalization of Abortion Laws." *Politics & Gender* 15 (4): 722–45.

Inda, Jonathan Xavier. 2005. "Analytics of the Modern: An Introduction." In *Anthropologies of Modernity: Foucault, Governmentality, and Life Politics*, edited by Jonathan Xavier Inda, 1–. Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470775875.ch.

Ingram, Helen, and Anne L. Schneider. 2015. "Making Distinctions: The Social Construction of Target Populations." In *Handbook of Critical Policy Studies*, edited by Frank Fischer, Douglas Torgerson, Anna Durnová, and Michael Orsini. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Inter-American Commission on Human and Inter-American Court of Human Right, eds. 1998. "Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women 'Convention of Belem Do Para.'" In *Inter-American Yearbook on Human Rights / Anuario Interamericano de Derechos Humanos, Volume 12 A (1996)*, 194–215.

Jacquot, Sophie, and Amy Mazur. 2010. "Politiques Publiques et Genre." In *Dictionnaire des politiques publiques*, ed Laurie Boussaguet. Paris : Presses de Sciences Po I. 460–68.

James, Gisela Bock, Susan, ed. 1992. *Beyond Equality and Difference: Citizenship, Feminist Politics and Female Subjectivity*. London: Routledge.

Jelin, Elizabeth. 1990. *Women and Social Change in Latin America*. London: Zed Books.

———. 2007. "Las Familias Latinoamericanas En El Marco de Las Transformaciones Globales." In *Familias y Políticas Públicas En América Latina: Una Historia de Desencuentros*, edited by Irma Arriagada, 93–121. Santiago de Chile: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL).

Jelin, Elizabeth, Renata Motta, and Sérgio Costa, eds. 2017. *Global Entangled Inequalities: Conceptual Debates and Evidence from Latin America*. London: Routledge.

Jemio, Ana Sofía. 2021. *Tras Las Huellas Del Terror. El Operativo Independencia y El Comienzo Del Genocidio En Argentina.* Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros Editorial.

Jenson, Jane. 1986. "Gender and Reproduction or, Babies and the State." *Studies in Political Economy* 20 (1): 9–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/19187033.1986.11675588.

———. Jane. 1997. "Who Cares? Gender and Welfare Regimes." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 4 (2): 182–87. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1093/sp/4.2.182.

———. 2001. "D'un régime de citoyenneté à un autre : la rémunération des soins." *Travail, genre et sociétés* 6 (2): 43–58. https://doi.org/10.3917/tgs.006.0043.

———. 2006. "Social Citizenship and New Social Risks: What Happened to Women's Voices?" *Droit et société* 62 (1): 21–43.

———. 2009. "Lost in Translation: The Social Investment Perspective and Gender Equality." *Social Politics* 16 (4): 446–83.

Jenson, Jane, Eric Remacle, and Bérengère Marques Pereira. 2007. *L'état des citoyennetés en Europe et dans les Amériques*. Montréal : Presses de l'Université de Montréal.

Jessop, Bob. 1993. "Towards a Schumpeterian Workfare State? Preliminary Remarks on Post-Fordist Political Economy." *Studies in Political Economy* 40 (1): 7–39.

———. 2002. "Liberalism, Neoliberalism, and Urban Governance: A State–Theoretical Perspective." *Antipode* 34 (3): 452–72.

Joachim, Jutta M. 2007. *Agenda setting, the UN, and NGOs : gender violence and reproductive rights*. Advancing human rights. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Johnson, Holly. 2015. "Degendering Violence." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 22 (3): 390–410.

Kamerman, Sheila B., and Alfred J. Kahn. 1989. "The Possibilities for Child and Family Policy: A Cross-National Perspective." *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 37 (2): 84–98. https://doi.org/10.2307/1173953.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1988. "Bargaining with Patriarchy." *Gender & Society* 2 (3): 274–90.

Kardam, Nüket. 2005. "Gender and Institutions: Creating an Enabling Environment." *Expert Group Meeting on Enhancing Participation of Women in Development through an Enabling Environment for Achieving Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women*, EGM/WPD-EE/2005/EP.9, United Nations, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), Bangkok, Thailand, 8–11 November 2005.

Kasparian, Denise. 2020. "Cooperativismo, Políticas Públicas y Organizaciones Sociales: Conflictividad En Cooperativas Promovidas Por El Estado En Argentina." *Psicoperspectivas* 19 (2): 94–106.

Kaufman, Robert R., and Barbara Stallings. 1991. "The Political Economy of Latin American Populism." In *The Macroeconomics of Populism in Latin America*, 15–43. University of Chicago Press.

Keck, Margaret E., and Kathryn Sikkink. 1999. "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics." *International Social Science Journal* 51 (159): 89–101.

———. 2014. *Activists beyond Borders*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.

Keddie, Amanda. 2023. "Gender Equality Reform and Police Organizations: A Social Justice Approach." *Gender, Work & Organization* 30 (3): 810–25. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12918.

Keefe-Oates, Brianna. 2021. "Transforming Abortion Access Through Feminist Community-Based Healthcare and Activism: A Case Study of Socorristas En Red in Argentina." In *Abortion and Democracy: Contentious Body Politics in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay*, by Barbara Sutton and Nayla Luz Vacarezza. New York: Routledge.

Kennett, Patricia, and Sarah Payne. 2014. "Gender Justice and Global Policy Paradigms." *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy* 30 (1): 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2014.887027.

Khalid, Aliya, Georgina Holmes, and Jane L. Parpart. 2023. *The Politics of Silence, Voice and the In-between: Exploring Gender, Race and Insecurity from the Margins*. London: Routledge.

Kockelmans, Joseph J. 1975. "Toward an Interpretative or Hermeneutic Social Science." *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 5 (1): 73–96. In "H.-G. Gadamer," special issue.

Koven, Seth, 1958-, and Sonya Michel 1942-. 1993. *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*. New York: Routledge.

Krizsán, Andrea, Maria Bustelo, Andromachi Hadjiyanni, and Fray Kamoutsi. 2007. "Domestic Violence: A Public Matter." In *Multiple Meanings of Gender Equality: A Critical Frame Analysis of Gender Policies in Europe*, edited by Mieke Verloo, 129–157. CPS Books. New York: Central European University Press.

Kurtz, Marcus J. 2004. "The Dilemmas of Democracy in the Open Economy: Lessons from Latin America." *World Politics* 56 (2): 262–302. https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2004.0013.

Kushner, Kaysi Eastlick, and Raymond Morrow. 2003. "Grounded Theory, Feminist Theory, Critical Theory: Toward Theoretical Triangulation." *Advances in Nursing Science* 26 (1): 30.

Lacombe, Delphine. 2018. "Légiférer sur les « violences de genre » tout en préservant l'ordre patriarcal. L'exemple du Nicaragua (1990-2017)." *Droit et société* 99 (2): 287–303. https://doi.org/10.3917/drs1.099.0287.

Lacombe, Delphine, and Élisabeth Marteu. 2015. "Une « dépolitisation » de l'action collective des femmes ? Réflexions croisées sur le Nicaragua et la Palestine." *L'Homme & la Société* 198 (4): 127–48. https://doi.org/10.3917/lhs.198.0127.

Laforest, Rachel, and Michael Orsini. 2005. "Evidence-based Engagement in the Voluntary Sector: Lessons from Canada." *Social Policy and Administration* 39 (5): 481–497. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2005.00451.x.

Lagarde y de los Ríos, Marcela. 2006. "Del femicidio al feminicidio." *Desde el jardín de Freud: revista de psicoanálisis* 6: 216–225. https://www.repositorio.ciem.ucr.ac.cr/handle/123456789/9.

Larner, Wendy. 2003. "Neoliberalism?" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21 (5): 509–12. https://doi.org/10.1068/d2105ed.

Larsson, Oscar. 2018. "Advancing Post-Structural Institutionalism: Discourses, Subjects, Power Asymmetries, and Institutional Change." *Critical Review* 30 (3–4): 325–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2018.1567982.

Lasswell, Harold D. 1970. "The Emerging Conception of the Policy Sciences." *Policy Sciences* 1 (1): 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00145189.

Laudano, Claudia N. 2017. "Movilizaciones #Niunamenos y #Vivasnosqueremos en Argentina: Entre el activismo digital y #Elfeminismolohizo." In *Seminário Internacional Fazendo Gênero 11 & 13th Women's Worlds Congress (Anais Eletrônicos)*, Florianópolis, 2017. ISSN 2179-510X.

Lebon, Nathalie, and Elizabeth Maier. 2010. *Women's Activism in Latin America and the Caribbean: Engendering Social Justice, Democratizing Citizenship*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. http://muse.jhu.edu/book/1664.

Leiras, Marcelo. 2013. "Las Contradicciones Aparentes Del Federalismo Argentino y Sus Consecuencias Políticas y Sociales." *Cuánto Importan Las Instituciones*, 209–48. https://marceloleiras.weebly.com/uploads/2/2/7/0/22705072/leiras_2013_las_contradicciones_aparentes_del_federalismo_argentino.pdf.

Levitsky, Steven, and Kenneth M Roberts. 2011. *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Levy, Charmain, Andrea Martinez, and Nora Nagels. 2019. "Femmes, travail du care et néocolonialisme." In *Genre, féminismes et développement : une trilogie en construction*. Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa.

Lewis, Jane. 1992. "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes." *Journal of European Social Policy* 2 (3): 159–73.

———. 1994. "Gender, the Family and Women's Agency in the Building of 'Welfare States': The British Case." *Social History* 19 (1): 37–55.

———. 1997. "Gender and Welfare Regimes: Further Thoughts." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 4 (2): 160–77. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/4.2.160.

Lind, Amy. 2003. "Gender and Neoliberal States: Feminists Remake the Nation in Ecuador." *Latin American Perspectives* 30 (1): 181–207.

Loango, Anny Ocoró. 2010. "Los negros y negras en la Argentina: entre la barbarie, la exotización, la invisibilización y el racismo de Estado." *La manzana de la discordia* 5 (2): 45–63.

Lombardo, Emanuela, Petra Meier, and Mieke Verloo. 2013. "Policy Making." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0027.

López, Adriana Carmona, Alma Gómez Caballero, and Lucha Castro Rodríguez. 2010. "Feminicide in Latin America in the Movement for Women's Human Rights." In *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Americas*, edited by Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, 10. New Haven: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822392644-010.

López, Fernando. 2016. *The Feathers of Condor: Transnational State Terrorism, Exiles and Civilian Anticommunism in South America*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publisher. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/mcgill/detail.action?docID=4648807.

López, Sonia Arellano, and James Petras. 1994. "La ambigua ayuda de las ONGs en Bolivia." *Nueva Sociedad* 131 (May-June 199): 72–87.

López-Alves, Fernando. 2020. "The Transatlantic Bridge: Mirros, Charles Tilly, and State Formation in the River Plate." In *The Other Mirror: Grand Theory through the Lens of Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. http://muse.jhu.edu/book/79333.

Lopreite, Débora. 2012. "10. Gendering Welfare State Regimes in Latin America: Argentina in Comparative Perspective." In *Comparative Public Policy in Latin America*, by Jordi Diez and Susan Franceschet, 228–46. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442689947-011.

Lopreite, Debora. 2012. "Travelling Ideas and Domestic Policy Change: The Transnational Politics of Reproductive Rights/Health in Argentina." *Global Social Policy* 12 (2): 109–28.

———. 2013. "Gender Policies in Argentina after Neoliberalism: Opportunities and Obstacles for Women's Rights." *Latin American Perspectives* 42 (June).

———. 2015. "Gender Policies in Argentina after Neoliberalism: Opportunities and Obstacles for Women's Rights." *Latin American Perspectives* 42 (1): 64–73.

———. 2020. "The Federal Restriction of Womens Rights: Argentinas Politics on Abortion and Contraception." In *Handbook on Gender, Diversity and Federalism*, 212–26. United Kingdom: Edward Elgar Publishing.

———. 2022. "The Long Road to Abortion Rights in Argentina (1983–2020)." *Journal of the Society for Latin American Studies*, Volume 42, Issue 3, Special Section: Contentious Legacy, July 2023, 357-371.

Lopreite, Debora, and Laura Macdonald. 2013a. "Gender and Latin American Welfare Regimes: Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in Argentina and Mexico." *Social Politics* 21 (1): 80–102.

———. 2013b. "Gender and Latin American Welfare Regimes: Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in Argentina and Mexico." *Social Politics* 21 (1): 80–102.

Lopreite, Debora, and Ana Laura Rodríguez Gusta. 2021. "Introducción: Estado, instituciones y políticas públicas con enfoque feminista en el análisis de viejas y nuevas desigualdades de género en América Latina." *Revista SAAP* 15 (2).

Lorber, Judith. 1994. *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lövbrand, Eva, and Johannes Stripple. 2015. "Foucault and Critical Policy Studies." In *Handbook of Critical Policy Studies*, edited by Frank Fischer, Douglas Torgerson, Anna Durnová, and Michael Orsini. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Lovenduski, Joni. 1998. "Gendering Research in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 1 (1): 333–56. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.1.1.333.

Lowe, Pam. 2016. "Responsible 'Choices' and Good Motherhood." In *Reproductive Health and Maternal Sacrifice: Women, Choice and Responsibility*, edited by Pam Lowe, 17–45. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-47293-9_2.

Lowndes, Vivien. 2020. "How Are Political Institutions Gendered?" *Political Studies* 68 (3): 543–64.

Lugones, María. 2019. "Revisiting Gender: A Decolonial Approach." In *Theories of the Flesh: Latinx and Latin American Feminisms, Transformation, and Resistance*, edited by Andrea J. Pitts, Mariana Ortega, and José Medina. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Macaulay, Fiona. 2006. "Judicialising and (de) Criminalising Domestic Violence in Latin America." *Social Policy and Society* 5 (1): 103–14.

Macdonald, Laura, and Arne Ruckert, eds. 2009. *Post-Neoliberalism in the Americas*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230232822.

Macdonald, Mandy, ed. 1994. "Gender Planning in Development Agencies: Meeting the Challenge: A Report of a Workshop Held at the Cherwell Centre, Oxford, England in May 1993." Oxfam. https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/122707/bk-gender-planning-development-agencies-contents-010194-en.pdf?sequence=20.

Machado, Marta Rodriguez De Assis, María Angélica Peñas-Defago, and Camila Gianella Malca. 2022. "Anti-Abortion Mobilization in Latin America: Signs of a Field in

Transformation." *Revista Direito GV* 18 (3): e2234. https://doi.org/10.1590/2317-6172202234.

Mackay, Fiona, Meryl Kenny, and Louise Chappell. 2010. "New Institutionalism through a Gender Lens: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism?" *International Political Science Review* 31 (5): 573–88.

Mackay, Fiona, Surya Monro, and Georgina Waylen. 2009. "The Feminist Potential of Sociological Institutionalism." *Politics & Gender* 5 (2): 253–62. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X09000208.

MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1989. *Toward a feminist theory of the state*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. http://www.gbv.de/dms/bowker/toc/9780674896451.pdf http://www.gbv.de/dms/bowker/toc/9780674896468.pdf https://bac-lac.on.worldcat.org/oclc/300930500.

Mahajan, Gurpreet. 1999. "Civil Society and Its Avatars: What Happened to Freedom and Democracy?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 34 (20): 1188–96.

Mahoney, James. 2000. "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology." *Theory and Society* 29 (4,): 507–48.

Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Thelen. 2010. "A Theory of Gradual Institutional Change." *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power* 1:1–37.

Mainwaring, Scott, Marcelo Leiras, and Daniel M. Brinks. 2014. *Reflections on uneven democracies: the legacy of Guillermo O'Donnell*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1983. "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." *American Political Science Review* 78 (3): 734–49.

———. 2008. "9 The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life." In *Explorations in Organizations*, by James G. March, 203–33. Stanford: Stanford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503627147-014.

Mariana Tallarico, Valeria. 2020. *Caracterización del AMBA*. https://www.teseopress.com/violenciacontralasmujeres/chapter/capitulo-4-caracterizacion-del-amba/.

Marques-Pereira, Bérengère. 2005. "Le Chili : Les femmes et la gauche. Une relation amicale ?" *Revue internationale de politique comparée* 12 (3): 365–78. https://doi.org/10.3917/ripc.123.0365.

———. 2007. "Le Chili et Les Rapports Entre Les Sexes. Quel « Régime De Citoyenneté » Pour Les Femmes ?" In *L'état Des Citoyennetés*, 81–99. Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal. https://doi.org/10.1515/9782760624856-008.

Marques-Pereira, Bérengère, and Roland Pfefferkorn. 2011. "Genre, politiques sociales et citoyenneté : enjeux et recompositions. Introduction." *Cahiers du Genre* HS 2 (3): 5–19. https://doi.org/10.3917/cdge.hs02.0005.

Marques-Pereira, Bérengère, and Florence Raes. 2002. "Les droits reproductifs comme droits humains : une perspective internationale." In *Corps de femmes*, 19–38. POL-HIS. Louvain-la-Neuve: De Boeck Supérieur. https://doi.org/10.3917/dbu.coene.2002.01.0019.

Marshall, Thomas H. 1992. *Citizenship and Social Class*. Edited by Tom Bottomore. Pluto Classics. Cambridge: Pluto Press. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.2307/j.ctt18mvns1.

Martínez Franzoni, Juliana. 2008. "Welfare Regimes in Latin America: Capturing Constellations of Markets, Families, and Policies." *Latin American Politics and Society* 50 (02): 67–100. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2008.00013.x.

Martínez Franzoni, Juliana, and Koen Voorend. 2012. "Blacks, Whites, or Grays? Conditional Transfers and Gender Equality in Latin America." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 19 (3): 383–407. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxs008.

Masson, Laura. 2004. *La política en femenino: género y poder en la Provincia de Buenos Aires*. 1. ed. Serie etnográfica. Buenos Aires: IDES, Centro de Antropología Social.

Mathieu, Sophie. 2016. "From the Defamilialization to the 'Demotherization' of Care Work." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 23 (4): 576–91. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxw006.

Mazur, Amy G. 2009. "A Comparative View of Feminist Movements and the Drafting of Policies." *Revue francaise de science politique* 59 (2): 325–51.

———. 2016. "Toward the Systematic Study of Feminist Policy in Practice: An Essential First Step." *Journal of Women, Politics & Policy* 38 (July):1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/1554477X.2016.1198210.

McBride, Dorothy E., and Amy G. Mazur. 2013. "Women's Policy Agencies and State Feminism." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon, 1st ed., 654–78. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0026.

McGlynn, Clare. 2022. "Challenging Anti-Carceral Feminism: Criminalisation, Justice and Continuum Thinking." *Women's Studies International Forum* 93 (July):102614. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2022.102614.

Meagher, Sharon M., and Patrice DiQuinzio. 2005. *Women and Children First: Feminism, Rhetoric, and Public Policy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Mendoza, Breny. 2012. "Chapter 2. The Geopolitics of Political Science and Gender Studies in Latin America." In *Gender and Politics*, edited by Jane Bayes, 33–57. Verlag Barbara Budrich. https://doi.org/10.3224/86649104.

Menjívar, Cecilia, and Leydy Diossa-Jiménez. 2023. "Blocking the Law from Within: Familyism Ideologies as Obstacles to Legal Protections for Women in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua." *Latin American Research Review* 58 (3): 501–18. https://doi.org/10.1017/lar.2022.72.

Menjívar, Cecilia, and Shannon Walsh. 2016. "Subverting Justice: Socio-Legal Determinants of Impunity for Violence against Women in Guatemala." *Laws* 5 (3): 31. https://doi.org/10.3390/laws5030031.

———. 2017. "The Architecture of Feminicide: The State, Inequalities, and Everyday Gender Violence in Honduras." *Latin American Research Review* 52 (2): 221–40.

Mercado, Lucía. 2016. *50 Años. Cierre de Ingenios Azucareros. 1966-2016.* Buenos Aires: Ediciones Lucía Mercado.

Merry, Sally Engle, and Peggy Levitt. 2017. "The Vernacularization of Women's Human Rights." In *Human Rights Futures*, edited by Stephen Hopgood, Jack Snyder, and Leslie Vinjamuri, 1st ed., 213–36. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108147767.009.

Mesa-Lago, Carmelo. 1997. "Social Welfare Reform in the Context of Economic-Political Liberalization: Latin American Cases." *World Development* 25 (4): 497–517. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(96)00125-8.

———. 2007. "Social Security in Latin America: Pension and Health Care Reforms in the Last Quarter Century." Edited by Robert R. Kaufman, Joan M. Nelson, Oficina Internacional del Trabajo (OIT), World Bank, Gerard M. La Forgia, Indermit Gill, Truman Packard, Juan Yermo, Kurt Weyland, and Fabio M. Bertranou. *Latin American Research Review* 42 (2): 181–201.

MESECVI. 2017. "Third Hemispheric Report on the Implementation of the Belém Do Pará. Prevention of Violence against Women in the Americas: Paths to Follow." Washington, DC: Organization of the American States (OAS) Inter-American Commission of Women. Follow-up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI).

Meyer, Silke. 2018. "Women, Domestic Violence and Child Protection." In *Handbook on Gender and Social Policy*, edited by Sheila Shaver. London: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785367168.00025.

Migdal, Joel Samuel, Atul Kohli, and Vivienne Shue, eds. 1994. *State Power and Social Forces: Domination and Transformation in the Third World*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139174268.

Mignolo, Walter. 2005. *The Idea of Latin America*. Blackwell Manifestos. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publications.

Miller, Alice M. 2000. "Sexual but Not Reproductive: Exploring the Junction and Disjunction of Sexual and Reproductive Rights." *Health and Human Rights* 4 (2): 68–109. https://doi.org/10.2307/4065197.

Miller, Grant. 2010. "Contraception as Development? New Evidence from Family Planning in Colombia." *The Economic Journal* 120 (545): 709–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0297.2009.02306.x.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1991. "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics." *The American Political Science Review* 85 (1): 77–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/1962879.

Moghadam, Valentine M. 2022. "4. Institutional Changes and Women's Citizenship in the Maghreb: Toward a New Gender Regime?" In *Citizenship on the Edge*, edited by Nancy J. Hirschmann and Deborah A. Thomas, 97–130. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812298284-005.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1991. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indiana University Press.

———. 2018. "Sous Les Yeux de l'Occident : Recherches Féministes et Discours Coloniaux." In *Genre, Postcolonialisme et Diversité de Mouvements de Femmes*, edited by Christine Verschuur, 171–202. *Cahiers Genre et Développement*. Genève: Graduate Institute Publications.

Moloney, Anastasia. 2009. "Unsafe Abortions Common in Colombia despite Law Change." *The Lancet* 373 (9663): 534. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60185-9.

Molyneux, Maxine. 2000. "Twentieth-Century State Formations in Latin America." In *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, edited by Elizabeth. Dore and Maxine Molyneux. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. http://www.h-net.org/review/hrev-a0c7d9-aa.

———. 2008. "The 'Neoliberal Turn' and the New Social Policy in Latin America: How Neoliberal, How New?" *Development and Change* 39 (5): 775–97. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2008.00505.x.

———. 2011. "Justicia de Género, Ciudadanía y Diferencia en América Latina." *Studia Historica. Historia Contemporánea* 28: 181–211. Retrieved from https://revistas.usal.es/uno/index.php/0213-2087/article/view/8049.

Molyneux, Maxine, and Nikki Craske. 2002. "The Local, the Regional and the Global: Transforming the Politics of Rights." In *Gender and the Politics of Rights and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Nikki Craske and Maxine Molyneux, 1–31. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403914118_1.

Molyneux, Maxine, and Shahra Razavi, eds. 2002. *Gender Justice, Development, and Rights*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0199256454.001.0001.

Montambeault, Françoise, Dan Furukawa Marques, and Nora Nagels, eds. 2024. *L'Amérique latine en transformation. Mobilisation et citoyenneté.* Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal.

Montaño, Sofia. 2007. "El Sueño de Las Mujeres: Democracia En La Familia." In *Familias y Políticas Públicas En América Latina: Una Historia de Desencuentros*, edited by Irma Arriagada, 77–90. Santiago de Chile: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL).

Monte, María Eugenia. 2010. "Del Universo de 'Lo Político' a Lo Plural de 'L*s Politic*s': Distintos Aportes Teóricos En Torno a La Noción de Ciudadania Sexual." *Claroscuro: Revista Del Centro de Estudios Sobre Diversidad Cultural* 4 (9): 101–27.

Montoya, Angeline. 2019. "L'avortement en Argentine : le refus de l'autonomie des femmes." *Problemes d'Amerique latine* N° 114 (3): 13–32.

Morgan, Lynn M, and Elizabeth F.S. Roberts. 2009. "Rights and Reproduction in Latin America." *Anthropology News* 50 (3): 12–16. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1556-3502.2009.50312.x.

———. 2012. "Reproductive Governance in Latin America." *Anthropology & Medicine* 19 (2): 241–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2012.675046.

Morgan, Lynn M. 2015. "Reproductive Rights or Reproductive Justice? Lessons from Argentina." *Health and Human Rights Journal* 17 (1): 136–47.

Moser, Caroline O. N. 1989. "Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs." *World Development* 17 (11): 1799–1825. https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(89)90201-5.

Motta, Renata. 2021. "Feminist Solidarities and Coalitional Identity: The Popular Feminism of the Marcha Das Margaridas." *Latin American Perspectives* 48 (5): 25–41. https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X211017896.

Mottier, Véronique. 2013. "Reproductive Rights." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon, 0. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0008.

"Mujeres Autoconvocadas de Rosario (MAR) – enREDando." 2008. August 27, 2008. https://www.enredando.org.ar/2008/08/26/mujeres-autoconvocadas-de-rosario-mar/.

Mujeres por Mujeres. 2023. "Caso María Magdalena: 11 años de lucha y un juicio oral en ciernes." *Fundación Mujeres x Mujeres* (blog). April 24, 2023. https://mujeresxmujeres.org.ar/caso-maria-magdalena-11-anos-de-lucha-y-un-juicio-oral-en-ciernes/.

Muñoz, María Antonia. 2009. "Crisis Política y Conflicto Social En Argentina: Alcances y Límites de Un Tipo de Participación Política No Convencional." *European Review of*

Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revista Europea de Estudios Latinoamericanos y Del Caribe, no. 87, 63–92.

Mutari, Ellen. 2006. "A Feminist View of the State." In *Alternative Theories of the State*, edited by Steven Pressman, 139–63. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230372795_7.

Nagels, Nora. 2013. "Quand l'institutionnalisation du genre s'ethnicise. Le cas bolivien." *Lien social et Politiques*, no. 69 (June), 91–106.

———. 2016. "The Social Investment Perspective, Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes and the Welfare Mix: Peru and Bolivia." *Social Policy and Society* 15 (3): 479–93.

———. 2018. "Incomplete Universalization? Peruvian Social Policy Reform, Universalism, and Gendered Outcomes." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 25 (3): 410–31.

———. 2020. "Gender and Conditional Cash Transfers. Shifting the Citizenship Regime in Bolivia?" In *Legacies of the Left Turn in Latin America: The Promise of Inclusive Citizenship*, edited by Manuel Balán and Françoise Montambeault. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

———. 2021. "Gender, the World Bank, and Conditional Cash Transfers in Latin America." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 23 (5): 676–97.

Nari, Marcela. 2004. *Políticas de Maternidad y Maternalismo Político, Buenos Aires, 1890-1940*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos.

Nassif, Silvia G. 2018. "Terrorismo de Estado en la Argentina: Tucumán y la ofensiva contra los obreros de la agro-industria azucarera." *Revista Interdisciplinaria de Estudios Agrarios* 48 (1st semester of 2018): 51-91.

Natalucci, Ana, and Julieta Rey. 2018. "New Feminist Wave? Gender Agendas, Repertoires of Contention and Women's Collectives (Argentina, 2015-2018)." *Revista De Estudios Políticos Y Estratégicos* 6 (2): 14-34. https://revistas.utem.cl/index.php/EPE/article/view/43.

Navarra, Gabriela. 2003. "Usan Un Analgésico Para Producir Abortos." *La Nación*, May 19, 2003.

Nazif-Munoz, José Ignacio, and Rose Chabot. 2022. "Mapping and Assessing Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy Changes over Time in Colombia: Measuring Their Impact on Pregnancy Terminations." Humanities and Social Sciences Communications 9 (1): 1–13.

Neumann, P. 2022. "If It's Not Femicide, It's Still Murder": Contestations Over Femicide in Nicaragua. *Feminist Criminology* 17 (1): 139-159. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1177/15570851211037271.

North, Douglass C. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Brien, Cheryl, and Shannon Drysdale Walsh. 2020. "Women's Rights and Opposition: Explaining the Stunted Rise and Sudden Reversals of Progressive Violence Against Women Policies in Contentious Contexts." *Journal of Latin American Studies* 52 (1): 107–31.

O'Donnell, Guillermo. 1993a. "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries." *World Development* 21 (8): 1355–69.

———. 1993b. "On the State, Democratization and Some Conceptual Problems: A Latin American View with Glances at Some Postcommunist Countries." *World Development* 21 (8): 1355–69.

———. 1994. "Delegative Democracy." *Journal of Democracy* 5 (1): 55–69.

———. 1996. "Illusions about Consolidation." *Journal of Democracy* 7 (2): 34–51.

O'Donnell, Guillermo A., and Philippe C. Schmitter. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Latin American Program. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Okeke–Ihejirika, Philomina E., and Susan Franceschet. 2002a. "Democratization and State Feminism: Gender Politics in Africa and Latin America." *Development and Change* 33 (3): 439–66.

———. 2002b. "Democratization and State Feminism: Gender Politics in Africa and Latin America." *Development and Change* 33 (3): 439–66.

O'Malley, Pat, and Clifford Shearing. 1997. "Governmentality, Criticism, Politics." *Economy and Society* 26 (November): 501–17.

Ong, Aihwa. 2007. "Neoliberalism as a Mobile Technology." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 32 (1): 3–8.

Orloff, Ann Shola. 2008. "Should Feminists Aim for Gender Symmetry? Feminism and Gender Equality Projects for a Post-Maternalist Era." Paper presented at the annual conference of the International Sociological Association Research Committee on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy, RC 19, *The Future of Social Citizenship: Politics, Institutions and Outcomes*, Stockholm, Sweden, September 4-6, 2008.

———. 1993. "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States." *American Sociological Review* 58 (3): 303–28.

———. 1996. "Gender in the Welfare State." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22 (1): 51–78.

———. 2009. "Gendering the Comparative Analysis of Welfare States: An Unfinished Agenda." *Sociological Theory* 27 (3): 317–43.

Orloff, Ann Shola, and Bruno Palier. 2009. "The Power of Gender Perspectives: Feminist Influence on Policy Paradigms, Social Science, and Social Politics." Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society 16 (4): 405–12.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1986. "An Agenda for the Study of Institutions." *Public Choice* 48: 3–25. https://doi-org.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/10.1007/BF00239556.

Oxhorn, Philip D. 1995. "From Controlled Inclusion to Coerced Marginalization: The Struggle for Civil Society in Latin America." In *Civil Society: Theory, History, and Comparison*, edited by John Hall, 250–277. Cambridge: Polity Press.

———. 2001. "From Human Rights to Citizenship Rights? Recent Trends in the Study of Latin American Social Movements." Latin American Research Review 36 (3): 163–82.

———. 2007. "Civil Society Without a State? Transnational Civil Society and the Challenge of Democracy in a Globalizing World." World Futures 63 (5–6): 324–39.

———. 2012. "Understanding the Vagaries of Civil Society and Participation in Latin America." In Routledge Handbook of Latin American Politics. Routledge.

Oxhorn, Philip, Andrew D. Selee, and Joseph S. Tulchin. 2004. "Unraveling the Puzzle of Decentralization." In Decentralization, Democratic Governance, and Civil Society in Comparative Perspective: Africa, Asia, and Latin America, edited by Philip Oxhorn, Andrew D. Selee, and Joseph S. Tulchin. Woodrow Wilson Center Press.

Oyewumi, Oyeronke. 1997. *Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Pader, Ellen. 2014. "Seeing with an Ethnographic Sensibility: Explorations Beneath the Surface of Public Policies." In *Interpretation and Method*, 2nd ed. Routledge.

Pamplona, Roberta S. 2023. "Symbolic and Transformative: Alignments Toward Feminicidio Legal Reform inside the Brazilian Police." *Social Politics* 00 (0): 1–24.

Panizza, Francisco, and Romina Miorelli. 2013. "Taking Discourse Seriously: Discursive Institutionalism and Post-Structuralist Discourse Theory." *Political Studies* 61 (2): 301–18.

———. 2002b. "Democratization and State Feminism: Gender Politics in Africa and Latin America." *Development and Change* 33 (3): 439–66. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-7660.00262.

Parpart, Jane L., Shirin M. Rai, and Kathleen A. Staudt, eds. 2002. *Rethinking Empowerment: Gender and Development in a Global/Local World*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203220078.

Pateman, Carole. 1997. *The Sexual Contract*. 1 online resource vols. Sociology of Health and Illness Monographs. Cambridge: Polity.

Paterson, Stephanie, and Francesca Scala. 2015. "Making Gender Visible: Exploring Feminist Perspectives through the Case of Anti-Smoking Policy." In *Handbook of Critical Policy Studies*, edited by Frank Fischer, Douglas Torgerson, Anna Durnová, and Michael Orsini. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781783472352.00035.

Pautassi, Laura. 2000. "Igualdad de Derechos y Desigualdad de Oportunidades: Ciudadanía, Derechos Sociales y Género en América Latina." In *Las Fisuras del Patriarcado: Reflexiones sobre Feminismo y Derecho*, edited by Gioconda Herrera, 82. Quito: FLACSO-CONAMU.

———. 2007. *El cuidado como cuestión social desde un enfoque de derechos*. Serie Mujer y desarrollo 87. Santiago de Chile: Naciones Unidad, CEPAL, Unidad Mujer y Desarrollo.

Pautassi, Laura C., and Carla Zibecchi. 2010. *La provisión de cuidado y la superación de la pobreza infantil: programas de transferencias condicionadas en Argentina y el papel de las organizaciones sociales y comunitarias*. Serie políticas sociales 159. Santiago de Chile: CEPAL, División de Desarrollo Social.

Payne, Sarah, and Lesley Doyal. 2012. "Re-Visiting Gender Justice in Health and Healthcare." In *The Palgrave Handbook of Gender and Healthcare*, edited by Ellen Kuhlmann and Ellen Annandale, 21–35. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137295408_2.

Paz Toscani, Rosa de la, Paula Rosa, and Regina Vidosa. 2023. "'NI UNA MENOS' Practices, Aims and Achievements of a Grassroots Women's Movement against Femicide and Patriarchal Relations in Argentina." In *Unsettled Urban Space: Routines, Temporalities and Contestations*, edited by Tihomir Viderman, Sabine Knierbein, Elina Kränzle, Sybille Frank, Nikolai Roskamm, and Ed Wall. New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Pearce, Jenny. 2010. "Perverse State Formation and Securitized Democracy in Latin America." *Democratization* 17 (2): 286–306. https://doi.org/10.1080/13510341003588716.

Peck, Dennis L. 2003. "The Death Certificate: Civil Registration, Medical Certification, and Social Issues." In *Handbook of Death & Dying*, 899–908. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412914291.

Peck, Jamie. 2013. "Explaining (with) Neoliberalism." *Territory, Politics, Governance* 1 (2): 132–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2013.785365.

Peck, Jamie, Neil Brenner, and Nik Theodore. 2018. "Actually Existing Neoliberalism." In *The SAGE Handbook of Neoliberalism*, edited by Damien Cahill, Melinda Cooper, Martijn Konings, and David Primrose. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526416001.

Peck, Jamie, and Adam Tickell. 1994. "Jungle Law Breaks out: Neoliberalism and Global-Local Disorder." *Area* 26 (4): 317–26.

———. 2002. "Neoliberalizing Space." *Antipode* 34 (3): 380–404. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8330.00247.

Peñas Defago, María Angélica, and José Manuel Morán Faúndes. 2014. "Conservative Litigation against Sexual and Reproductive Health Policies in Argentina." *Reproductive Health Matters* 22 (44): 82–90.

Perreault, Thomas, and Patricia Martin. 2005. "Geographies of Neoliberalism in Latin America." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 37 (2): 191–201. https://doi.org/10.1068/a37394.

Peruzzotti, Enrique, and Catalina Smulovitz. 2002. "Held to Account: Experiences of Social Accountability in Latin America." *Journal of Human Development* 3 (2): 209–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649880220147310.

Peruzzotti, Enrique., and Catalina. Smulovitz. 2006. *Enforcing the rule of law : social accountability in the new Latin American democracies*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press. http://site.ebrary.com/id/10960581.

Petchesky, Rosalind Pollack. 1995. "From Population Control to Reproductive Rights: Feminist Fault Lines." *Reproductive Health Matters* 3 (6): 152–61.

Pieper Mooney, Jadwiga E. 2020. "'Taking the Nature Out of Mother': From Politics of Exclusion to Feminisms of Difference and Recognition of Rights." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 39–67. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21402-9_3.

Pierre, Jon. 2000. *Debating Governance: Authority, Steering, and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pierson, Paul. 1994. *Dismantling the Welfare State?: Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Retrenchment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 251–67.

———. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7sgkg.

Pingeot, Lou. 2018. "United Nations Peace Operations as International Practices: Revisiting the UN Mission's Armed Raids against Gangs in Haiti." *European Journal of International Security* 3 (03): 364–81. https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2018.4.

Piscopo, Jennifer M. 2014. "Female Leadership and Sexual Health Policy in Argentina." *Latin American Research Review* 49 (1): 104–27.

———. 2015. "States as Gender Equality Activists: The Evolution of Quota Laws in Latin America." *Latin American Politics and Society* 57 (3): 27–49.

Pitch, Tamar. 2014. "La violencia contra las mujeres y sus usos políticos." *Anales de la Cátedra Francisco Suárez* 48 (January):19–29. https://doi.org/10.30827/acfs.v48i0.2778.

Potter, Linda and Elizabeth Alcoff, ed. 1992. *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203760093.

Poulantzas, Nicos. 1972. "Les classes sociales." *L'homme et la société*, revue internationale de recherches et de synthèses sociologiques, no. 24-25 (avril-septembre): 23-55. https://doi.org/10.3406/homso.1972.1513.

Pouliot, Vincent. 2007. "'Subjectivism': Toward a Constructivist Methodology." *International Studies Quarterly* 51 (2): 359–84. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2007.00455.x.

Prieto-Carrón, Marina, Marilyn Thomson, and Mandy Macdonald. 2007. "No More Killings! Women Respond to Femicides in Central America." *Gender & Development* 15 (1): 25–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/13552070601178849.

Przeworski, Adam. 1997. "The State in a Market Economy." In *Transforming Post-Communist Political Economies*, edited by Joan Nelson, Charles Tilly, and Lee Walker, 411–31. Washington: National Academy Press.

Puar, Jasbir K. 2017. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Baltimore: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822371755.

Pucci, Roberto. 2007. *Historia de La Destrucción de Una Provincia. Tucumán 1966.* San Martín, Buenos Aires, Argentina: Imago Mundi.

Puri, Jyoti. 2014. "States' Sexualities: Theorizing Sexuality, Gender and Governance." In *The SAGE Handbook of Feminist Theory*, edited by Mary Evans, Clare Hemmings, Marsha Henry, Hazel Johnstone, Sumi Madhok, Ania Plomien, and Sadie Wearing. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473909502.

Radford, Jill, and Diana EH Russell. 1992. *Femicide: The Politics of Woman Killing*. London: Twayne Publishers.

Rai, Shirin, and Geraldine Lievesley, eds. 2013. *Women And The State: International Perspectives*. London: Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315041223.

Rai, Shirin M. 2018. "Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women." In *Mainstreaming Gender, Democratizing the State?*, edited by Shirin M. Rai. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Ramm, Alejandra. 2020. "Latin America: A Fertile Ground for Maternalism." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 13–37. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21402-9_2.

Ramm, Alejandra, and Jasmine Gideon, eds. 2020. *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21402-9.

Ramos, Hugo, and Mariano Vaschetto. 2022. "Capítulo 3. Los Orígenes Del Kirchnerismo En Santa Fe. Del Armado Político-Electoral a La «línea Propia» (2003-2005)." In *El Kirchnerismo En Las Provincias Argentinas: 2003–2015*, edited by Pamela Sosa, Victoria Ortiz de Rozas, Hernán Campos, Fernanda Maidana, Sebastián Mauro, Virginia Mellado, Cintia Rodrigo, and Penélope Vaca Ávila. Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento. https://repositorio.ungs.edu.ar/handle/UNGS/1073.

Rankin, L Pauline, Jill Vickers, and Anne-Marie Field. 2001. "Women's Movements and State Feminism: Integrating Diversity into Public Policy." Status of Women Canada. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=f5a3d9d2493a34f5bda daea8b91fce9f4fe63146.

Rauber, Isabel. 2002. "Mujeres piqueteras: el caso de Argentina." In *Économie mondialisée et identités de genre*, edited by Fenneke Reysoo, 107–23. Graduate Institute Publications. https://doi.org/10.4000/books.iheid.6176.

Razack, Sherene. 2002. *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*. Toronto: Between the Lines. Retrieved from https://coilink.org/20.500.12592/m6rskd on 13 December 2024.

Razavi, Shahra, and Silke Staab. 2018. "Rethinking Social Policy: A Gender Perspective from the Developing World." In *Handbook on Gender and Social Policy*, edited by Sheila Shaver. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785367168.00010.

Razavi, Shahrashoub. 2013. "Households, Families, and Social Reproduction." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon, 1st ed., 289–312. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0011.

Regueiro, Sabina Amantze. 2015. "'Subversivas': 'Malas madres' y familias 'desnaturalizadas.'" *Cadernos Pagu*, June, 423–52. https://doi.org/10.1590/1809-4449201500440423.

Reichertz, Jo. 2019. "Abduction: The Logic of Discovery of Grounded Theory – An Updated Review." In *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*. SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526485656.

Reis Brandão, Elaine, and Cristiane da Silva Cabral. 2019. "Sexual and Reproductive Rights under Attack: The Advance of Political and Moral Conservatism in Brazil." *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters* 27 (2): 76–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/26410397.2019.1669338.

Rhodes, R. A. W. 2018. "What Is Decentred Analysis?" In *Narrative Policy Analysis: Cases in Decentred Policy*, edited by R.A.W Rhodes, 1–21. Understanding Governance. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-76635-5_1.

Rich, Adrienne. 1986. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. Tenth anniversary edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Riggirozzi, Pia. 2020. "Social Policy, Inequalities and the Battle of Rights in Latin America." *Development and Change* 51 (2): 506–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12571.

Ríos, Marcela Lagarde Y. De Los. 2010. *Preface: Feminist Keys for Understanding Feminicide*. *Terrorizing Women*. Baltimore: Duke University Press. https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9780822392644-001/html.

Risley, Amy. 2019. "The Youngest Citizens: Children's Rights in Argentina." In *The Youngest Citizens*. London: Routledge.

Roberts, Dorothy. 2015. "Reproductive Justice, Not Just Rights." *Dissent* 62 (4): 79–82. https://doi.org/10.1353/dss.2015.0073.

Roberts, Kenneth M. 2006. "Populism, Political Conflict, and Grass-Roots Organization in Latin America." *Comparative Politics* 38 (2): 127–48. https://doi.org/10.2307/20433986.

———. 2009. "Beyond Neoliberalism: Popular Responses to Social Change in Latin America." In *Beyond Neoliberalism in Latin America?*, edited by John Burdick, Philip Oxhorn, and Kenneth M. Roberts, 1–13. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230618428_1.

Roberts, Kenneth M., and Steven Levitsky. 2011. *The Resurgence of the Latin American Left*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. https://doi.org/10.1353/book.1866.

Rodabough, Tillman. 2003. "The Evolution of the Legal Definition of Death." In *Handbook of Death & Dying*, 284–91. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412914291.

Rodigou, Maite, Carlos Javier López, Pamela Ceccoli, Ivana Puche, and Valeria Aimar. 2012. "Sentidos en disputa sobre la violencia hacia las mujeres en las políticas públicas. El caso de la normativa de la provincia de Córdoba, Argentina." *Revista Punto Género*, no. 2 (January), ág. 119-141. https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-0417.2012.28367.

Rodríguez Marquina, Paulino. 2012. *La Mortalidad Infantil En Tucumán*. Edited by Fernando Longhi. 1st ed. Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi.

Roffo, Julieta. 2021. "Se cumplen 20 años del asesinato de Natalia Melmann, el crimen que paralizó a la sociedad cuando todavía no decíamos 'femicidio.'" elDiarioAR.com. February 3, 2021. https://www.eldiarioar.com/sociedad/cumplen-20-anos-asesinato-natalia-melmann-crimen-paralizo-sociedad-todavia-no-deciamos-femicidio_1_7188587.html.

Roggeband, Conny. 2014. "Latin American Advocacy on Violence against Women and the OAS Convention." In *Gender Equality Norms in Regional Governance*, edited by Anna van der Vleuten, Anouka van Eerdewijk, and Conny Roggeband. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137301451.

———. 2016. "Ending Violence against Women in Latin America: Feminist Norm Setting in a Multilevel Context." *Politics & Gender* 12 (01): 143–67. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X15000604.

Rose, Nicolas. 2000. "Government and Control." *British Journal of Criminology* 40 (2): 321–39. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/40.2.321.

———. 2001. "Normality and Pathology in a Biological Age." *Outlines. Critical Practice Studies* 3 (1): 19–33. https://doi.org/10.7146/ocps.v3i1.5126.

Rose, Nikolas, and Peter Miller. 1992. "Political Power beyond the State: Problematics of Government." In *Foucault and Law*, 191–224. Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315094021-9/political-power-beyond-state-problematics-government-nikolas-rose-peter-miller.

Rosemblatt, Karin Alejandra. 2000. "Domesticating Men. State Building and Class Compromise in Popular-Front Chile." In *Hidden histories of gender and the state in Latin America*, edited by Maxine Molyneux and Elizabeth Dore. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Ross, Loretta J. 2017. "Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism." *Souls* 19 (3): 286–314.

Ross, Loretta J., Sarah L. Brownlee, Dázon Dixon Diallo, Luz Rodriguez, and Latina Roundtable. 2001. "The SisterSong Collective: Women of Color, Reproductive Health, and Human Rights." *American Journal of Health Studies* 17 (2): 79–88.

Ross, Loretta, and Rickie Solinger. 2017. "Reproductive Justice: An Introduction." In *Reproductive Justice: A New Vision for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Rickie Solinger, Khiara M. Bridges, Zakiya Luna, and Ruby Tapia. Oakland: University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520963207.

Rudolf, B., and A. Eriksson. 2007. "Women's Rights under International Human Rights Treaties: Issues of Rape, Domestic Slavery, Abortion, and Domestic Violence." *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 5 (3): 507–25. https://doi.org/10.1093/icon/mom022.

Ruibal, Alba. 2014. "Movement and Counter-Movement: A History of Abortion Law Reform and the Backlash in Colombia 2006–2014." *Reproductive Health Matters* 22 (44): 42–51. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(14)44803-1.

———. 2018a. "Federalism and Subnational Legal Mobilization: Feminist Litigation Strategies in Salta, Argentina." *Law & Society Review* 52 (4): 928–59. https://doi.org/10.1111/lasr.12370.

———. 2018b. "Federalism, Two-Level Games and the Politics of Abortion Rights Implementation in Subnational Argentina, Salta." *Reproductive Health Matters* 26 (54).

Rulli, Mariana, and Federico Centeno Lappas. 2006. "Procesos De Reforma Política: La Derogación De La Ley De Lemas En Santa Fe." *Temas Y Debates*, no. 12 (December): 151-80. https://doi.org/10.35305/tyd.v0i12.121.

Saccomano, Celeste. 2017. "El Feminicidio En América Latina: ¿vacío Legal o Déficit Del Estado de Derecho? / Feminicide in Latin America: Legal Vacuum or Deficit in the Rule of Law?" *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*, no. 117, 51–78.

Said, Edward W. 1978. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Saín, Marcelo, and Valeria Barbuto. 2002. "Las Fuerzas Armadas y Su Espacio En La Vida Democrática." *Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales*. https://cels.org.ar/common/documentos/informe_2002_dossier2.pdf.

Sainsbury, Diane. 1999a. "Gender and Social-Democratic Welfare States." *Gender and Welfare State Regimes*, 75–114.

———. 1999b. *Gender and Welfare State Regimes*. Oxford University Press. https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=j38AlSWiyyUC&oi=fnd&pg=PP12&dq=sainsbury+1994+welfare+states&ots=kpdfTsju4M&sig=vYFPjvJrqgwLfVNNjhpRGkUjXSM.

———. 2013. "Gender, Care, and Welfare." In *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics*, edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola, and S. Laurel Weldon, 1st ed., 313–36. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199751457.013.0012.

Salomon, Christine. 2021. "The influence of familialism and political inaction on gender-based violence in New Caledonia." *Cahiers du Genre* 70 (1): 75–106.

Sandoval, María F. López, Andrea Robertsdotter, and Myriam Paredes. 2017. "Space, Power, and Locality: The Contemporary Use of Territorio in Latin American Geography." *Journal of Latin American Geography* 16 (1): 43–67.

Santos, Sônia Beatriz dos. 2012. "Controlling Black Women's Reproductive Health Rights: An Impetus to Black Women's Collective Organizing." *Cultural Dynamics* 24 (1): 13–30. https://doi.org/10.1177/0921374012452809.

Saraceno, Chiara. 2016. "Varieties of Familialism: Comparing Four Southern European and East Asian Welfare Regimes." *Journal of European Social Policy* 26 (4): 314–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/0958928716657275.

Saraceno, Chiara, Jane Lewis, and Arnlaug Leira. 2012. "Families and Family Policies." In . https://www-elgaronline-com.proxy3.library.mcgill.ca/display/Research_Reviews/9781848447820/9781848447820.xml.

Schaffer, Frederic Charles, and Andreas Schedler. 2002. "What Is Vote Buying." In . International Conference, Center for International Studies, MIT, Cambridge: Citeseer.

https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=183ba20a9f6a97c4bb461379ee34bab7d089e7a3.

Schamis, Hector E. 2006. "A 'Left Turn' in Latin America? Populism, Socialism, and Democratic Institutions." *Journal of Democracy* 17 (4): 20–34. https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2006.0072.

Schild, Verónica. 2015. "Emancipation as Moral Regulation: Latin American Feminisms and Neoliberalism." *Hypatia* 30 (3): 547–63. https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12162.

Schmidt, Vivien A. 2017. "Theorizing Ideas and Discourse in Political Science: Intersubjectivity, Neo-Institutionalisms, and the Power of Ideas." *Critical Review* 29 (2): 248–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/08913811.2017.1366665.

Schuster, Gloria, and Mariana García Jurado. 2006. "Análisis Comparativo de La Legislación Nacional y Provincial En Materia de Salud Sexual y Reproductiva." In *La Política Pública de Salud y Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos En La Argentina: Aportes Para Comprender Su Historia*, edited by Mónica Petracci and Silvina Ramos. Buenos Aires: CEDES/UNFPA.

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. 2011. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203854907.

Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. 2006. "Still Supermadres? Gender and the Policy Priorities of Latin American Legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (3): 570–85.

Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale University Press. https://books.google.ca/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=wRcOEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR9&dq=Scott+the+weapon&ots=hbcWfP4YHi&sig=uGb--1yEmkGX1yUQ7mVqSRETyi4.

———. 2008. "Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed." In *Seeing Like a State*. Yale University Press. https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300128789.

Scott, Joan W. 1986. "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis." *The American Historical Review* 91 (5): 1053–75.

Secretaría de Derechos Humanos de la Nación, ed. 2010. "Anexo V. Listado de Centros Clandestinos de Detención y Otros Lugares de Reclusión Ilegal Del Terrorismo de Estado En La Argentina Entre 1974 y 1983." Secretaría de Derechos Humanos de la Nación. Registro unificado de víctimas del terrorismo de Estado.

Segato, Rita Laura. 2021. *Feminismos Debates Pendientes*. Colección Ensayos y Conferencias. Buenos Aires: Malba Literatura.

———. 2005. "Território, soberania e crimes de segundo Estado: a escritura nos corpos das mulheres de Ciudad Juarez." *Revista Estudos Feministas* 13 (2): 265–85. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-026X2005000200003.

———. 2010. "Territory, Sovereignty, and Crimes of the Second State: The Writing on the Body of Murdered Women." In *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Americas*. Books Gateway. Duke University Press. http://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/1432/chapter/169196/Territory-Sovereignty-and-Crimes-of-the-Second.

———. 2014. "Las nuevas formas de la guerra y el cuerpo de las mujeres." *Sociedade e Estado* 29 (2): 341–71. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69922014000200003.

Shaver, Sheila. 1990. "Gender, Social Policy Regimes and the Welfare State." *SPRC Discussion Paper; 26*. https://doi.org/10.26190/UNSWORKS/161.

———. 2018. "Introduction to the Handbook on Gender and Social Policy." In *Handbook on Gender and Social Policy*, edited by Sheila Shaver. Edward Elgar Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4337/9781785367168.00005.

Siim, Birte. 1990. "Women and the Welfare State: Between Public and Private Dependence." In *Gender and Caring. Work and Welfare in Britain and Scandinavia*, edited by Clare Ungerson, 80–109. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Sikkink, Kathryn. 1995. "Nongovernmental Organizations and Transnational Issue Networks in International Politics." *Proceedings of the ASIL Annual Meeting* 89:413–15. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272503700084834.

———. 1998. "8. Development Ideas in Latin America: Paradigm, Shift and the Economic Commission for Latin America." In *International Development and the Social Sciences*, edited by Frederick Cooper and Randall M. Packard, 228–56. University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520919440-011.

———. 2019. "The Emergence, Evolution, and Effectiveness of the Latin American Human Rights Network." In *Constructing Democracy*, by Elizabeth Jelin, edited by Elizabeth Jelin and Eric Hershberg, 1st ed., 59–84. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429039232-4.

Simmons, Erica S. 2016. *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316417645.

Simmons, Erica S., and Nicholas Rush Smith. 2017. "Comparison with an Ethnographic Sensibility." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50 (01): 126–30. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516002286.

———, eds. 2021. *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108966009.

Singer, Elyse Ona. 2022. "Lawful Sins: Abortion Rights and Reproductive Governance in Mexico." In *Lawful Sins*. Stanford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503631489.

Sistema Argentino de Información Jurídica. 2009. Ley de orden público, doctrina, jurisprudencia, Superior Tribunal de Justicia. Superior Court of Justice.

Skocpol, Theda. 1982. "Bringing the State Back in: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research." *Bringing the State Back In* 9. http://www.rochelleterman.com/ComparativeExam/sites/default/files/Bibliography%20and%20Summaries/Skopcol.pdf.

———. 1992. "State Formation and Social Policy in the United States: Social Policies In The United States Existing Theories And Their Shortcomings U.S. State Formation And Patterns Of Social Provision U.S. Institutions And Social Groups In Politics Continuing Ambivalence About The Role Of The State References." *The American Behavioral Scientist (1986-1994)* 35 (4/5): 559.

———. 1995. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674043725.

Skocpol, Theda, and Gretchen Ritter. 1991. "Gender and the Origins of Modern Social Policies in Britain and the United States." *Studies in American Political Development* 5 (1): 36–93. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0898588X0000016X.

Small, Mario Luis. 2009. "'How Many Cases Do I Need?': On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10 (1): 5–38. https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138108099586.

Smulovitz, Catalina. 2015. "Legal Inequality and Federalism: Domestic Violence Laws in the Argentine Provinces." *Latin American Politics and Society* 57 (3): 1–26.

Soedirgo, Jessica, and Aarie Glas. 2020. "Toward Active Reflexivity: Positionality and Practice in the Production of Knowledge." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53 (3): 527–31. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096519002233.

Soifer, Hillel David. 2015. "Chapter I: The Emergence of State-Building Projects." In *State Building in Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316257289.

Soledad Yañez, Sabrina. 2013. "Europa-Argentina: Reflexiones sobre algunos hitos del proceso de institucionalización de la maternidad." *Nómadas. Revista Crítica de Ciencias Sociales y Jurídicas* 37 (1): 287–303. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_NOMA.2013.v37.n1.42568.

Sondarjee, Maïka. 2020. *Perdre Le Sud: Décoloniser La Solidarité Internationale*. Écosociété.

Sosa, Pamela, Victoria Ortiz de Rozas, Hernán Campos, Fernanda Maidana, Sebastián Mauro, Virginia Mellado, Hugo Ramos, Cintia Rodrigo, Penélope Vaca Ávila, and Mariano Vaschetto. 2022. *El Kirchnerismo En Las Provincias Argentinas: 2003–2015*. Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento. https://repositorio.ungs.edu.ar/handle/UNGS/1073.

Soss, Joe. 2014. "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research." In *Interpretation and Method*, 2nd ed. Routledge.

Souza, Natália Maria Félix de. 2019. "When the Body Speaks (to) the Political: Feminist Activism in Latin America and the Quest for Alternative Democratic Futures." *Contexto Internacional* 41 (April):89–112. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-8529.2019410100005.

Souza, Natália Maria Félix de, and Lara Martim Rodrigues Selis. 2022. "Gender Violence and Feminist Resistance in Latin America." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 24 (1): 5–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2021.2019483.

Souza, Ruth de. 2013. "Who Is a 'good' Mother?: Moving beyond Individual Mothering to Examine How Mothers Are Produced Historically and Socially." *Australian Journal of Child and Family Health Nursing* 10 (2): 15–18. https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.659667211869786.

Staab, Silke. 2012. "Maternalism, Male-Breadwinner Bias, and Market Reform: Historical Legacies and Current Reforms in Chilean Social Policy." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 19 (3): 299–332. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxs010.

———. 2017. *Gender and the Politics of Gradual Change*. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-34156-9.

Staudt, Kathleen. 2009. "Violence and Activism at the Border: Gender, Fear, and Everyday Life in Ciudad Juarez." In *Violence and Activism at the Border*. University of Texas Press. https://doi.org/10.7560/716704.

———. 2018. "Gender Mainstreaming." In . https://www.manchesterhive.com/display/9781526137494/9781526137494.00011.xml.

Staudt, Kathleen A. 2010. "Globalization and Gender at Border Sites: Femicide and Domestic Violence in Ciudad Juárez." In *Gender and Global Restructuring*, 2nd ed. Routledge.

Steele, Cynthia, and Susana Chiarotti. 2004. "With Everything Exposed: Cruelty in Post-Abortion Care in Rosario, Argentina." *Reproductive Health Matters* 12 (sup24): 39–46. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(04)24021-6.

Stefanetti, Camila. 2019. "El ciclo de movilización #NiUnaMenos: La recreación del movimiento de mujeres en Argentina (2015-2019)." In , 36. Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires: Sociedad Argentina de Análisis Político y la Universidad Nacional de San Martín.

Sternbach, Nancy Saporta, Marysa Navarro-Aranguren, Patricia Chuchryk, and Sonia E. Alvarez. 1992. "Feminisms in Latin America: From Bogotá to San Bernardo." *Signs* 17 (2): 393–434.

Stoffel, Sophie. 2008. "Rethinking Political Representation: The Case of Institutionalised Feminist Organisations in Chile." *Representation* 44 (2): 141–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/00344890802079631.

Stratigaki, M. 2004. "The Cooptation of Gender Concepts in EU Policies: The Case of 'Reconciliation of Work and Family.'" *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 11 (1): 30–56. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxh025.

Strauss, Barney, and Anselm Glaser. 2017. *Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203793206.

Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina. 2012. F., A. L. s/ Medida autosatisfactiva, FA12000021 Jurídica, Sistema Argentino de Información. Corte Suprema de Justicia de la Nación.

Sutton, Barbara. 2007. "Poner El Cuerpo: Women's Embodiment and Political Resistance in Argentina." *Latin American Politics and Society* 49 (03): 129–62. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2007.tb00385.x.

———. 2010. "Bodies in Crisis: Culture, Violence, and Women's Resistance in Neoliberal Argentina." In *Bodies in Crisis*. Rutgers University Press. https://doi.org/10.36019/9780813555416.

———. 2020. "Intergenerational Encounters in the Struggle for Abortion Rights in Argentina." *Women's Studies International Forum* 82 (September):102392. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2020.102392.

———. 2021. "Reclaiming the Body: Abortion Rights Activism in Argentina." *Feminist Formations* 33 (2): 25–51. https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2021.0025.

Szwarc, Lucila. 2024. "Los Aportes de Las Luchas Por El Aborto Legal En Argentina: Para Un Enfoque Feminista de La Salud." *Critical Times* 7 (1): 26–45. https://doi.org/10.1215/26410478-11082945.

Tapia Tapia, Silvana. 2016. "Sumak Kawsay, Coloniality and the Criminalisation of Violence against Women in Ecuador." *Feminist Theory* 17 (2): 141–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700116645324.

———. 2022. *Feminism, Violence against Women, and Law Reform : Decolonial Lessons from Ecuador*. 1 online resource vols. Social Justice (Abingdon, England). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003098799.

Tapia Tapia, Silvana, and Kate Bedford. 2021. "Specialised (in)security: violence against women, criminal courts, and the gendered presence of the state in Ecuador." *Latin American Law Review*, no. 7 (August), 21–42. https://doi.org/10.29263/lar07.2021.02.

Tarducci, Mónica. 2017. "'Poner el cuerpo' en las calles: los enfrentamientos de las activistas feministas y los grupos anti-derechos." *Cadernos Pagu*, December, e175121. https://doi.org/10.1590/18094449201700510021.

———. 2018. "Escenas claves de la lucha por el derecho al aborto en Argentina." *Salud Colectiva* 14 (3): 425. https://doi.org/10.18294/sc.2018.2036.

Tella, Keertana Kannabiran. 2022. *Abortion Rights, Reproductive Justice and the State: International Perspectives*. Taylor & Francis.

Tesio, Eugenia María. 2013. *Sarmiento y la construcción del ser nacional. Ciudadanía, extranjeridad y representación en la Argentina del siglo XIX*. Buenos Aires: Teseo. https://www.teseopress.com/sarmientoylaconstrucciondelsernacional/.

"The Yogyakarta Principles." 2024. The Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. July 6, 2024. https://yogyakartaprinciples.org/.

Thelen, Kathleen. 1999. "Historical Institutionalism In Comparative Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1): 369–404. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.369.

Thomson, Jennifer. 2018. "Resisting Gendered Change: Feminist Institutionalism and Critical Actors." *International Political Science Review* 39 (2): 178–91.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 1850. *De la démocratie en Amérique*. Pagnerre.

Torrado, Susana. 1993. *Procreación En La Argentina: Hechos e Ideas*. CEM, Buenos Aires, AR. https://idl-bnc-idrc.dspacedirect.org/items/15707891-87f4-42ee-957b-a2f31f72db46.

Trentini, Florencia, and Alejandra Pérez. 2021. "Poner El Cuerpo Para Cuidar El Territorio. Mujeres Mapuche Frente al Extractivismo y La Conservación, En Neuquén, Argentina." *Ecología Política*, no. 61, 80–84.

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 2001. "The Anthropology of the State in the Age of Globalization: Close Encounters of the Deceptive Kind." *Current Anthropology* 42 (1): 125–38. https://doi.org/10.1086/318437.

Tuana, Nancy, and Rosemarie Tong, eds. 1995. "Liberal Feminist Perspectives." In *Feminism And Philosophy*. Routledge.

UNFPA. 1995. Programme of Action. International Conference on Population and Development. Fund, United Nations Population.

Urosevich, Florencia. 2020. "La negación de la maternidad de las detenidas-desaparecidas embarazadas (Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada, 1976-1983)." *Clepsidra. Revista Interdisciplinaria De Estudios Sobre Memoria* 7 (14): 64–81.

Vacarezza, Nayla Luz. 2021. "The Green Scarf for Abortion Rights: Affective Contagion and Artistic Reinventions of Movement Symbols." In *Affect, Gender and Sexuality in Latin America*, edited by Cecilia Macón, Mariela Solana, and Nayla Luz Vacarezza, 63–86. Gender, Development and Social Change. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-59369-8_4.

Vacarezza, Nayla Luz, and Julia Burton. 2023. "Transformar los sentidos y el sentir. El activismo cultural de las redes de acompañantes de abortos en América Latina." *Debate Feminista* 66 (April):1–30. https://doi.org/10.22201/cieg.2594066xe.2023.66.2409.

Vaggione, Juan Marco, and José Manuel Morán Faúndes, eds. 2017. *Laicidad and Religious Diversity in Latin America*. Vol. 6. Boundaries of Religious Freedom: Regulating Religion in Diverse Societies. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-44745-2.

Vallejos, Soledad. 2022. "Procesaron a José Alperovich por abuso sexual | En la causa que investiga la denuncia de su sobrina." *Página/12*, May 5, 2022, sec. Sociedad. https://www.pagina12.com.ar/419424-procesaron-a-jose-alperovich-por-abuso-sexual.

van der Klein, Marian, Rebecca Jo Plant, Nichole Sanders, and Lori R. Weintrob, eds. 2012. *Maternalism Reconsidered: Motherhood, Welfare and Social Policy in the Twentieth Century*. New York: Berghahn Books.

Vargas, Virginia. 1992. "The Feminist Movement in Latin America: Between Hope and Disenchantment." *Development and Change* 23 (3): 195–214. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.1992.tb00462.x.

———. 2002. "The Struggle by Latin American Feminisms for Rights and Autonomy." In *Gender and the Politics of Rights and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by Nikki Craske and Maxine Molyneux, 199–221. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403914118_9.

Vargas, Virginia, and Daptnhe Cuevas. 2020. "A Veinticinco Años de La IV Conferencia Mundial Sobre La Mujer En Beijing." Cotidiano Mujer. Montevideo: Articulación Feminista Marcosur.

Vargas, Virginia, and Saskia Wieringa. 2019. "The Triangle of Empowerment:" In *Women's Movements and Public Policy in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean*, by Geertje A. Nijeholt and Saskia Wieringa, edited by Geertje Lycklama À Nijeholt, Vargas Virginia, and Saskia Wieringa, 1st ed., 3–24. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315051369-1.

Vaughan, Mary Kay. 2000. "Modernizing Patriarchy. State Policies, Rural Households, and Women in Mexico, 1930–1940." In *Hidden histories of gender and the state in Latin America*, edited by Maxine Molyneux and Elizabeth Dore. e-Duke books scholarly collection. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Venticinque, Valeria. 2015. "Críticas Y Reformulaciones En Torno Al Concepto De Ciudadanía. El Caso De Las Políticas Sanitarias En El Municipio De Rosario" 7:11.

———. 2020. "Las políticas públicas sanitarias desde la perspectiva de género." *Nueva época*, no. 17.

Venugopal, Rajesh. 2015. "Neoliberalism as Concept." *Economy and Society* 44 (2): 165–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2015.1013356.

Vetten, Lisa. 2014. "Deserving and Undeserving Women: A Case Study of South African Policy and Legislation Addressing Domestic Violence," June. http://hdl.handle.net10539/14807.

Vickers, Jill. 2012. "Is Federalism Gendered? Incorporating Gender into Studies of Federalism." *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* 43 (1): 1–23.

Vickers, Jill, Joan Grace, and Cheryl N. Collier. 2020. *Handbook on Gender, Diversity and Federalism*. [N.p.]: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://proxy.library.mcgill.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=2508919&scope=site.

Vignoli, Marcela, María Fernanda Fernández, Cristina Garat, and Gladys González. 2022. *Mujeres y Feminismos. Historias de Luchas En Tucumán (1966-2021)*. Colección Puntos de fuga. Historia de las mujeres y estudios de género. San Miguel de Tucumán: Grupo Editor Universitario.

Walby, Sylvia. 2004. "The European Union and Gender Equality: Emergent Varieties of Gender Regime." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 11 (1): 4–29. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxh024.

———. 1989. "Theorising Patriarchy." *Sociology* 23 (2): 213–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038589023002004.

———. 1994. "Is Citizenship Gendered?" *Sociology* 28 (2): 379–95. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038594028002002.

Walsh, Shannon Drysdale, and Cecilia Menjívar. 2016. "Impunity and Multisided Violence in the Lives of Latin American Women: El Salvador in Comparative Perspective." *Current Sociology* 64 (4): 586–602. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011392116640474.

Waylen, Georgina. 2014. "Informal Institutions, Institutional Change, and Gender Equality." *Political Research Quarterly* 67 (1): 212–23.

Weber, Max. 2019. *Economy and Society: A New Translation*. Harvard University Press. https://books.google.ca/books?hl=fr&lr=&id=YoyIDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Max+Weber+Economy+and+Society+1922&ots=tvKaafISQc&sig=2DH15dfYM15rT49xEv8kAUoVraU.

Wedeen, Lisa. 2007. "The Politics of Deliberation: *Qāt* Chews as Public Spheres in Yemen." *Public Culture* 19 (1): 59–84. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-2006-025.

Weissman, Deborah M. 2010. "Global Economics and Their Progenies: Theorizing Femicide in Context." In *Terrorizing Women: Feminicide in the Americas*, edited by Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano, 0. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822392644-014.

West, Candace, and Don H. Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender & Society* 1 (2): 125–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243287001002002.

Weyland, Kurt. 2004. "Neoliberalism and Democracy in Latin America: A Mixed Record." *Latin American Politics and Society* 46 (1): 135–57. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2004.tb00268.x.

Weyland, Kurt, Raúl L. Madrid, and Wendy Hunter. 2010. *Leftist Governments in Latin America: Successes and Shortcomings*. Cambridge University Press.

Widding, Ulrika. 2011. "Problematic Parents and the Community Parent Education: Representations of Social Class, Ethnicity, and Gender." *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 23 (February):19–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/08952833.2011.548701.

Wildavsky, Aaron. 1980. *The Art and Craft of Policy Analysis*. Springer.

Williamson, John. 2009. "A Short History of the Washington Consensus Preface." *Law and Business Review of the Americas* 15 (1): 7–26.

Wittig, Monique. 1980. "La Pensée Straight." *Questions Féministes*, no. 7, 45–53.

Wobbe, Theresa. 2003. "From Protecting to Promoting: Evolving EU Sex Equality Norms in an Organisational Field." *European Law Journal* 9 (1): 88–108. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0386.00171.

World Health Organization. 2012. "Unsafe Abortion Incidence and Mortality. Global and Regional Levels in 2008 and Trends during 1990–2008." https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/WHO-RHR-12.01.

Wright, Melissa W. 2011. "Necropolitics, Narcopolitics, and Femicide: Gendered Violence on the Mexico-U.S. Border." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 36 (3): 707–31. https://doi.org/10.1086/657496.

Wuest, Judith. 1995. "Feminist Grounded Theory: An Exploration of the Congruency and Tensions between Two Traditions in Knowledge Discovery." *Qualitative Health Research* 5 (1): 125–37. https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239500500109.

Yanow, Dvora. 2003. "Accessing local knowledge." In *Deliberative policy analysis: understanding governance in the network society*, edited by Maarten A. Hajer and H.

Wagenaar. Theories of institutional design. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Yates, Julian S., and Karen Bakker. 2014. "Debating the 'Post-Neoliberal Turn' in Latin America." *Progress in Human Geography* 38 (1): 62–90.

Young, Iris Marion. 2003. "The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 29 (1): 1–25.

———. 2011. *Justice and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400839902.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. 1997. "Women, Citizenship and Difference." *Feminist Review* 57 (1): 4–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/014177897339632.

———. 1999. "The 'Multi-Layered Citizen.'" *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 1 (1): 119–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/146167499360068.

Zárate, María Soledad. 2020. "To Not Die in Childbirth: Maternal Health and State Policy, 1930–1980." In *Motherhood, Social Policies and Women's Activism in Latin America*, edited by Alejandra Ramm and Jasmine Gideon, 97–121. Cham: Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21402-9_5.

Zarco, Abril. 2011. "Maternalismo, identidad colectiva y participación política: las Madres de Plaza de Mayo." *Revista Punto Género*, no. 1 (October), 229–47. https://doi.org/10.5354/0719-0417.2011.16883.

Zwingel, Susanne. 2013. "Translating International Women's Rights Norms: CEDAW in Context." In *Feminist Strategies in International Governance*, edited by Gülay Caglar and Elisabeth Prügl, 0 ed. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203094969.

Appendices

Table 2: Summary of the integration of a feminist research ethic, as per Ackerly and True (2018)

Moment of the research process	Building block of feminist research ethic	Presence of the building block in the research (Yes/No)	Implementation in the research
Defining the research questions and goals	Research "for" women, not "on" women—Commitment for gender equality.	Yes	The research objectives, methods, analysis, and writing were geared towards producing scientific knowledge and evidence that reflect a commitment for gender equality.
	Skeptical scrutiny of research questions, disciplines, and methods.	Yes	I adapted the research question, theoretical approach, and methodology throughout the research process, based on the research participants' insights unveiled through relational interviewing (Fujii 2013).
	Adopts an ethic of inclusionary inquiry by being attentive to social epistemologies through a consideration of all potential sources of knowledge.	Partial	I integrated a variety of actors involved in the policy process—from state actors to informal and autonomous feminist groups and networks.
	Interrogation of power inequalities during data collection.	Yes	I actively used reflexivity to examinate and mitigate unequal power relations throughout the research process.

Fieldwork	Conceptualizing fieldwork research as connected to knowledge production and social struggles outside scholarship.	Yes	I practiced critical and reflexive thinking about the political impacts of my research in a way that informed data collection, analysis, and writing.
	Participation of participants in the interpretation/analysis of the results.	Minimal	Due to time constraints, I discussed some components of data interpretation and writing with some participants, when possible.
Theory-building	Analytical tools allow exposing gender hierarchies as well as women's agency.	Yes (with limitations)	Both gender hierarchies and women's agency are exposed in the dissertation. However, most participants are cis women; trans women and non-binary persons' perspectives are not fully represented.
	Availability of results to the participants.	To be done	I am planning on organizing a discussion session with research participants interested in learning about the conclusions of the dissertation.

I am planning on translating the dissertation to Spanish, send a digital version to all participants once completed. I will also print some physical copies for specific organizations who requested it. |
| Availability and Communication of Findings | Findings are broadly accessible. | To be done | The dissertation will be publicly available online and I will also distribute it broadly in my networks. |

APPENDIX II: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, March 22, 2020.

Interview with coordinator of the Directorate of Sexual and Reproductive Health of the Province of Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

Interview with CTA Union worker. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

Interview with Director of CLADEM. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

Interview with ex-Minister of Health of the Province of Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, November 2, 2020.

Interview with ex-President of Consejo Nacional de la Mujer (CNM). Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, February 25, 2020.

Interview with ex-undersecretary for Gender of the Province of Santa Fe (2015-2019). Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, January 18, 2020.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2020.

Interview with member of Abogados por la vida Association (Lawyers for Life). Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, October 3, 2020.

Interview with member of a feminist and human rights NGO. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2020.

Interview with member of a feminist and human rights NGO. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2020.

Interview with member of Asociación Abogados por la Vida (Lawyers for Life Association). Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, February 15, 2020.

Interview with Provincial Deputy, Equality and Participation Bloc. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, February 26, 2020.

Interview with member of CLADEM. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 14, 2020.

Interview with member of Foro Feminista. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in La Plata, February 3, 2020.

Interview with member of NGO working on violence against women. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, January 22, 2020.

Interview with member of Mujeres X Mujeres. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, September 3, 2020.

Interview with member of Mumalá. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, December 3, 2020.

Interview with Member of the Board of the Pharmaceutical Industrial Laboratory, State Corporation (LIF). Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, February 20, 2020.

Interview with members of Andhes. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2020.

Interview with members of the Red Nacional de Contención de las Mujeres (National Network for Supporting Women). Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, April 2, 2020.

Interview with politician, ex-public servant, member of the National Campaign. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, February 14, 2020.

Interview with Provincial Director for Child Health, Sexual and Reproductive Health. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, February 16, 2020.

Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, July 2, 2020.

Interview with psychologist, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, July 2, 2020.

Interview with researcher at CEDES. Interview by Rose Chabot. Phone, March 13, 2020.

Interview with Secretary for Women of the Ministry of Social Development. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 2, 2020.

Interview with Secretary for Women of the Ministry of Social Development. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 2, 2020.

Interview with Secretary of State for Equality and Gender of the Province of Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, February 26, 2020.

Interview with social worker member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Greater La Plata, February 4, 2020.

Interview with social worker, Subsecretary for Gender Policies of the Province of Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, July 2, 2020.

Interview with worker a at the Secretary for Women. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 13, 2020.

Interview with worker at the Secretary of Health of the Municipality of La Plata, PROFAVI Program. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in La Plata, February 4, 2020.

Interview with worker b at the Secretary for Women. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, March 2, 2020.

Interview with worker of the Women's Observatory. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, October 3, 2020.

Interview with a gynecologist member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, February 13, 2021.

Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, March 30, 2021.

Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 15, 2021.

Interview with activist from Socorristas en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, June 30, 2021.

Interview with Directing member of the Provincial Society of General Medicine of Tucumán. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, July 5, 2021.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, May 15, 2021.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, May 19, 2021.

Interview with member of Agrupación Familiares Atravesados por el Femicidio Federal (Federal Group of Families Affected by Femicide). Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 15, 2021.

Interview with member of Agrupación Familiares Atravesados por el Femicidio Federal (Federal Group of Families Affected by Femicide). Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 20, 2021.

Interview with a feminist activist Ni Una Menos, from the Workers' Plenary. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 25, 2022.

Interview with a gynecologist member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 31, 2022.

Interview with a journalist from Ni Una Menos. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, Santa Fe, May 20, 2022.

Interview with a journalist from Ni Una Menos. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 25, 2022.

Interview with a journalist from Ni Una Menos. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, Santa Fe, May 26, 2022.

Interview with a lawyer from the Women's Multisectorial of Santa Fe, Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In-Person, May 20, 2022.

Interview with a psychologist member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, May 27, 2022.

Interview with a psychologist member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, November 5, 2022.

Interview with activist from Socorrista en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 5, 2022.

Interview with activist from the National Emergency Campaign against Gender-based Violence. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, December 15, 2022.

Interview with Assistant Provincial Senator. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, March 15, 2022.

Interview with social worker member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, December 5, 2021.

Interview with worker of the Provincial Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, March 5, 2021.

Interview with member of Asociación Civil Generar. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 29, 2021.

Interview with a psychologist from the Domestic Violence Office, Judiciary of the Province of Tucumán. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2021.

Interview with researcher at UNL. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 30, 2021.

Interview with Commissions' Director of the Provincial Senate. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, March 15, 2022.

Interview with Coordinator of Health Secretary, Sexual and Reproductive Health Program. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, Lomas de Zamora, April 25, 2022.

Interview with Director of National Sexual and Reproductive Health Direction. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 26, 2022

Interview with Director of the Ministry of Women, Gender Policies, and Sexual Diversity, Undersecretariat for Policies Against Gender-Based Violence, Provincial Directorate of High-Risk Situations and Critical Cases. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, May 17, 2022.

Interview with Director of the National Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, April 4, 2022.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Lomas de Zamora, April 19, 2022.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 27, 2022.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, June 15, 2022.

Interview with family and generalist doctor member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, June 16, 2022.

Interview with Family Judge at a Family Court. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, March 19, 2022.

Interview with founder of Socorristas en Red. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 19, 2022.

Interview with gynecologist member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Rosario, December 5, 2022.

Interview with ILE/IVE healthcare team, members of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in La Plata, April 27, 2022.

Interview with lawyer at a Private Family Law Advisory Office. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, March 16, 2022.

Interview with lawyer at the Family Court, Victim Information and Support Unit. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, March 19, 2022.

Interview with popular feminist activist of a Women's Association in La Matanza. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, La Matanza, August 4, 2022.

Interview with member of Casa de la Mujer Norma Nassif. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 13, 2022.

Interview with member of the National Campaign, Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, March 23, 2022.

Interview with member of the National Campaign, Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, April 5, 2022.

Interview with member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Miguel de Tucumán, June 3, 2022.

Interview with member of the Women's Multisectoral of Santa Fe. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Santa Fe, May 20, 2022.

Interview with piquetera political activist in the FOL/Marabunta. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Isidro, April 28, 2022.

Interview with President of an NGO member of the National Campaign, Buenos Aires. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, April 19, 2022.

Interview with Prosecutor from the Specialized Prosecutor's Unit for Gender Violence. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Isidro, May 4, 2022.

Interview with a journalist from Ni Una Menos. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, August 23, 2023.

Interview with a local feminist journalist, online. Interview by Rose Chabot, August 31, 2023.

Interview with Coordinator of Plan ENIA. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, November 4, 2023.

Interview with Prosecutor from the Specialized Prosecutor's Unit for Violence Against Women. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, March 29, 2022.

Interview with researcher at UBA. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, February 24, 2022.

Interview with researcher at UBA. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, March 31, 2022.

Interview with researcher at UNSAM. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, April 30, 2022.

Interview with social worker and psychologist at the Office for Assistance to Women Victims of Violence, Secretariat for Women, Gender, and Diversity of Lomas de Zamora. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, Lomas de Zamora, March 5, 2022.

Interview with social worker, María de Los Ángeles Foundation. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, San Miguel de Tucumán, January 6, 2022.

Interview with social worker member of the RPSDD. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in San Isidro, April 20, 2022.

Interview with the Coordinator of the Women Lawyers' Unit for Gender Violence, Legal Advisor, National Ministry of Justice. Interview by Rose Chabot. In person, in Buenos Aires, August 4, 2022.

Interviews with members of Casa Rosa Chazarreta. Interview by Rose Chabot. Online, May 28, 2022.

Figure 12: Interview distribution by province and issue area

Figure 13: Interview distribution by participant type and province
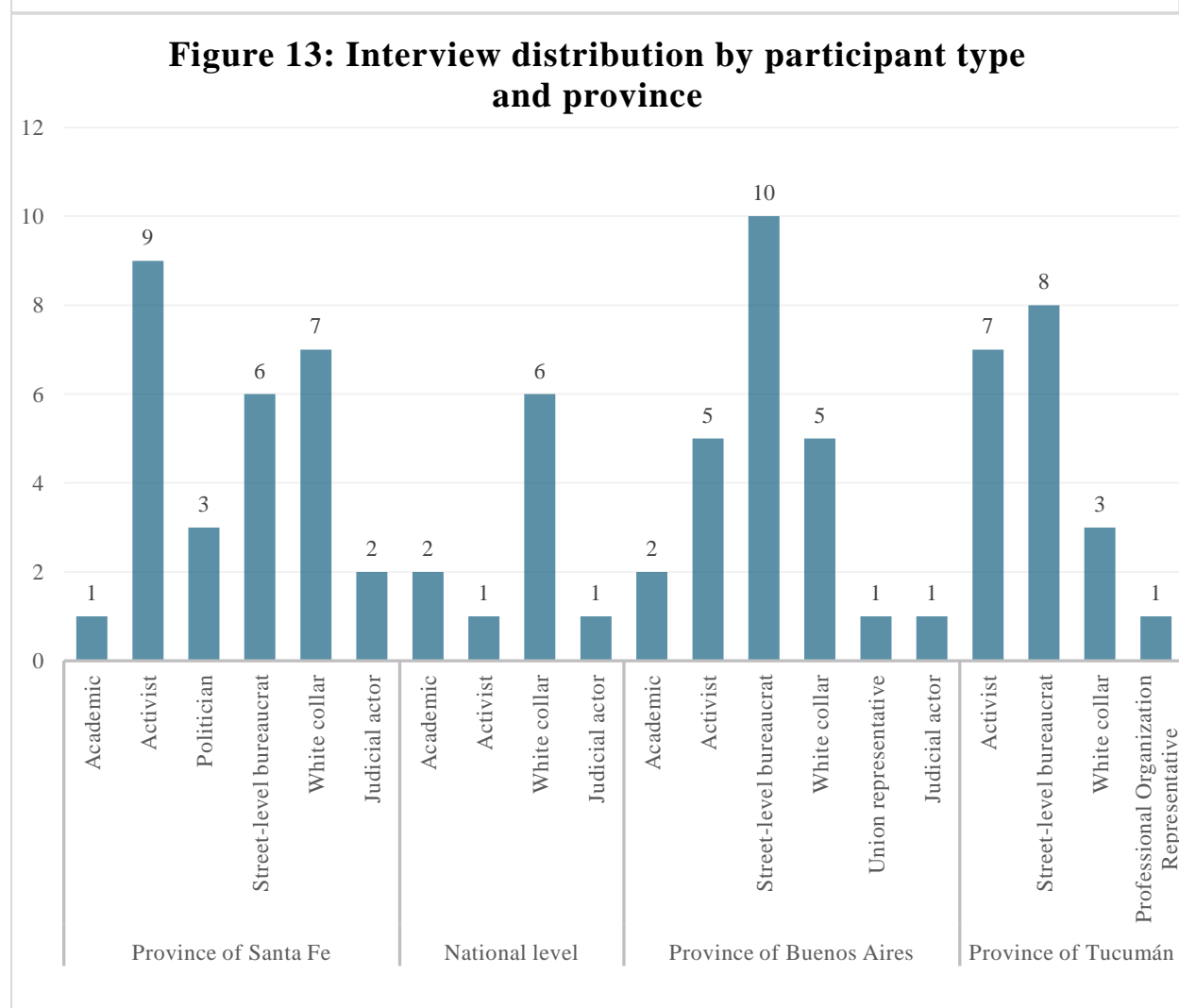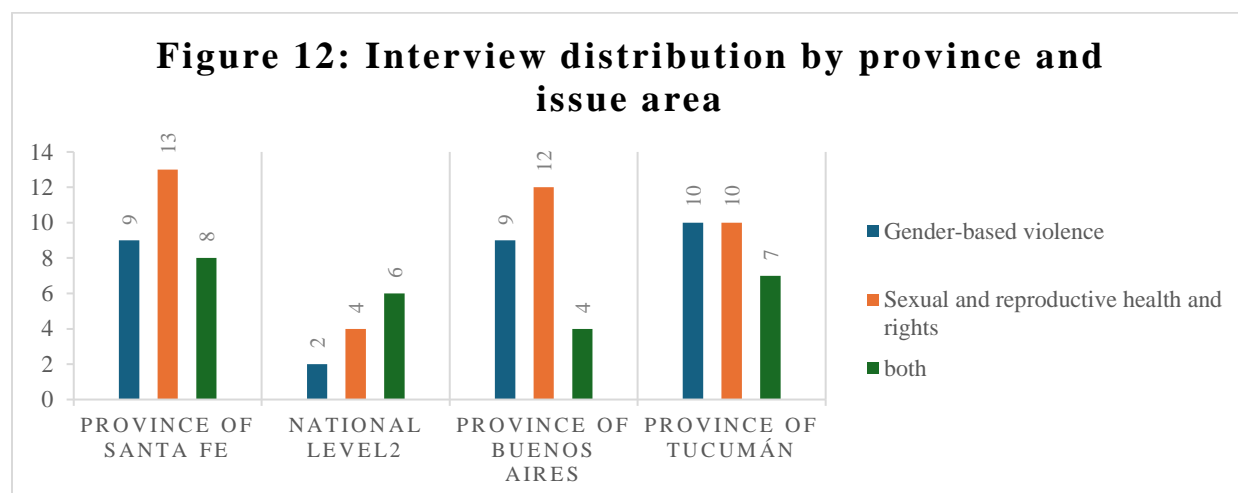
Interview questionnaire for civil society organization (translated from Spanish)

1. **Introduction**
   - Could you describe your personal and professional trajectory, as well as your current position within the organization?

2. **Gender-Based Violence**
   - How does your organization perceive federal policies regarding gender-based violence, and more specifically, how does it perceive the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women?
   - What role did your organization play in the formulation and adoption of national policies for addressing gender-based violence, and particularly the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women?
   - How does your organization perceive the implementation of the Law in Argentine provinces? According to you, what are the major achievements and challenges in terms of provincial implementation of the Law?
   - How does your organization perceive the implementation of the Law in Argentine municipalities?

3. **Sexual and Reproductive Rights**
   - How does your organization perceive federal policies regarding the sexual and reproductive health of women, and more specifically, how does it perceive the National Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation (2003)?
   - What role did your organization play in the formulation and adoption of national policies on sexual and reproductive health of women, and particularly the National Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation?
   - How does your organization perceive the implementation of the Program in Argentine provinces? According to you, what are the major achievements and challenges in terms of provincial implementation of the Program?
   - How does your organization perceive the implementation of the Program in your province?
   - The topic of sexual and reproductive health of women can be a sensitive issue in society. Do you perceive (or have you perceived in the past) the presence of conflicts between your organization and some social or political sectors? What types of conflicts?
   - In your opinion, how significant or influential are the groups opposing public policies on the sexual and reproductive health of women, compared to organizations that support them?

4. **Relationships**
   - Does your organization have any relationships with the executive branches (ministries) of the nation, provinces, and municipalities? What types of relationships? How so?
   - Does your organization have any relationships with the legislative branch at the national, provincial, and municipal levels? How so?
   - Does your organization have any relationships with political parties at the national, provincial, and municipal levels? What types of relationships? How so?
   - Does your organization have any relationships with other civil society organizations? What types of relationships? How so?
   - [Gender-based violence/reproductive rights] can be a sensitive issue in society. Do you perceive (or have you perceived in the past) the presence of conflicts between your

organization and some social or political sectors? What types of conflicts? How do you deal with them?

- In your opinion, how significant or influential are the groups opposing public policies addressing gender-based violence, compared to organizations that support them?

4. **Achievements and Challenges**
- According to you, what are the major achievements of your organization in implementing its actions and programs?
- According to you, what are the major challenges your organization faces in implementing its actions and programs?
- Does your organization produce studies on the progress and outcomes of its programs in society? If so, how do you measure progress? Could you share these quantitative and/or qualitative data?

Interview questionnaire for public servants (translated from Spanish)

1. **Introduction**
- Could you describe your personal and professional trajectory with [reproductive rights/gender-based violence], as well as your current position within the organization?

2. **Gender-Based Violence**
- How does your organization perceive federal policies related to addressing gender-based violence, and more specifically, how does it perceive the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women?
- The Comprehensive Protection Law for Women is a national government law, but it also involves significant participation from provincial and municipal governments. Could you explain the role of each level of government in the implementation of the program, and specifically the role of the government of the province of Santa Fe and the various municipal governments in the province?
- What role does your organization play in the implementation of the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women? How does your organization interact with the provincial ministries involved in the implementation? How does your organization interact with the Governor's office of the province? How does your organization interact with the National Institute of Women in Buenos Aires?
- Does your organization have any relationships with non-governmental organizations, churches, or private companies regarding the implementation of the law in your province? What is your relationship with them? What types of agreements, contracts, or collaborations do you have with them?
- Gender-based violence can be a sensitive issue in society. Have you, in your work, noticed the presence of opposing organizations or sectors? How is this opposition characterized?
- In your opinion, how significant is the opposition to policies like the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women, which defends women's rights, compared to organizations or sectors that support it?
- According to you, what are the major challenges your organization faces in implementing the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women? What are the major challenges in ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services in your province?

- According to you, what are the major achievements of your organization in relation to the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women and gender-based violence in general? Are there visible results?
- How does your organization measure the implementation of the Comprehensive Protection Law for Women and other services related to gender-based violence? What quantitative and qualitative data does your organization produce to measure the progress of policy implementation? Do you know how to access this data?

3. **Sexual and Reproductive Rights**
   - How does your organization perceive national public policies related to the sexual and reproductive health of women, such as the National Program for Sexual Health and Responsible Procreation (2002)?
   - The program is a national public policy, but it also involves significant participation from provincial and municipal governments. Could you explain the role of each level of government in the implementation of the program, and specifically the role of the government of the province of Santa Fe and the various municipal governments in the province?
   - Considering that the public health system is decentralized at the provincial level in Argentina, how does your organization interact with the provincial Ministry of Health? How does it interact with the executive branch, that is, the Governor's office of the province and the other provincial ministries?
   - How does your organization, as part of the National Women's Institute, connect the national government with the provincial government?
   - The program involves the participation of non-governmental organizations in its implementation. Does your organization have relationships with social organizations, churches, or private companies? What is your relationship with them? What types of agreements, contracts, or collaborations do you have with them?
   - From your perspective as an employee of the secretariat, how would you characterize the participation of social organizations in the implementation of the program?
   - The topic of sexual and reproductive health of women can be a sensitive issue in society. Have you, in your work, noticed the presence of opposing organizations or sectors? How is this opposition characterized?
   - In your opinion, how significant is the opposition to policies that implement women's rights, compared to organizations or sectors that support it?
   - According to you, what are the major challenges your organization faces in implementing the program? What are the major challenges in ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services in your province?
   - According to you, what are the major achievements of your organization in relation to sexual and reproductive rights of women in general? Are there visible results?
   - How does your organization measure the implementation of the program and other services related to the sexual and reproductive health of women? What quantitative and qualitative data does your organization produce to measure the progress of policy implementation? Do you know how to access this data?

4. **Relationships**
   - Does your organization have any relationships with the executive branches (ministries) of the nation, provinces, and municipalities? What types of relationships? How so?

- Does your organization have any relationships with the legislative branch at the national, provincial, and municipal levels? How so?
- Does your organization have any relationships with political parties at the national, provincial, and municipal levels? What types of relationships? How so?
- Does your organization have any relationships with other civil society organizations? What types of relationships? How so?
- Gender-based violence can be a sensitive issue in society. Do you perceive (or have you perceived in the past) the presence of conflicts between your organization and some social or political sectors? What types of conflicts? How do you deal with them?
- In your opinion, how significant or influential are the groups opposing public policies addressing gender-based violence, compared to organizations that support them?

5. Achievements and Challenges
- According to you, what are the major achievements of your organization in implementing its actions and programs?
- According to you, what are the major challenges your organization faces in implementing its actions and programs?
- Does your organization produce studies on the progress and outcomes of its programs in society? If so, how do you measure progress? Could you share these quantitative and/or qualitative data?

Renewed in 2020, 2021, and 2022

McGill

Research Ethics Board Office   Tel: (514) 398-6831
James Administration Bldg.   Fax: (514) 398-4644
845 Sherbrooke Street West. Rm 325   Website:
www.mcgill.ca/research/research/compliance/human/ Montreal, QC H3A 0G4

Research Ethics Board 1
Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 19-11-017

Project Title: Unequal Gender Policy-Making in Latin America

Principal Investigator:
Rose Chabot **Status:**
Ph.D. Student
Department: Political
Science
Faculty Supervisor: Prof. Manuel Balan

Approval Period: <u>December 3, 2019 to December 2, 2020</u>

The REB-1 reviewed and approved this project by delegated review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.

Deanna Collin
Senior Ethics Review Administrator

---

* Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described.
* Modifications to the approved research must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
* A Request for Renewal form must be submitted before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval. Submit 2-3 weeks ahead of the expiry date.
* When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
* Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
* The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
* The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this study.
* The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.