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in Urban Studies [4CITIES]
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Emancipating female-headed households
from the domestic sphere.

Learnings and challenges from collaborative
housing experiences in Madrid and Barcelona.



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Abstract

In the face of the global housing crisis, female-headed households are among the most affected collectives. In order to address their housing needs, providing solutions in line with the ethics of care is of greatest importance. In this context, Europe has seen the reemergence of collaborative forms of housing. By prioritizing reproduction over production, collaborative housing entails groundbreaking socio-spatial dynamics aimed to encourage mutual support among residents. However, it remains a gap in knowledge between the reemergence of these housing forms in Spain and its potential in emancipating female-headed households from the domestic sphere. This research seeks to learn about this issue through the exploration of the collaborative housing experiences 'Las Carolinas' in Madrid and 'La Borda' in Barcelona. Inquiry is focused on how these case studies could meet the socio-spatial needs of women heads of households and their families. Although the results have shown that collaborative housing has a great potential in improving the everyday life of female-headed households, there are challenges to face, so the socio-spatial housing needs of this collective are fully responded to. In shedding new light on the little-recognized impact that housing environments have in emancipating women from the domestic sphere, this work attempts to better enable public authorities and actors involved in the production of housing to better provide and promote housing initiatives in line with the ethics of care.

Keywords: collaborative housing, housing innovation, female-headed households, female emancipation.

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Introduction

Research background

Why a feminist perspective?

Marjorie De Vault (1996:31) defines feminism as a movement and a “*set of beliefs, that problematize gender inequality*”. Despite the existence of many feminisms with different focuses and purposes, feminists are joined by accountability to a movement conceived as a contested and transformative discourse.

As a researcher, I am concern about the injustices women suffer in their society which are ultimately rooted in the existing structures of power built upon gender disparities. I consider academia as a starting point to reveal and transform these structures. I understand knowledge production as capable of picturing the present but also envisioning a more equal and just future for women.

Feminist knowledge production emerges from feminist critique. Feminist researchers consider gender relations as a fundamental aspect of social systems and hence, of knowledge production. Existing scientific knowledge has been broadly universalized to the image of men founded on the abstract principles of rationality and objectivity. Women's experiences have been hidden and their concerns have been silenced in most of knowledge production (Tim Cresswell, 2013). Donna Haraway (1985:65) emphasizes that the exploration of the female experience as a source of knowledge was central for feminist research, “*a fiction and fact of the most crucial, political kind*”. The so valued female experience is then, a collective construction.

Feminist inquiry reclaims the experiences of women as a valid source of knowledge. From this starting point, the purpose of knowledge production is not simply to research about women but to research for women, so their conditions in society are transformed (Mary Margaret Cook & Judith A. Fonow, 1986). In this regard, Joke Schrijvers (1995) states that despite feminist theory would not be possible without a gender perspective, the application of gender theory does not necessarily imply a feminist approach. Although the nonexistence of a singular gender or feminist urban theory, both areas of study build theory regarding their genuine concern about how prevailing structures impact the lives of women.

Despite women are the principal category of analysis and gender inequality is the focus of research, feminist studies also unveil systems that oppress other segregated groups when unrevealing power structures that sustain gender inequality (Sherilyn MacGregor, 2019). In this sense, this research is meant to shed light on the potential that collaborative housing may have in improving the everyday experiences of women head of households but also, of other groups whose lived realities are ignored by dominant structures.

Why collaborative housing?

Housing is much more than a roof, but an essential element for any family and a key factor for a just society (Mar Joanpere Foraster & Teresa Morià Folch, 2018). However, the provision of housing has been left to the markets, whose neoliberal character has transformed housing from a right into a commodity (Suzanne Speak, 2013). In this context, real estate has become an important factor in inequalities in access to housing, affecting women more (Jordi Bosch Meda, 2017).

In Spain, real estate has become one of the main players in the economic crisis of 2008. The enormous impact that the crisis has had on the financial, labor and housing markets has increased the pressure on many families to meet their household expenses (Eduard Cabré & Arnau Andrés, 2018).

In this context, not only Spain but also Europe has witnessed the reemergence of collaborative housing models after 40 years of relative decline (David Mullins & Tom Moore, 2018). The reappearance of collaborative forms of housing has been driven in part by unaffordability and the pursuit of more sustainable ways of living from a both social and environmental perspective (Darinka Czischke, 2019).

Although collaborative housing is presented in practice only as a micro-laboratory for new urban models (Mullins & Moore, 2018), it opens up new possibilities for learning lessons about how to overcome social challenges from the domestic sphere (Lidewij Tummerts; 2016). Scholars (Helen Jarvis, 2011; Hatice Kalfaoglu Hatipoglu, 2017) argue that this reconceptualization of housing underpins the need for new and radical approaches to urban planning and policy that promote sustainable responses to the dynamics of the market economy.

Why female-headed households?

In the context of this research, female-headed households are understood as a household arrangement in which a woman without a partner takes care of her dependent children (Manuela Áviles Hernández, 2013). This definition includes both single mothers and separated or divorced mothers. In recent decades, research on female-headed households has become

increasingly important in knowledge production, as this social group has been recognized as an indicator of gendered social rights and patterns of discrimination (Melissa Gilbert, 2000).

The increasing number of female-headed households became known in the 1980s as a sociological phenomenon related to the women's emancipation movement of the time. In 2020, 10%¹ of Spanish households were single-parents, and most of them were headed by women. Scholars have pointed to the increasing economic vulnerability of this group (John Andersen & Jørgen Elm Larsen, 1998) and their growing share of the inadequately housed population (Helen V. Graber & Jayner L. Wolfe, 2004). Statistics show that in 2018, 50%² of Spanish female-headed households were at risk of poverty or social exclusion and that in 2019, 61%³ of these households suffered from a high financial burden due to housing costs.

Empirical evidence (Susana Jimenez et al., 2004) shows that the main challenges for women heading households are primarily job insecurity and secondarily housing instability. They also find it difficult to balance productive and reproductive activities, especially those related to childcare. Women rely primarily on informal support, which they usually receive from family members (Beatriz Morgado, 2003).

Although a political analysis exceeds the scope of this research, it is important to mention that scholars stress the urgent need to develop family policies that address the specific needs of this type of household (Manuela Áviles Hernández, 2013). In this sense, the inadequacy of family policies is attributed to the Spanish family culture (Luis Ayuso Sánchez & Milagrosa Bascón Jiménez, 2021), in which the family is very present as a provider of social services, especially care services. In this sense, the authors explain that the great challenge facing the Spanish family in the coming years is caregiving.

From a gender perspective, the inadequacy of family policies focused on care makes it difficult for female heads of households to access equal work opportunities, as their participation in the labor market is hindered by overload in productive and reproductive work (Luis Flaquer & Elisabet Almenda, 2005). In this regard, this research seeks to provide insights into how community housing could contribute to the reconciliation of the reproductive and productive spheres by placing care at the center of daily life.

¹ National Institute of Statistics. 2020. Continuous Household Survey. Retrieved from <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.htm?path=/t20/p274/serie/prov/p02/I0/&file=02022.px&L=0>

² National Institute of Statistics. 2018. Risk of poverty and/or social exclusion rate by household type and period. Retrieved from <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=11203>

³ Eurostat. 2019. Financial burden of the total cost of housing. Retrieved from https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_mdcd04&lang=en

Problem statement & Research question

(The ideal condition) Care is a moral imperative. Urban practices support the emancipation of women by tackling the polarized spatial structures founded on the segregation of the public and private spheres. Collaborative housing challenges this segregation because it places care in the center and prioritizes reproduction over production. Moreover, collaborative housing improves the everyday life of female-headed households because it entails groundbreaking socio-spatial dynamics that meet the specific needs of this group in relation to domestic sphere.

(The real condition) However, there remains a gap in knowledge between the reemergence of collaborative housing in Spain and its potential in emancipating the rising number of households headed by women.

(The consequences) Without the action of urban practitioners in the housing field in the relation to the complex difficulties of female-headed households, the difficulties and inequalities that they face may be worsened.

It is important to inquire about the learnings and challenges that the collaborative housing reappearance entails when meeting the real socio-spatial needs of women who head households. To this end, the reappearance of collaborative housing environments in Spain could be used strategically to better understand how the everyday experiences of female-headed households could be improved from the domestic sphere. This can better enable public authorities and actors involved in the production of housing to back housing initiatives that encourage the emancipation of women from the domestic sphere. Therefore, this research intends to address the problem by examining the link between the housing needs of female-headed households and the reemergence of collaborative housing in Spain, specifically in Barcelona and Madrid.

I aim to answer the following question: How might the reemergence of collaborative housing in Barcelona and Madrid contribute to the emancipation of female-headed households from the domestic sphere? The secondary questions are 1) What are the socio-spatial needs of female-headed households in Barcelona and Madrid? 2) How do the collaborative housing experiences under research meet these needs? 3) What are the challenges that collaborative housing must overcome to address female-headed households?

Structure

This thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter 'Literature review' explains the theoretical framework that supports this research. From the urban to the housing scale, this first section develops how existing socio-spatial structures are embedded in gender roles expectations by making care invisible and secluding women to the private sphere. The potential that collaborative forms of housing have in improving the everyday experiences of women from the dwelling is also discussed here.

The second 'Methodology' chapter is focused on the methodological approach adopted for this work. Starting with the standpoint of the researcher, this part presents a detailed research design, the collaborative housing experiences selected as case studies as well as the data analysis and the data collection methods employed throughout the investigation.

The results from the processes of data collection and data analysis are introduced in the third chapter 'Findings'. While the first part of this section explores the socio-spatial housing needs of women who participated in the research, the second part elaborates on the characteristics of the collaborative projects under research.

In the framework of the literature review, the final chapter 'Discussion & Conclusion' sets a dialogue between the socio-spatial needs of participants and the socio-spatial characteristics of Las Carolinas and La Borda. This exchange enables the researcher to answer the research question by learning about the opportunities and challenges that collaborative housing projects entail to emancipate female-headed households from the domestic sphere.

Literature review

Feminist urban critique

The feminist critique of urbanism and planning from the 1970s demonstrated that cities have been built without considering the diverse experience of everyday life, particularly the experience of women (Yasminah Beebeejaun, 2017; John Friedmann, 2020). Scholars have built a feminist urban critique by strongly questioning the prevailing functionalist and supposedly progressive urban models of the last century. For this reason, understanding the functionalist urban paradigm is considered essential in the framework of this work.

The functionalist perspective emerged as a response to the industrial city crisis which has been described by Flora Tristan in her work 'Promenades in London' published in 1840. The author exposes the infamous urban inequalities of the nineteenth century by describing with absolute harshness the everyday realities in London. Flora Tristan pictures the greasy waters running in the streets and unbearable smells in the atmosphere, adults, and children lying in the mud and crowded in the doorless and windowless hovels that functioned as their homes (Zaida Muxí, 2018).

Inhuman living conditions were solid grounds to bring hygienist and rational solutions to the urban problem. Science and technique should solve the problems that emerged in the relationship of human beings with the world and with each other. In this context, the Modern Movement in architecture promoted the urban planning document called the Athens Charter which was published in 1933 and set the guidelines for the new urban paradigm that has deeply impacted the contemporary city. According to these guidelines and in line with rationalist perspectives, the urban is not considered as a situated process but as an object that can be reproduced unrestrictedly (Françoise Choay, 2009).

In the same vein, human needs were not contextualized. The urban principles of the Modern Movement were founded on a universal model of a man and his four basic needs: dwelling, work, recreation, and transport. In doing so and until our times, the male experience has been mainstreamed when analyzing and building the urban. While men are the rule, women are considered incomplete or different (Anne Philips, 1993). This homogeneous vision about cities and people has a great impact on the everyday experiences of other identities that are not comprehended under the definition of this universal man (Carole Pateman, 1966). From this perspective, not just gender inequalities are being perpetuated but also class and race inequalities (Muxí, 2011).

Additionally, the Modern Movement understood the four basic needs of the universal man as separate functions spread in the territory. This was translated into zoning, a rigorous method that segregates large monofunctional areas connected by an extensive transport network that mainly relies on the private car. The spatial order of the modern city responds to a new level of efficiency that must be understood in consonance with production. The city must be industrious, a working tool. Modern urban planning had to fulfill this instrumental function (Choay, 2009).

Zoning caused that a great part of the population and activities moved to these monofunctional areas mainly located in the new suburbs while the decay of inner cities increased. The combination of monofunctional areas, sectorial public policies, and speculative market dynamics resulted in the concentration of population according to their income which ultimately led to urban marginalization. Similarly, Henri Lefebvre (1969) claims that spatial segregation reflects the incapacity to build integrated societies causing the deterioration of urban life. The author makes visible the negative impact that capitalism and particularly neoliberalism have in the cities by turning the urban into a commodity at the exclusive service of capital accumulation.

Feminist rejects the functionalist understanding of urban planning. In contrast, feminist scholars working on the urban matter advocate for mixed uses and proximity which in turn generates diverse and lively urban environments. To this end, the existence of everyday infrastructure at the neighborhood scale is essential. The notion of 'everyday infrastructure' was introduced in the 1970s to describe the social and economic infrastructure that enables everyday life by facilitating care activities that are mainly performed by women (Liisa Horelli, 2009). In this respect, Inés Sanchez de Maradiaga (2002) emphasizes that urbanism from a gender perspective involves a close connection with the notions of social sustainability. An urban environment capable of meeting the everyday needs of women inexorably responds to the needs of many other identities. Feminist and gender studies have opened a critical line on how to think and make the city as well as how the urban impacts different identities. By definition, feminist urbanism is inclusive.

Space is not neutral, nor equal

Rather than reflecting on power structures, space was assumed by traditional spatial sciences as an abstract dimension. From the 1980s space has been considered a category of relations and interpretations temporally and simultaneously constructed by social subjects. The construction of space is always a struggle for power (Lefebvre, 1969). In the same vein, Jane Darke (1998) states that every settlement is the reflection of existing social relationships of the society that has built it.

Thus, urban space is not neutral, nor equal. Urban replicates the patriarchal power structures that rule our everyday. The dominant thinking that shapes the urban is based on a spatial model that has assigned gender roles according to sex differences (Isabela Velázquez, 2006). In other words, women are relegated to certain spaces in accordance with the imposed gender roles.

Linda Mc Dowell (2000) explains that space is determined by rules that set physical and social boundaries. The polarization of space has been imposed by establishing both physical and social boundaries that differentiate the public from the private spheres. While the public sphere of the urban is the area of general interest and rationality, the private sphere of the home is the particular interest, emotions, and care. These domains are respectively attributed to men and women.

Tovi Fenster (2010) argues that when irrupting the public space, women are implicitly claiming the right to urban life, or the right to the city⁴ (Lefebvre, 1969). Fenster (2010) continuously explaining that breaching the right to the city of women at the public level has consequences at the private level. Hence, the fulfillment of the right to the city demands to meet the needs of women both in the public and the private spheres. But understanding the space in terms of power relations is particularly significant when analyzing the spaces of the dwelling. (Peter Kellett & Graham Tipple in Vestbro et al., 2005:201)

Work segregation

The home used to be the space where production, consumption, and reproduction were integrated conforming to the household (Muxí, 2018). In this respect, María del Rosario Marcos (2002) suggests that capitalism altered not only the production of goods but also the reproduction of society when productive and reproductive spheres were segregated and placed in the factory and the home respectively.

While women used to work in their domestic environment, industrialization separated and differentiated the spaces to dwell from the spaces to work. This separation transferred female paid work to the factories which disabled working women to perform both paid and unpaid in the domestic sphere. To further challenging the conciliation of paid and unpaid work, factories not only had rigid working schedules but also were located away from the place of residence (Julio Iglesias de Ussel, 2004). Despite women continued working at home, work performed in

⁴ "[...] the right to the city is like a cry and a demand [...] [and] [...] cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (Lefebvre 1969:158).

the domestic sphere would not be defined properly as work. Work has been equated to employment since industrialization times (Raquel Royo, 2011).

Cristina Carrasco (2006) states that although industrialization moved a great part of the production from the home to the factory, an important portion of activities that support life continued to take place at home. These activities that sustain life are defined as 'reproductive work'. Activities related to reproduction are traditionally assigned to women and largely underestimated because their result disappears through the development of the activity. In contrast, productive work enjoys social value and has been assigned to men.

By assigning productive work to men and reproductive work to women, the sexual division of work is reached. Laura Nuño (2010) also relates the sexual division of work with patriarchy. The supposed biological characteristics that supported the sexual division of work were the result of a profitable mechanism caused by socialization. The author claims that what is the result of education and tradition that patriarchy itself sustains, is wrongly attributed to ontology.

The functional segregation that emerged from the modern urban model reflects and reinforces the sexual division of work according to which productive and reproductive tasks are spatially segregated.

María Duran (2000) and Zaida Muxí (2018) states that with the sexual division of work embedded in the household, men are responsible for the productive tasks that are situated in the public sphere and belong to the city while women are in charge of the reproductive activities which are framed in the private sphere and belong to the periphery. However, the importance of reproductive work is a fundamental element for urban life to occur (Manuel Castells, 1997).

Care as the most radical liberation movement

Amaia Pérez Orozco and Cristina Carrasco (2006, 2014) underline that the universal image of man to which the urban environment is suited corresponds to the productive male pattern. This pattern is that of the white, bourgeois, adult, and the heterosexual man who believes himself to be completely independent. It means that the urban denies the interdependencies that all human beings have by nature. Instead, autonomy is placed at the center when analyzing and building cities.

In the 1980s, Carol Gilligan (2014) introduced the concept of care as attached to human strength and wellbeing. In consonance, the feminist debate assumed in its narrative the transition from domestic work to care work as associated with affective dimensions (Borderías, Carrasco y Torns, 2011). Care is not feminine but a feminist ethic, the author explains that *"feminism, guided by an ethic of care, is arguably the most radical, in the sense of going to the*

roots, liberation movement in human history" (Gilligan, 2014:13). Besides, care is embedded in gender relationships. In our patriarchal and neoliberal societies care has mainly rested on the back of women (Carrasco, 2011).

Care is defined by material or immaterial, both are essential to life. Care comprehends feeding, cleaning, and other biological needs as well as affections, relationship buildings, psychological and physical security. All people at all life stages need care. Although the need for care is more intense at certain stages, life is always sustained by care.

However, care is often invisible to both the formal economy and mainstream public policy. Carrasco (2001) explains that societies are constituted as a kind of iceberg. To sustain the frictions between independent people in the peak and thus make productive capitalist systems feasible, a subsystem of care is required. This subsystem consists of underground economies and markets as well as information services that allow meeting social needs that are not addressed in the public and formal sphere. In Spain, the economic value of this subsystem of care is estimated to be between 40% and even above 100% of the national gross domestic product (Sánchez de Maradiaga, 2009).

From an economic approach (Orozco, 2014), feminists argue that the privileged position that the monetary economy has in the system must be a shift to focus on life. Placing life in the center of the economy not only means integrating production and reproduction but to make visible care and wellbeing and hence, build more equal cities by including the needs of all identities. In this sense, the caring city paradigm is born as a transversal principle to be applied to the decisions over the production of the urban space to ensure that cities place the sustainability of life at the center. It means to produce cities capable of taking care of their inhabitants and enable people to take care of others and themselves (Blanca Valdivia, 2018).

The home

In denying the mutual dependence of the private and public spheres, care is hidden in the domestic sphere. Feminist criticism does not reject that the domestic domain is private but argues that both private and public worlds are interrelated (Pateman, 1996). The private-public duality is operational. It has served to establish hierarchies and make invisible the care activities that are not desired in the public scene (Garcés, 2003).

The management of care is usually delegated only to the private spheres, either in specific institutions or in households. From the neoliberal narrative, housing became a social space that hides in its interior vulnerability and dependency (Garcés, 2003). In this regard, Carrasco (2012) suggests that the resolution of certain structural problems is relegated to the domestic sphere whose main spatial manifestation is the home.

Housing is the place of everyday life where social structures and values are built. The home is “the setting though which basic forms of social relations and social institutions are reproduced and constituted” (Kellett & Tipple in Vestbro et al., 2005:202) Gender roles are ongoing social constructions like family and home. Ideas about gender and family determine the physical design and the construction of space. At the same time, the physical environment involves expectations about the activities that should be done in a particular space and how these activities are related. These expectations usually differ for men and women. Therefore, the built environment reproduces identities by supporting and reinforcing ideas around gender and family (Karen Franck, 1985). In this sense, looking at the household is highly significant because families continue to constitute a fundamental element in the organization of social life that needs to be explored (Seisdedos & Cano, 2012).

In the modern urban model, the dwelling is considered as part of the mass production command that universalizes lifestyles. The response to the urgent housing need that emerged from the industrial city was standardized and remains until today. Housing needs have been refixed, homogenized, and understood as inherited from the bourgeois home (Signorelli, 1999). The bourgeois house typology was consolidated in the nineteenth century when the nuclear family structure was formalized. The dwelling is then reduced to the minimum but maintaining divisions and spatial hierarchies according to gender expectations. As a result, massive housing provision has been an instrument of social engineering more than a consequence of existing lifestyles throughout the twentieth century (Atxu Amann, 2005).

Over history, housing was deeply affected by different discourses around gender. The efficient minimum modern kitchens allowed the rationalization of work so working women would have time to perform wage work in factories and care work in their homes (Muxi, 2018). The American postwar housing in the suburbs fueled the mystique of femininity by considering women the angel of the home. Large kitchens were full of mass-produced appliances that tried to convince women their personal development in the consumer society had to be exclusively through domestic work (Dolores Hayden, 1985).

Amann (2009) states that even in contemporary society, women and men have been socialized to relate with the home in a remarkably different manner. The home is not only a physical space delimited by its walls but a moral territory that symbolizes the dominant ideology. The house, an anonymous form of shelter, is related to men as their public symbol of power while the home, a social environment, is related to women as their private realm of care.

In the same vein, Weisman (1992:126) stresses that women's fight against patriarchal injustice commands the deconstruction of the traditional household which "*hides the housewife's isolation, the battered woman's pain, and the welfare mother's shame*". Similarly, Hayden (1985) points out that cities have been designed for homebound women constraining them physically, socially, and economically.

Household transformation

Amann (2005) claims that in opposition to standardized typologies of housing for a specific model of household produced in the past, lifestyles are becoming heterogeneous. As society is rapidly changing, more diverse ways of living are increasingly drifting further apart from the nuclear family. It means that while society changes, dwellings are being built with the same criteria of rationality and mass production as it was done decades ago. Thus, there is a great need for innovative housing solutions (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2009).

This discrepancy between housing provision and social reality is also reflected in the urban environment. Constanza Tobío (1995) claims that despite social changes, people are living in outdated urban forms. In segregating the public from the private sphere, urban modernism has built cities based on the nuclear household image in which the salaried work is attributed to men and domestic work to women. But the massive entrance of women into the labor market has challenged the sexual division of work. This transformation of assigned gender roles has questioned the social and spatial organization, at the housing and urban scale. Contemporary cities have poorly responded to the challenges posed by these transformations (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2009).

Meil Landwerlin (1999) refers to the "postmodern family" to describe the change in the gender roles of the nuclear household. The author explains that society has been through a slow but constant dedifferentiation process of domestic work. More than a change of gender roles, this dedifferentiation is related to an increment in the share of household chores. Although gender patterns have become blurred, Ana Irene Del Valle Loroño (1998) claims that part of the society still believes that care work must fall exclusively on women. Even among the social imaginary of the youngest, domesticity is still linked to the female role.

It seems to be a social resistance to break what Inés Alberdi (1999) calls 'the traditional social contract' in which the division of work is based on sex. According to this contract, childcare and homecare are assigned exclusivity to women. After marriage women used to be naturally assumed to be responsible for the domestic sphere while in compensation, men were responsible for the economic livelihood, the family authority, and the social representation of the household. When looking at the Spanish household, the author explains that traces of the

traditional social contract endure in everyday home life. Although this contract is ideologically obsolete, social behavior inertia remains beyond the failure of values and ideals. Work specialization according to gender is more a rule than an exception.

The distribution of housework between men and women is becoming more equal but imbalances remain (Victor Perez Díaz, 2000). Couples frequently share childcare and homecare, but male involvement in household chores is usually more an attitude than a real behavior (Meil, 1999). Social and feminist theories have shown that the temporal dimension is not gender-neutral. There are gender differences in conceiving and using the time that is determinant in reproducing inequalities (Fernando Lousada, 2007). This is evidenced by the results of the of Spanish Working Conditions Survey conducted in 2015⁵.

The survey yielded that when considering paid and unpaid work, women work on average 12% more hours per week than men. When looking at single-parent households, the results show that women who head households work 22% more hours than men who head households⁶. Although this data is 7 years old, the results of the Quality of Life Survey⁷ conducted in 2019 in Spain do not indicate that the gender gap in Spain regarding paid and unpaid work has changed significantly⁸. It means that statistics demonstrate that work overburden is greater in women than in men. Women struggle much more when conciliating employment and family spheres.

5 National Institute of Statistics. 2015. CalIndicator of paid and unpaid hours of work by type of working day, Working Conditions Survey 2015 . Retrieved from <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=26059>The National Survey of Working Conditions in Spain was conducted in the framework of the European Working Conditions Survey which objective is to collect reliable and comparable data on working conditions across Europe. Specifically, it aims to quantify the working conditions of both employed and self-employed workers, analyze the relationships between different aspects of working conditions, identify groups at risk, identify issues of concern and progress, monitor trends and contribute to the formulation of European policies (Spanish Institute of Statistics, 2021).

6 National Institute of Statistics. 2015. Indicator of paid and unpaid hours of work by type of working day, Working Conditions Survey 2015 . Retrieved from <https://www.ine.es/jaxiT3/Datos.htm?t=26059>

7 The Living Conditions Survey (LCS) has been conducted since 2004. Based on harmonized criteria for all European Union countries, its main objective is to provide a reference source of comparative statistics on income distribution and social exclusion at the European level. The LCS provides the European Commission with a major statistical tool for the study of poverty and inequality, the monitoring of social cohesion within its scope, the study of the needs of the population and the impact of social and economic policies on households and individuals, as well as for the design of new policies (Spanish Institute of Statistics, 2021).

8 While men perform paid and unpaid work on an average of 40 and 14 hours per week respectively, women do it on an average of 34 and 27 hours per week. When comparing the number of work hours between men and women, it resulted that men perform 15% more paid work per week than women but women perform 52% more unpaid work per week than men. Despite the distribution of paid and unpaid work, women work 12% more hours per week than men. When looking at the work conditions of single-parent households, the differences based on gender are deepened. While single fathers dedicate on average the same number of hours per week to unpaid work as men in nuclear households, women dedicate on average 5 more hours per week to unpaid work than women in nuclear households. Although women and men perform less paid work hours in single-parent households than in nuclear households, single fathers perform on average 4 fewer paid work hours per week, and women perform on average 2 hours fewer paid work hours per week. It means that single mothers work 22% more hours per week than single fathers.

Difficulties in conciliation may have not only personal economic, emotional, professional, and health consequences, but impacts at the social scale such as the case of natality (Nuria Del Olmo et al., 2011). According to the statistics, 38% of women who perform paid work do not have children in 2018⁹. Among the reasons behind not having children, the problem of conciliation is emphasized. In this regard, Testa (2012) claims that despite the low fertility rate in Spain, the average number of desired children has remained relatively stable in the last decades. It implies a significant gap between desired and achieved fertility. In other words, many women desire to have children but they do not have them.

The urban plays a key role in facilitating the conciliation of productive and reproductive work (Iglesias de Ussel, 1998). The design of cities remains largely linked to a sexual division of labor in which both productive and reproductive spheres are understood in different spaces and times. The organization of the urban does not consider aspects such as the care of dependents or the management of time and its relationship with the schedules of care services (Jordi Borja, 2012).

The housing problem from a gender perspective

When looking at the housing problem through gender lens, structural factors that contribute to the housing crisis affect women disproportionately. An avenue of inquiry into housing resources and challenges for women has emerged over the past two decades. Researchers have found that patriarchal structures and cultural make it difficult for women to build independent households (Matulic Domandzic et al., 2020) but also make these households more likely to fall into poverty (Jørgen Elm Andersen & John Larsen, 1998).

Evidence demonstrates the strong connection between poverty and women. The theory 'feminization of poverty' has been employed to describe the increasing impoverishment of women. Scholars have criticized this approach because poverty cannot be explained just through gender but also class and race need to be considered (Malcom Harrison & Cathy Davis, 2001). The feminization of poverty term has also been discussed for being politically polarizing due to it fails in including men who are also living in poverty (Steven Pressman, 2003).

Siohie (2000) partly explains the female housing problem through the decline of the nuclear family and the generalization of women in the labor market. While these transformations produce female emancipation and social justice, it also exposes women to housing insecurity due to the existing power structure embedded in gender inequalities. Women are systematically

⁹ National Institute of Statistics. 2018. Women in paid work by number of children, occupation, and age. Retrieved from <https://www.ine.es/jaxi/Datos.htm?path=/t20/p317/a2018/def/p01/e01/&file=04002.px>

excluded from well-paid jobs which ultimately limits their opportunities to improve their economic condition and access adequate housing (Pressman, 2003). Despite women becoming less restricted to the domestic sphere, they are still struggling in the public domain (Hayden, 1985).

Tom Carter and Chesya Polevychok (2004) explain that problems in housing from a gender perspective need to be understood from the aspect of affordability but also accessibility. While affordability can be explained through the conjunction of insufficient income and housing prices, accessibility is related to the inadequacy and poor location of a significant part of the housing available to women. Locational factors encompass neighborhood safety as well as proximities to employment and services. These elements affect mobility and consequently hinders access to employment, education, and other needs.

As explained earlier, the problem is paradoxical (Jukka Hirvonen & Johanna Lilius, 2019). Women cannot improve their housing status if their overall position in society remains the same. Concepts such as collaborative housing may represent a sensitive perspective about housing by acknowledging the complexity of the problem of housing from a gender perspective.

Collaborative Housing

Dorit Fromm (2012) defines the term 'collaborative housing' as an umbrella term for the wide range of housing typologies where groups of residents collectively design, develop and inhabit housing. In doing so, collaborative housing also fosters relationships of reciprocity and solidarity within the community (Czischke, 2019).

Ideas of collaborative housing emerged as a utopian vision of communal life over two thousand years ago. Collaborative housing is in most cases characterized by the combination of private dwellings with the advantages of community living. Common spaces and shared facilities play a key role in creating environments for vivid social networks (Vestbro & Horelli, 2012). Empirical evidence highlights the importance of such spaces to encourage neighborly relations that may have positive effects both on individual well-being and on general trust in society (Amann, 2009). Horelli (2013:15) claims that "*shared space is a necessary condition for constructing and maintaining community*". The importance of the design factor of collaborative housing in supporting social interaction has been researched by Jo Williams (2005). The author claims that although limiting the private space does not necessarily increase social interaction, providing alternative common spaces for those activities could increase neighbor encounters.

Collaborative housing is closely related to gender. From a conceptual view, Amann (2009) argues that while the patrilineal scheme of housing offers an individualistic organization of

dwelling, the matrilineal scheme reflects the sense of community and caring. In this sense, housing only exists when its interior parts are related to spaces of socialization.

Moreover, collaborative housing raises expectations on equal distribution of care by challenging gender roles. Although the reduction of housework has been significant through the history of collaborative housing, ideas around equal sharing between men and women appeared just after the 1970s when feminists promoted community and cooperation among residents no matter the gender (Jarvis, 2011). Common spaces play a key role in this by creating intermediate areas between the public and private spheres where neighbors not only get together but care is also made visible (Etxezarreta et al., 2018). In this sense, existing literature about collaborative housing corroborates that household work substantially decreases and social interaction intensifies (Vestbro and Horelli, 2012).

Vestbro and Horelli (2012) explain that although men and women do not necessarily appropriate the spaces in the same way in collaborative housing, gender roles are challenged from the dwelling. The authors argue that the temporal and spatial patterns of certain activities carried out in the domestic sphere have an impact on the reproduction of gender identities. The process of gender reproduction is often affected by the patriarchal cultural patterns that constrain the choices of the household. In collaborative housing, neighbors tend to interact through alternative temporal and spatial patterns, and in turn, their gender identities are altered.

Horelli (2013) claims that collaborative housing represents a rupture with traditional household structures and a threat to the nuclear family by breaking the traditionally gendered household chores. For this reason, the main obstacle for the implementation of collaborative housing and other urban practices towards ethics of care is the patriarchal society.

Methodology

Research standpoint

In order to answer my research question, I work with a feminist methodological approach throughout the entire investigation. Feminist research has altered rather than invented its methods. There is not a feminist methodology as such. Instead, the construction of a feminist methodology is an ongoing process (De Vault, 1996).

Following Cook and Fonow's view (1986), feminist methodologies involve acknowledging the standpoint from which knowledge is defined. This is particularly important considering that knowledge production often relies on detached, universalistic, and rational methodologies that have silenced the experiences of women. The knowledge produced about and by women was excluded from science because women could not escape from their embodied experiences so they could not produce valid knowledge. Producing knowledge from a feminist perspective instead, is about recognizing that 'knowledge' is not only produced through scientific methodologies and cannot be homogeneously applied to all people and all places. It is about valuing knowledge based on lived experiences (Cresswell, 2013).

When looking at urban research, feminist methodological contributions are not fully comprised in mainstream literature. Mainstream urban studies often feature silences in relation to gender and intersecting inequalities. Research on everyday life in the city, a line that includes household studies, remains significant but frequently under-explored (Brenda Parker, 2016).

Feminist inquiry recognizes that knowledge is embodied and situated, it cannot be produced by anyone from anywhere. Sandra Harding (1986) brings the concept of 'standpoint theory' to explain that knowledge is always produced from the standpoint of the knower. In the same vein, Haraway (1988) advocates for 'situated knowledge', a form of knowledge that is contextualized in place and time.

Accordingly, the knowledge produced in this work is locally and temporarily grounded. Moreover, the findings of this research cannot be detached from my position, a researcher who carries political biases and cultural values. As a female researcher, I am both part of a disadvantaged group as well as of a privileged class. Although being a woman raised in a female-headed household might enable me to better understand gender inequalities and participants' personal experiences, this fact is not necessarily associated with superior insight.

Working from a feminist perspective permits me to reflect on my position as a scholar and find ways to challenge pre-established hierarchies of power and control in research relations. Endeavors are aimed at countering my own privilege and avoid the objectivity that led to the dichotomy between the known and the knower, paramount in most of the knowledge production.

Objectivity in the research process has not only harmed and controlled women but also hindered the development of reflexive methodologies capable of understanding the female experience (MDeVault, 1996). On the contrary, my approach to research is participatory. I intend to work together with women who are involved in my work to collectively reflect on inequalities based on gender and explore their embodied experiences. Given that these embodied experiences are generally lived as personal, subjectivity cannot be rejected (Cook & Fonow, 1986). In this regard, the methodology employed in this research seeks to legitimize the emotional and intimate word as well as to reduce to minimum harm and control over participants. Emotions are necessary for knowledge production. As human beings, people make sense of the world through emotions (Cresswell, 2013).

Transforming the object of research into participants and contributors suggests an active role from their side. In this sense, the purpose of my research is not only to give voice to women engaged in this work but also to raise awareness among participants about the mechanisms that have ignored their experiences and ultimately, encourage activism among them. In this respect, Leslie Weisman (1994:132) states that *"the personal is political not because starting from experience is wrong, but because of the richness of collective rather than individual stories of agency and resistance"*.

Research design

Purposes

The purpose of this work is to unveil the potential that collaborative housing might have in improving the everyday realities that the collective of female-headed households experience and hence, contribute to their emancipation from the domestic sphere. This research aims to learn about this issue from collaborative housing experiences located in Madrid and Barcelona. These case studies were selected based on the opportunities that these projects entail in meeting the socio-spatial needs of female-headed households. Particular emphasis is placed on the challenges that collaborative housing must address so these needs are fully met, thus adequately including female-headed households collaborative housing.

J. Lawrence Roderick highlights the urgency of multidimensional approaches that include social, spatial, and economic factors (D. Urban Vestbro et al., 2005). These factors must be simultaneously comprehended at the three scales of the housing unit, the residential building, and the neighborhood. Accordingly, this work intends to answer the research question by looking at socio-spatial housing needs of women who head households and the socio-spatial dynamics at play in collaborative housing. Although focusing on the economic dimension of housing goes beyond the scope of this master thesis, insights on this aspect cannot either be neglected due to the influence it has on the social and spatial aspects of housing. Indeed, a need for a multidimensional approximation to the topic has become evident throughout the research.

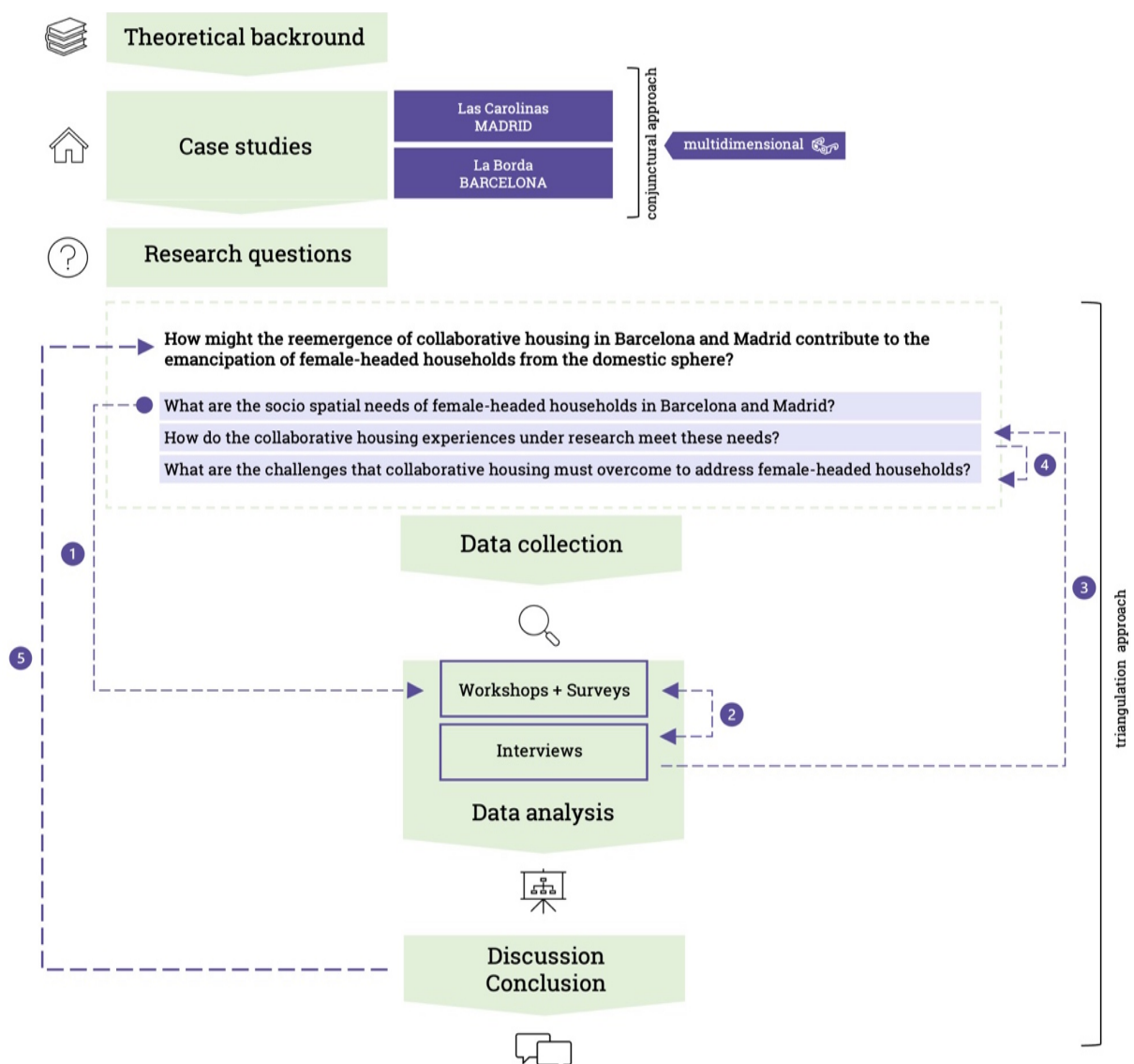


Figure 1 | Research design diagram (Source: Author)

From this multidimensional approach, the housing needs that female-headed households face were primarily explored in the literature to be further developed and locally situated during a first fieldwork stage (1). In the second stage of fieldwork, structural characteristics of the collaborative cases under study are inferred (2). In this regard, characteristics are structural to the extent that are relevant to meet the needs of women (3). At this point, the first two inquiries from the secondary research questions are answered. When relating the housing needs of women-headed households and the structural characteristics of collaborative housing, opportunities and challenges are learned and hence, the third secondary question is answered (4). Finally, the discussion of these outcomes led to addressing the principal research question (5) (Figure 2).

Case studies

Rationale behind the case studies

Questions are aimed to be answered by looking at the cession-of-use housing cooperatives of 'Las Carolinas' in Madrid and 'La Borda' in Barcelona. According to Dorit From (2012), these housing experiences can be comprehended under the collaborative umbrella due to residents collectively designing, developing, and inhabiting their housing. The motivations behind the selection of European and particularly Spanish collaborative housing experiences are threefold.

First, the reemergence of collaborative housing in Europe encompasses motivations such as the searching for sustainable ways of living from economic, social, and environmental perspectives (Darinka Czischke, 2019). This approximation to housing is closely related to the ethics of care due to it prioritizes reproduction over production (Aitziber Etxezarreta et al., 2018). Hence, this topic might become of great interest when explored through a feminist lens.

Second, Spain is undergoing a very particular momentum in which cession-of-use housing cooperatives forms are flourishing (Cabré & Andrés, 2018). In contrast to other European countries, not many antecedents of cession of use tenure forms have been registered in Spain (Foraster & Folch, 2018). Innovative forms of tenancy such as cession-of-use challenge can simultaneously respond to certain housing needs that the market is unable to cover and challenge cultural values based on homeownership as the heart of family wealth (Etxezarreta et al., 2018).

Third, housing is a primary concern for women who head households (Jordi Bosch Meda, 2017). In Spain, the needs of female-headed households are not met despite becoming more prominent. This research aims to explore the contributions of collaborative housing reemergence towards emancipating female-headed households from the domestic sphere.

Las Carolinas and La Borda

Entrepatrios is the first cession-of-use housing cooperative in Madrid. The purpose of the cooperative is to *"implement other ways of living in the city that does not allow real estate speculation, take into account environmental sustainability and create community"* (Entrepatrios n.d.). The foundational and finalized project of Entrepatrios is Las Carolinas (Figure 3), inaugurated during 2020 in the Orcasita neighborhood which belongs in the Usera district. This area is about 4 km from the city center but well served by public transport. Las Carolinas is formed by 17 housing units distributed in 5 typologies that range from 41 to 100 square meters (Entrepatrios n.d.).

In the case of La Borda (Figure 4), the housing project was given the same name as the housing cooperative. The project was born from a strong neighborhood movement related to the urban renewal of the industrial site 'Can Batlló' where the housing building is situated in Barcelona (Cabré & Andrés, 2018). By placing its residents at the center, La Borda aims to *"harmonise the need for access to adequate, social, affordable and environmentally sustainable housing with the desire to promote new forms of coexistence and to generate community through the interrelationship between neighbours"* (La Borda, n.d.). La Borda is located in the neighborhood of La Bordeta, very close to the city center. The housing building was opened for its residents in 2018. The project comprises 28 housing units with three typologies that range between 40 and 76 square meters (La Borda, n.d.).

Housing cooperatives have traditionally protected the most disadvantaged sectors excluded from the market by ensuring no profit or speculative gain over housing production and provision. In Spain, the members of a housing cooperative are offered the right of housing ownership for more affordable prices than in the private market (Etxezarreta & Merino, 2013). But emerging cooperative housing in Spain entails some changes. Instead of granting the right of ownership to cooperative members, they obtain the lifetime right of using a housing unit in exchange of an initial fee called 'social capital'¹⁰ and soft monthly payments. This is formalized through a cession-of-use contract, an intermediate form between renting and owning. Although the ownership of the housing building belongs to the cooperative, the cession-of-use over the housing unit can be inherited or transferred (Foraster & Folch, 2018).

¹⁰ When defining 'social capital', an interviewed contributor makes an interesting comparison by explaining that *"this initial contribution in legal terms is called social capital. The social capital is like a share in the housing cooperative. If it were a capitalist company it would be like buying shares in the company. Here there are no such shares because a housing cooperative is not a capitalist company. For this reason, the share in a housing cooperative is called social capital. This initial contribution will finance what the bank does not lend."*

There are other similarities between Las Carolinas and La Bord. Both are characterized by the engagement of their cooperative members in the processes of design, construction, development, and management of housing. To this end, decision-making processes based on collaborative and nonhierarchical structures are implemented. Collaboration is also the basis of coexistence during everyday life in the project. Practices of mutual support and reciprocal care are promoted to create a sense of community among neighbors. Collaborative approaches are also reflected in the relationship between the housing project and the neighborhood. From this view, collaborative housing could be valuable agent of change in urban regeneration processes (Carlos Rosa et al., 2016).

This intention of building community is ultimately reflected in the spatial organization of the housing buildings. The projects under research involve private units as well as common spaces which have been collectively designed by their residents through participatory procedures (Etxezarreta et al., 2018). Las Carolinas and La Borda also seek to lower the ecological impact during the development and the use of the housing building (Etxezarreta & Merino, 2013) through strategies such as smart architectural design, renewable energy production, water recycling, and the use of environmentally friendly materials were encouraged (Foraster & Folch, 2018). Sharing spaces as well as services, therefore, not only led to reduced economic costs but also reduced environmental impacts.



Figure 3 | Las Carolinas' facade (Source: Andrés Valentín-Gamazo, sAtt Arquitectura Triple Balance)



Figure 2 | La Borda's facade (Source: laborda.coop)

Regarding the financialization of the projects, funding was accessed jointly through loans granted by private ethical banks, the social capital provided by residents, credits and donations extended by innovative housing models promoters, and public subsidies. The latter were granted in different degrees according to the case. Once the loans necessary to develop the projects are amortized, monthly payments can be reduced, and the balance can be used for social purposes related to the cooperative. This means that cession-of-use housing cooperatives have the capacity of generating own resources which can be used to fund other housing initiatives in the medium term (Etxezarreta et al., 2018).

Conjunctural approach

Following Annet Steinfuhrer (Vestbro et al., 2005), I aim to discover patterns through the exploration of two case studies without falling into particularisms or universalisms. This approach permits dialogue between the case studies in line with conjunctural perspectives.

In advocating conjunctural thinking to the urban, Ozgur Sayin and Michael Hoyler (2020) draw on the importance of doing comparative studies differently. It means that instead of seeking for differences, dialogue is encouraged between case studies by focusing on diversity. The importance is placed on what characteristics make each case study distinct rather than understanding them as exceptions to the general rule. In accordance with this, the purpose of this work is to understand how the chosen collaborative housing experiences in Madrid and Barcelona can complement each other in order to better grasp the topic of research.

In line with a conjunctural perspective and a feminist approach, the findings from this research are not intended to be generalized either to the wider system of collaborative housing or to the broader population of women-headed households. Although some patterns can be revealed, this research is not aimed to be representative. Both when exploring the needs of women and understanding the characteristics of collaborative housing, this work seeks for detail and complexity. This approximation is considered sufficient and unique to answer the research question.

Triangulation strategies

Triangulation can be explained as the awareness of multiple insights offered by different perspectives. The synergies between these perspectives might complement, converge and even contradict on a given topic (Hoyler, 2020). Triangulation can also involve the combination of multiple methods Rolf Johansson in (Vestbro et al., 2005) or specifically the mix of both qualitative and quantitative methods (Saldaña, 2011). The ultimate purpose of triangulation is to enrich knowledge production by approaching the research question holistically.

When conducting research employing triangulation methods Sofia Cele (Vestbro et al., 2005) argues that the findings resulting from one method not necessarily must validate the findings from others but they might even contradict them. While this can be difficult when interpreting data but, the value of triangulation lies in that it exposes the complexity of a problem and it produces more accurate knowledge by providing different angles about the same issue.

Although feminist research has been often characterized by an emphasis on qualitative methods, the perspective applied in this research acknowledges that quantitative approaches do not necessarily misrepresent the female experience if applied critically. In fact, triangulation is frequently employed in feminist inquiry, including rather than denying quantitative methods (Rose Wiles & Graham Crow, 2013).

Given the multidimensional nature of this work, a triangulation strategy has been applied to answer the research questions. A single perspective and one methodological approach are not suitable to illustrate the complexity of the matter. Instead, diverse insights about the topic and a range of complementary methods will be employed in order to answer the research question.

First, I will apply a multiperspective approach to gain a more detailed picture of the everyday phenomena as well as further apprehend the various factors encompassed by housing. Data sources are classified according to the research question seek to answer. When looking into the needs of households headed by women, data about this matter is provided both by women who head households. Another source of knowledge is the group represented by actors involved in the provision of collaborative housing in Spain and users residing either in Las Carolinas or La Borda. Given the participatory nature of collaborative housing, members of this group are generally providers and users at the same time. Their insights contribute to exploring the characteristics of the provision side and the everyday life in the collaborative housing projects under research. The outcomes resulted from the collected data in some cases support or complement each other. In other cases, the discoveries contradict one another. Divergent findings are observed even within the same data source category. This emphasizes the multidimensionality and complexity of the research topic as well as the need of triangulation strategies.

Second, quantitative and qualitative methods will be combined in the process of data collection and analysis. This is particularly important in housing research in order to better understand the specific requirements of the increasing heterogeneity of households arrangements worldwide Roderick (Vestbro et al., 2005). Quantitative data will be gathered through surveys and qualitative methods employed in this research will be workshops, surveys, and interviews. Given the pandemic context, all possible measures were taken to take care of the health of the

participants and contributors. To this end, the entire process of data collection was carried out through digital methods which will be explained in the section below.

Data collection methods

Workshops

The housing needs that women face were inferred in the first place through group workshops called 'housing needs of female-headed households from a caring perspective'. These methods along with the surveys were conducted at the first data collection stage. Three workshops were held online through the platform Zoom with the support of Miró during June 2021. A total of 16 women heads of households who resided in non-collaborative housing in Madrid and Barcelona participated in the workshops. These 16 women were aged between 32 and 56 years old, 2 of them were of immigrant backgrounds. Their children were between 8 months and 28 years old. Despite almost all participants having received post-secondary education, their household income varies significantly.

Workshops can be defined as *"deliberative meetings where a group of people analyze a focal issue, perhaps debate and hopefully comprise solutions, proposals or visions"* (Nina A. Nygrén, 2019:4). Without being either observations or interviews but combining them, workshops produce firsthand evidence about the actions of participants and offer access to inner thoughts and reasons regarding these actions. Participatory workshops aim to create the circumstances for participants to accomplish something of their interest while simultaneously producing data about the research topic (Rikker Ørngreen & Karen Levinsen, 2017).

In the framework of this research, the workshops had three main purposes. First, workshops enabled women to provide insights about the meanings they attach to their everyday experiences by emphasizing socio-spatial dynamics that housing involves and hence, produce knowledge about the domain in question. Second, to overcome the isolation in the households by creating safe spaces of exchange and ultimately, establishing supporting networks between participants. Finally, the workshops were intended to raise awareness among the participants about the role of the domestic sphere in emancipating women-headed households.

The call for participants was carried out via email. I contacted feminist and social organizations, alumni associations, nurturing and parenting groups, children and feminist libraries as well as cultural and civic centers. A total of 1243 and 980 emails were sent to entities based on Barcelona and Madrid respectively. The response rate for both cities was remarkably low, about 3%.

The workshops were scheduled according to the availability of the participants. Remaining flexible in this respect is particularly important because women head of households frequently perform economic and care activities, so time availability is expected to be a limitation. While the attendance to Madrid workshops was of 5 and 7 women on each occasion, in the case of Barcelona workshops participation was lower, of 4 women.

Based on the purposes of the workshop and the recommendations from the literature (Nygrén, 2019), the encounters were designed to have a duration of no more than 1 hour and a maximum attendance of 8 participants. This duration and participants' number made the implementation of the workshop possible through digital channels. The workshop format also allows each participant to express themselves avoiding airtimes albeit enabling space for spontaneous dialogue more responsive to the concerns of women. Although there is predetermined structure, it was planned to be influenced by the facilitator during the workshop according to the circumstances.

As a researcher engaged with participatory research approaches, my role as a workshop facilitator comprehended both guiding and involvement in the conversation with women. This principally comprises sharing knowledge about the research topic, orientation throughout the different activities, encouraging attendants to engage in the conversation, keeping participants on time and focused on the theme, and finally, summarizing the discussion to confirm my understanding of women insights.

The workshop structure was piloted with a group of fellow students and adjustments were made according to feedback. A detailed description of the design of the workshop can be found in Appendix 1.

Surveys

The second source from which women's housing needs have been explored was a standardized digital survey filled by the respondents themselves. This method was conducted through Google Forms in June and July 2021. The survey questionnaire was distributed among the 16 women who had previously participated in the workshops. A total of 14 women responded to the questionnaire, meaning that the response rate was high. The survey was aimed to continue producing qualitative data but also to provide quantitative insights capable of leading to richer research outcomes.

As the survey was individual and anonymous, it enabled women to provide information that might be considered sensible to be shared in the context of the group workshop. Respondents had the possibility of omitting questions in the case of not wishing to share the information derived from the answer. As participants might face difficulties regarding time availability, it

was considered important to design a questionnaire to be responded in less than 30 minutes. This amount of time was considered reasonable and sensible given the everyday experiences of participants as well as the amount of expected data to be produced through the method.

The questionnaire comprehended both closed and open questions, giving women space for interpretation and collecting unexpected data. Most questions were designed to be answered by respondents with prior knowledge about collaborative housing and ethics of care. For this reason, only women who participated in the workshop were required to complete the survey.

The survey questionnaire consisted of 36 questions divided into 7 thematic sections. Each section corresponded to the topics identified around collaborative housing in an earlier research stage. These primary findings comprehend the knowledge gained when reviewing literature and doing preliminary interviews with the collaborative housing side. Before being implemented, the survey was piloted with two women head of households. According to their feedback, the questionnaire was refined to ensure understanding from potential respondents. For interested readers, further description of the survey design is available in the Appendix 2.

Expert interviews

The principal method employed to understand structural characteristics of the case studies was expert interviews with representatives from the provision side who will be called contributors in the framework of this research. This method was applied at the second stage of data collection after understanding the socio-spatial needs of research participants. Four interviews were conducted online through the platform Zoom during June and July 2021.

Sigrun Kabisch (Vestbro et al., 2005) employs the concept of 'expert' to refer to a person "*with a specific position in a decision-making process and with privileged access to information and knowledge about relevant projects and persons*". In this sense, the interviewees to this research were experts involved either in the case projects under research or in the production of other collaborative housing projects. In the framework of this work, interviewees are called 'contributors'. While two of the contributors were professionals working in the framework of collaborative housing both in Madrid and Barcelona, the other two were women part of the steering groups of Las Carolinas and La Borda and head of households.

Expert interviews aimed at understanding the structural characteristics of the collaborative housing projects. These characteristics are structural to the extent that are relevant to meet the socio-spatial needs of participants. This means looking at the case studies through the lens of women who head households. In this respect, the findings resulted from the workshops and surveys became of great importance to identify the concerns and interests of these women.

Prospect contributors were identified throughout the research process. While inquiring about collaborative housing in Spain in the first stage of research, I became familiar with the key actors involved in collaborative housing. The group of possible contributors involved housing cooperatives, housing providers, and independent professionals. The rate response to the interview invitation was highly successful. From the 10 prospect contributors that were contacted through email, all of them responded and 4 interviews could be scheduled.

In line with my methodological approach to research, the interview was seen as a relationship between the researcher and contributor. The interview was not a process of knowledge extraction but a collective production of knowledge, a reciprocal exchange (Kevin Ward, 2014). From this perspective, while contributors give their perspective about the matter, the researcher comments to confirm understanding and share their own knowledge. This allows the researcher to reflect on the ongoing dialogue.

The semi-structured interview guide allowed the contributor to bringing unexpected topics as well as reminded the researcher about the purpose and the limitations of the encounter. The guide consisted of 17 questions organized in 7 nucleoli and planned to be answered in one hour. This length was both considerate towards the availability of contributors and the interview purposes. The interview was designed on the basis of the thematic categories identified throughout the workshops and surveys after analyzing data. Supplementary data associated with the design of the expert interviews can be found in Appendix 3.

Data analysis methods

Before collecting data, participants and contributors agreed to informed consent which ensured confidentiality and consideration during and after the encounter. Owners of authorship rights over the visual data utilized throughout this research consented to its use (Appendix 4).

Data was partly analyzed through content analysis methods which are defined by Ward (2014) as *“the systematic examination of texts and visuals media and or material culture to analyze their prominent manifest and latent meanings”*. Content analysis was mainly applied over qualitative data which includes both preexisting and non-preexisting textual information as well as visuals media such as plans and pictures of the collaborative housing projects under research.

Preexisting textual data found on the websites of Las Carolinas and La Borda was analyzed to gain preliminary knowledge about the case studies under research. This initial approach enabled the research to better design data collection methods. Preliminary knowledge was also confirmed, complemented, or even refuted when conducting expert interviews.

Non-preexisting textual data was produced through workshops, surveys, and expert interviews. Both workshops and interviews were audio-recorded. In the case of workshops, group exchange was complemented with the digital wall collectively elaborated by participants. In the case surveys, information was converted from the employed specialized software to a text document. Most of the responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaire produced textual data which was analyzed along with the information collected from workshops.

Following the recommendations of Braun and Clarke (2006), an interpretative bottom-up analysis strategy was employed when studying textual and visual data. After being acquainted with the qualitative data, commonalities in relation with the domain of research were identified and thematic categories with subtopics were built. Meanings were attached to thematic categories and relationships among them were established. While relevant passages were captured in the textual data, significant spaces were pictured in visual data.

In the case of quantitative data produced by surveys, data were summarized and organized through graphics and charts. Later, inferences were drawn from the summary and related to the thematic categories. Always remaining careful of not generalizing the outcomes of the analysis to a broader population as quantitative approaches tend to do.

As in the case of data collection, content analysis was performed in different stages. First, the information available on the websites of Las Carolinas and La Borda was analyzed to better plan data collection methods. Second, analysis was conducted over the data collected through workshops and surveys to grasp the socio-spatial needs of women who participated in the research. Third, the data collected through expert interviews were analyzed along with the plans and pictures of the case studies. This latter stage of content analysis was aimed to understand how the socio-spatial needs of women are met by the collaborative housing projects under research. This approach to the data analysis enabled me to learn about challenges and opportunities, necessary to identify to answer my research questions.

Reflections

When designing data collection strategies, digital methods were considered advantageous to solve practicalities. In principle, online workshops and interviews proved to be easier to schedule than in-person meetings. Videocalls enabled the researcher and participants to save travel time and cost. Mainly in the case of women who head households, this fact was thought to be beneficial due to issues around time availability and economic capacity which were previously mentioned. Regarding surveys, digital platforms for implementation were particularly useful for me as the researcher because they reduce time and are inexpensive.

The most significant drawbacks of employing digital methods with participants were those related to access to a stable internet connection, a mobile phone, or particularly in the case of workshops, a computer or tablet for participation; as well as a relatively high level of expertise in using digital tools. However, when conducting expert interviews, contributors from the provision side showed themselves comfortable using digital technologies.¹¹

Considering online surveys, the considerably high response rate could have implied the engagement level with the research on the part of workshop participants. Yet the impersonality of web-based survey formats might be considered a limitation to collect sensitive information or clarify doubts about the questionnaire (Saldaña, 2011), the combination with qualitative methods such as workshops proved to be successful to achieve expected results.

Questions remain around the low response from the entities contacted to spread the workshop call for participants which was particularly noticeable in the case of Barcelona. Though the scope of the study precludes making assumptions in this regard, the fact that some of the contacted entities offered a physical space to conduct workshops may raise awareness about the preference in implementing in-person methods. In this respect, a representative of a social center claimed that many of the members that might be interested in participating had not either knowledge about digital tools or internet access.

¹¹ This may be because of the 'digital divide' Joris Hoekstra in (Vestbro et al., 2005). Experienced internet users tend to be wealthier with higher education levels. Although the research design in the pandemic context could have not been possible without the implementation of digital methods, a single platform that could be supported by mobile phones might have made workshops more inclusive.

Findings

Understanding the socio-spatial needs of participants

Care as survival in every sense of the word

In the framework of the research, exploring the meanings that women assign to care becomes of great relevance. According to the participants, care involves a wide range of multidimensional tangible and intangible aspects that include both doing and thinking activities. Care is a global concept that involves 24-hour availability to meet any need that may arise so life is possible. In this vein, a participant remarks that care means to *“ensure the survival of another human being, survival in every sense of the word”*.¹²

In meeting the needs of both mothers and children, the most recurrent care activities performed by research participants can be categorized as domestic, emotional, and educational. These dimensions often overlap and comprehend both planning and carrying out care activities.

Throughout workshop discussions, women highlighted two factors of care they considered to be frequently underestimated. First, planning aspects of care were emphasized as particularly unimportant but stressful. Regarding this matter, participants commented:

“Being able to tell my mother that I can leave the children with her for a while so that I can unburden myself a little is not really a solution to the mental pressure.”

“Just having planned and thought about what food I want to prepare takes a lot of burden off. What do I do? What do I do? Well! I’ve already written it down. Maybe I’ll end up changing the menu later, but because I want to prepare something else. I don’t have to think about it, which in the end is the most burdensome, thinking all day long.”

When upbringing children without a partner, it is not only that the mental burden that care entails falls entirely on a single person but finding help to reduce this mental burden is challenging.

Exchanging knowledge through socialization is a second undervalued aspect of care. For workshop discussants, educating implies not only providing children with sufficient knowledge for their development but also educating themselves. Motherhood is described as a constant learning process that is often achieved through exchange with other people, particularly with

¹² All quotations in this paper have been translated from Spanish into English by the researcher.

other parents. In this respect, a workshop discussant observes that *“sharing knowledge is what gives me a lot of peace of mind”*. Another participant elaborated further on this:

“Socializing with other families gives me so much life. Socializing with other women who are mothers of other children of a similar age to yours and who you like is a blessing because while the children are playing, you can also talk about things and help each other. For me, this network of support is the most important thing. Cultivating these relationships also takes time but it is very, very good.”

In collectivizing knowledge, women find a space to being listened to and listen to others about their parenting experiences. In these spaces of exchange, participants feel supported in their role as mothers which impacts positively in their emotional world.

From these findings, it can be inferred that research participants principally understand care with others, specifically with their children. In this sense, although women frequently prioritize the wellbeing of their children over their own, they acknowledge that satisfying their own care needs is a prerequisite to responding properly to the care needs of their children.

The uphill struggle of housing

Research participants identified housing as a shelter, an intimate place of safety to care for themselves and their children. However, the findings also show that solving housing needs has always been a major challenge throughout their lives, principally after having children. In one of the workshops, a participant noted *“housing has always been an uphill struggle, there is no other option but to cheat a lot because you are left with no other options to have a decent place to live with your children.”*

This section will be focused on both social and spatial housing needs which participants understand as two dimensions of the same problem. These dimensions are present at different geographic scales including the private residential unit, common areas within the building, and the interplay of the residential building with the territory. Social and spatial needs are closely related to economic aspects of housing but further examination in this respect exceeds the scope of research.

The survey conducted among research participants also confirmed that meeting housing needs was a challenge for almost all respondents. Although the diverse economic situation of participants, most of them find affordability as the most urgent need concerning housing. In this respect, participants highlighted that the housing cost burden has become gradually heavier in the last years. In many cases, women spend more than 50% of their income on housing. In this context, none of them receive any economic aid or subsidy that would decrease

the housing financial strain. Therefore, the economic aspect emerges as an issue of central importance in the participants' struggle to build a home.

Among the most unsatisfied needs, a recurrent topic throughout the workshops was the problem of insufficient spaces. Respecting the housing unit, the need for privacy for both mothers and children was brought up as an important matter to be considered. Due to the lack of space, having separate rooms for everyone is frequently not feasible. Room for kids to play and learn as well as areas for women to carry out productive work was also emphasized as a pressing issue, particularly since the beginning of the pandemic. The absence of exterior areas such as terraces or balconies was also emphasized as much more noticeable during lockdown periods. A participant stated that *"one thing that was very noticeable with the pandemic is the need to have an expansion, a balcony, a window, something through which you can inhale air because breathing becomes overwhelming"*.

Inadequacy of housing spaces was another significant problem that participants regularly face. Women commented that as the urban fabrics of Madrid and Barcelona are greatly confirmed by old constructions, many housing buildings fail to comply with current regulations. As a result, many housing units in these cities have very poor conditions of ventilation and illumination. A participant shared her experience and commented that *"there are many flats, especially the old flats in the center of Barcelona, where you have a room with a small window that looks out onto the corridor or even to the lift shaft"*.

Another aspect of inadequate housing is related to the architectural design of both private residential units and common areas. These spaces often hinder rather than contribute to the development of reproductive work, especially housework connected with housing chores and child-rearing. Research participants underlined the need for architectural layouts that allow caregivers to perform domestic tasks and keep an eye on children simultaneously. In relation to this, a participant reflected that *"it is very important that the living room and kitchen are one space so I can cook while I watch my daughter playing, that seems to me to be an advantage of my house"*. Compartmented kitchens or laundries that isolate caregivers from the rest of the housing unit are one of the architectural practices that makes reproductive work difficult, especially when children are highly dependent. Another participant elaborated this further:

"A housing layout with a living room in the center and in a star-shaped distribution there is the bathroom, a bedroom, the other bedroom, the kitchen, and the exit. This structure seems to me to be very successful when there is an adult in charge who must have four eyes to look after children, doing several tasks and at the same time, ordering the carrots on the internet."

Continuing with poorly designed spaces, housing units with more than one story are also considered by women to increase the burden of everyday reproductive work due to the physical wear and tear involved. The same logic applies to apartment buildings with several stories. Workshop participants agree that elevators must stop on all floors and have the necessary dimensions so elements such as baby prams or shopping trolleys can be easily carried. A participant shared her own experience:

"I lived in a house with a lift but it was a lift between floors and going out with my little son to the street to take courage. Until I didn't ask permission from all the neighbors to let me put the pram in a utility room, I had to carry my son, his pram, and the groceries upstairs all at the same time."

Other needs regarding the common areas of the housing building were mainly centered on the lack of qualified spaces of encounter capable of encouraging socialization. For participants, the possibility of building community with their neighbors and creating spaces for sharing seems to be of high importance. The potential that research participants envision in these common spaces will be discussed below.

Territories of care

When spatializing caring activities during the workshops, the domestic sphere of housing was revealed as central. Still, a substantial part of care work is jointly performed both in housing and urban environments. This is the third geographic scale of care, the interplay of the residential building with the territory.

The extension of territory over which care is spread differs greatly from one participant to another. These differences are based on their access to care networks that support women. Taking it one step further, a research participant defined these territories of care not as physical spaces but as emotional territories *"where you can find the people with whom you have confidence and peace of mind, sometimes they are not even in their neighborhood, sometimes they are in another city."*

Childcare strategies strongly influence territories of care. Emotional territories are generally defined on a larger urban scale when participants receive help from relatives with upbringing. When women find childcare support in the community or in the infrastructure within the neighborhood, emotional territories are determined on a smaller scale. In this regard, a participant commented:

"I share childcare with the neighborhood. You have no choice, I share it with the neighborhood in the sense that we have a small group of mums, generally mums, not

dads, there are a few dads who get involved. I rely on this group and they rely on me too."

The territorial scale in which care needs are met significantly affects the well-being of participants. Having good transport service is important to connect with emotional territories as well as with downtown and workplaces.

However, women agreed that when support is found geographically close, the care burden decreases substantially. According to participants, the urban infrastructure relevant to be available in the vicinity of the home includes markets and small-sized shops, health facilities, pharmacies, veterinary clinics, green spaces, sports amenities, cultural activities such as libraries and art spaces as well as recycling points. Children's care services such as nurseries, schools, or playrooms are considered essential to be in less than 10 minutes from the housing building. This infrastructure is essential to perform caring activities and its proximity to housing contributes significantly to facilitate reproductive work.

Some participants emphasized the need of solving some aspects of care on an even smaller scale than the neighborhood. An emotional territory between the housing unit and the neighborhood emerged throughout the discussion due to its potential to contribute to everyday care activities. Participants elaborated on this:

"The most important thing is that the care is in our home, that is to say in our home, understanding it as a block courtyard or in the neighborhood, but close by. In the end, the one I relate to is the one who lives in the parallel street, I see the others from time to time and I relate to them very casually."

"What we want is to have things at home or a bit closer in the neighborhood. Maybe in the community, understanding it as something in between. The house, the community, and then the neighborhood."

Whatever their scale, emotional territories play a fundamental role in supporting women so they can meet their care demands, especially those demands related to childcare. In doing so, emotional territories contribute to the conciliation of the productive and reproductive spheres.

The problem of conciliation

Conciliating production and reproduction is a major challenge in the everyday life of women (Del Olmo, Montoro y López, 2011). The findings showed that research participants are not an exception. Almost all survey respondents experience difficulties when conciliating productive and reproductive work. The main reasons that explain these difficulties are insufficient time derived from salaried work conditions and deficient care infrastructure and services.

One dimension of the problems is that office hours frequently mismatch with caring and education services timetables. The situation worsens during holidays when alternative caring infrastructure is limited. In this context, women who perform economic activities overtime or outside regular work schedules struggle even more. Even when working at home is a possibility, women struggle to combine productive and reproductive work, particularly when childcare needs be conciliated. A participant commented that *"when working at home, it is complicated to attend to my son's needs because his care requires me to be present and if I work, I am not there."*

Unusual and unexpected events such as doctor appointments or child illnesses are considered a major challenge for conciliation of productive and reproductive activities. These events require what was referred to by participants as 'extraordinary care'. Due to its nature, this form of care interrupts the daily routine and hinders caring strategies. Regarding this issue, a participant added:

"One thing is to take care of making meals every day and taking my daughter to school on a set schedule, but I think that what is most annoying and what complicates life the most when you are a single parent is the unexpected. There is daily care and extraordinary care, the latter is what complicates life because, in the end, you get used to everything else. The problem is what is outside the routine."

If commuting time is added to the equation, combining productive and reproductive work becomes further complicated. Particularly when caring services, residence, and workplace are distantly located or public transport is poor, commuting times are even longer. Respecting this issue, a participant shared her experience:

"In my first job I had zero flexibility, it drove me crazy [...] I had to work until 6 pm, then I had another job from which I left at 9.30 pm, it was crazy. Then I had to take three buses to get to the library where my daughter was being cared for. If I was late, they would close that place and leave my daughter at the door."

Even in the case of women with more flexible working conditions, challenges to conciliation persist. Time allocated to personal care is often devoted to meet job responsibilities and family needs, particularly when the wellbeing of their children is at stake. A participant remarks that *"although I have a lot of flexibility at work, I always lack time to finish the tasks I have to do and I end up stealing hours of sleep to get everything done."* Another woman who joined the workshops added:

"Cleaning takes me the whole weekend, so it takes me a lot of time even though it is the time when I should be resting. I don't do more than the minimum house chores"

and it takes me the whole weekend to clean the apartment but during the week I always come home tired."

The general feeling among research participants is that time is not enough to cover both productive and reproductive demands. The biggest issue in this regard is that missing valuable moments with their kids entails a heavy emotional cost for women who head households. Throughout workshops, women remarked on this point:

"I have the permanent feeling that I'm doing everything by half. I'm half-playing with my son because I have a thing in my mind. I think, now I'm with my son for 20 minutes and then I make dinner in 10 minutes because I reheat this and that, then I can do this work and so I can hand it in tomorrow before the deadline. And I have this feeling all the time."

"I see my son looking for me to play a lot when we're are home. I have to explain to him that I can't play at that moment because if I don't prepare food, we're not going to have dinner ready in a while. Then I am filled with guilt. I think he needs me now to play with me, to teach me anything, and sometimes with the issue of care support I can't. I must set the washing machine or hang out the laundry because otherwise, it won't be ready for tomorrow when needed."

"And of course, you have a hard time. You think you're doing well, but you hear a voice telling you that one day the social services are going to come and take your daughter away, bad mother, bad mother! Well, that's why I had a very bad time until my daughter was at an age when she could more or less be discerned on her own. I had a terrible time."

Lack of time is a problem because if women spend fewer hours in the labor market to devote more time to their children and care activities, they cannot meet the economic needs of their families. Not to mention that working overtime is only possible if women count on adequate and accessible childcare. In certain circumstances, spending more hours in the labor market makes no sense when the surplus income is absorbed by childcare costs. Anyhow, the economic problem persists.

The labor market not only pressures women to meet their economic needs but also to pursue their career goals. Spending more time performing economic activities is translated into gaining expertise which ultimately, contributes to remaining competitive to get better job opportunities and higher salaries. But prioritizing reproductive over productive work in the present may have negative consequences in the future both for women and their children. From the perspective of a participant:

"My daughter is growing up, she is 8 and a half years old. But when she is 12, maybe she won't need me as much as she does now. And you are stuck in a precarious job and you can't improve your work situation. It is more difficult to change to a better job because you are older because you lack experience, even if you have the capacity to learn."

In light of the paradoxical situation of productive and reproductive conciliation, care collectivization emerges as a strategy with the potential of alleviating the problem of insufficient time.

Collectivization in the journey of motherhood

Except for cases in which specialized care is required, many reproductive activities aimed at satisfying everyday care needs are carried out cyclically in most households. Besides, these activities are often conducted by caregivers on their own. In this sense, all participants agreed that collectivizing care in a community would impact positively their everyday experiences. Two main topics emerged in this respect. One is related to practical implications and the other is linked to the personal impacts that care collectivization might imply.

The practical perspective is focused on the reduction of the care work burden by collectivizing certain activities which are normally performed repetitively. Women who participated in the research are willing to collectivize domestic chores such as buying and preparing food, doing the laundry, cleaning of spaces, waste management, gardening, attending pets, or household management. From the view of a participant:

"It takes me the same amount of time to make a meal for me and my son as it does for four people. I end up throwing away a lot of tupperware! I make extra food to freeze later, but then we eat the same thing four days in a row [...] Then there are people who like to cook and I don't mind ironing or cleaning toilets, which are things that get on a lot of people's nerves. Whenever I go away for a weekend, I try to share the space with other people and I propose, I wash dishes but I don't cook. And there are people who fight to take two shifts in the kitchen, so they don't do the dishes! The task that is terrible for me is fantastic for someone else and the other way around."

Not only the collectivization of domestic tasks would inexorably contribute to improving the everyday life of women, but specific chores around upbringing were also brought into the discussion. Looking after kids while their mothers are working, playing with children, or taking them to school and other leisure activities emerged as the main activities that might be collectivized. About this issue, a participant remarked:

"If you leave me with five children for an afternoon, I almost work better than with just one child. And then, of course, I have a free afternoon to work. Another thing that takes up a lot of my time is doing chores, dinner, shopping, and so on. Instead of my son being alone with me while I'm doing those chores, I would prefer him to be with other children of his age or other ages."

Apart from pragmatic advantages, collectivizing care might have positive impacts on children. Growing up in a community is particularly esteemed by the participants to increasing the wellbeing of their children. The opportunity of spending more time with peers is greatly appreciated for its importance in the psychological and social development of children. From an educational perspective, participants also value their children being in contact with diverse ways of thinking. A workshop discussant noted:

"It would also be good for them, for the children who only depend on one person's view on how to manage everything. One must give a global education in which you will probably often get confused. By living more in community, you have the views of several people."

Child-rearing in the community would not only have positive effects on the personal world of children but also would enrich the everyday experience of their mothers. On one hand, time savings resulting from sharing care workload contribute to the conciliation of productive and reproductive worlds which ultimately, increases the welfare of women. Participants also consider that establishing ties with other adults helps to overcome personal difficulties and influences positively their emotional world. This is particularly important due to *"the possibilities of meeting social needs in motherhood are very limited."* A participant observed:

"Sometimes what weighs the most is feeling alone with everything. The burden is the same, but it is better shared. Because we are social beings, and in addition to the practical aspect, it is emotionally very important not to feel alone in the journey of motherhood. The more peace of mind we mothers have, the better the emotional education of our children."

A contributor highlighted that care collectivization in collaborative housing communities depends largely on how residents understand collaboration. These understandings that frequently vary from one resident to another are what defines care synergies within the housing community. For this reason, elaborating on collaborative understandings with participants is of great significance.

A kind of chosen family

A significant number of women who participated in the research were acquainted with collaborative ideas around housing. For some participants, these ideas were related to existing housing projects mainly located in Spain. Some participants even had vast knowledge and informed opinion about the case studies under research. For other participants, notions of collaborative housing were associated with previous experiences based on informal arrangements to solve housing needs. A participant shared her experience in this regard:

"I have just moved from one town to another and was just looking to share a large house with another woman so that we could live with our respective daughters. In the end, there was no such house. We couldn't find enough space to be comfortable. We ended up living on our own."

The participants' understandings about collaborative housing were deeply rooted in spatial and social aspects. The women defined collaborative forms of housing as spatial structures that combine private housing units and common areas such as laundry or kitchen rooms. These spatial structures are intended to foster community by encouraging collaboration among neighbors. A workshop discussant pictured collaborative housing as:

"Housing where the spaces of the family units are minimal or indispensable and the common spaces are really the most important. Collaboration is present not only when it comes to sharing resources but also when it comes to spending time in your home with other people and raising a group."

All research participants agreed that building support networks based on collaboration with their neighbors within the same housing building would impact positively their everyday experiences and would contribute to meet their housing needs. The women believe that among the advantages of establishing neighbor networks, the sharing of domestic work, the collectivization of upbringing, and the emotional support are of great significance.

"Because it would save time and effort in many tasks, and also because we would do it in the company of other people, which I find appealing. My daughter does not share her play at home with anyone, and I do a lot of housework, alone too, which leaves me hardly any time to enjoy playing with her or other things that can be done and enjoyed at home."

"It's having a support network at home, from the classic cup of salt to keeping an eye on my child while I have a work meeting or even saving on food costs. But it's also additional psychological support and learning from other people."

"I consider life is more enriching with people around with whom you can relate in many ways and learn vital skills such as listening, sharing spaces and ideas. I value this positively for myself and of course for my son. Collaborative social networks are the most important socio-emotional support we have, and building it is a constitutive process of the person."

"If we did that building collaborative networks (with neighbors within the same building), we would have more freedom and independence."

It can be inferred that from the perspective of the participants, collaboration is inherent to motherhood. When referring to collaborative housing environments, most participants understand collaboration as centered on child-rearing with the support of a neighborhood community. Some participants even assumed the housing community was formed by people going through the same vital moment, that is to say, mothers' heads of households. In this sense, a research participant defined collaboration as *"not simply a sharing of tasks to lighten burdens, but to really create a community, a kind of chosen family."*

Reaching coexistence agreements

Although all research participants recognize that building community within the housing building would substantially improve their everyday experience, they think that there would be significant challenges to face. Not only do housing spaces need to be redesigned according to collaborative approaches but also social dynamics. Rather than an obstacle, conflict is considered a matter to work on from the very beginning of the project. Participants observed:

"Living in a community can lead to conflicts. The basic rules should be very well worked out in order to avoid conflicts, which there will always be when there are people."

"The issue of organizing and raising in a tribe implies a lot of communication between the families of adults who form part of this community. We should enjoy the possibilities it offers us and also commit ourselves to invest time in learning to communicate because conflicts will be there from the very beginning."

Throughout the workshop with women, establishing coexistence agreements, planning conflict resolution strategies as well as creating spaces that facilitate communication between neighbors emerged as needs to meet when making collaborative lifestyles possible. The main issues that were seen as possible conflicts to solve were the organization of collectivized housing chores such as shared spaces maintenance or common meals preparation.

Again, child-rearing arose as another central topic. Two main dimensions that might generate conflict were considered in this regard. First, attention is placed on the ideological approaches to the wide range of aspects that comprehend upbringing. The values in which children are educated might probably differ among households that form the community. This situation might result in disagreement in the community around child-rearing. A workshop discussant suggested that *"the way each family raises their children should be taken into account because, of course, you can't share a life with people whose way of raising children is the opposite of yours."*

The second dimension is related to child-rearing and spatial conflicts. Children tend to be physically expansive over the space which could lead to tension among the neighbors, particularly when considering shared areas within the residential building. Women believe that agreements that reach both private units and common areas are necessary to avoid divergence in this respect. The participants elaborated upon this matter:

"I may consider that the best upbringing for my child is to be able to paint on the walls. So in my house, I may tell my child to paint wherever he wants because for me it is very important that he can do it. But of course, he can't do that in common spaces. To what extent can the other adult scold my child for painting on the walls when it is something that I let him do at home?"

"The issue of silence is also important. In parenting, there are times when you need silence and times when you need the opposite, and your neighbors are making a lot of noise. When raising together with other families, I think this is something to think about carefully so that these issues do not get in the way. Rules of coexistence are needed in this respect. I think there could be quiet zones and separate play areas to share with others."

Although the coexistence difficulties that might emerge, research participants are generally optimistic about the possibility of reaching coexistence agreements. From the perspective of a participant:

"I have the idea that we do more complicated things at work, we do more complicated things in common spaces. What happens is that this is something we are not used to thinking about, but I think that it is perfectly possible to reach agreements."

Sharing spaces

When participants picture collaborative housing, shared areas become both spaces of possible conflict and of community building. In this sense, the survey conducted among research participants yielded that a very high percentage of women would be willing to share common

spaces within the housing building. Communal kitchens, dining rooms, laundries, terraces, playrooms, working places, and storage areas are among the spaces that women most likely would share with neighbors.

When discussing the kind of common housing spaces that participants need and desire, issues around the correlation between the private and the collective spheres arose. A key question is related to spatial maximization. The women explained the physical space taken in the private unit by washing machines, not often used household appliances, storage containers or even books could be optimized through the creation of common facilities. In this sense, not only the space is collectivized but also part of the household resources. A participant remarked:

"My son will want to keep some of his stories, but many others I could make communal. In other words, collectivization can be thought of not only in community spaces but also in community materials. In that case, I would need much less stuff at home and less space."

Another issue is linked with the size of the private dwelling. A high number of research participants would be willing to share common spaces even if it implies having a smaller residential unit. All this if spatial collectivization does not compromise the privacy of women and their families. In this vein, the basic spatial needs of the household unit would be private bedrooms for both mother and children, one bathroom, and a small living room with an integrated simple kitchen. Regarding this matter, a workshop discussant stated:

"If I want to be in privacy with a friend or a lover or whoever, I would need to have that place (the residential unit). Then, there is a common space like a big living room where all the small dwellings would somehow communicate and the community would become more collective."

Understanding collaborative housing experiences

The different of the different

Since female-head of households who participated in this research understood housing collaboration as principally focused on upbringing children with the support of a community, exploring how the housing community of Las Carolinas and La Borda understand collaboration is of great importance to detect care synergies.

The first approach to this matter is to explore the motivations behind joining a collaborative housing project. According to the contributors, the principal reason is based on political ideology. Being part of a collaborative housing project is, above all things, an act of political activism. Las Carolinas and La Borda are projects born for the political purpose of giving

visibility to initiatives that break down barriers by offering sustainable forms of housing based on community building. Solving housing affordability is a second motivation to engage with collaborative housing, particularly in the case of projects located in Barcelona, where the cooperative movement has responded to the urgent economic housing needs of their members. In this sense, a contributor remarked that *"La Borda has allowed me to live in Barcelona comfortably, which is quite difficult in a city where rents are so expensive, and even more so for a single mother."*

Although neither neighborhood places overt emphasis on child-rearing, this topic is present when analyzing the composition of residents. The traditional family is dominant in both projects, particularly in the case of Las Carolinas, where a contributor said the housing community is homogeneous in terms of age and household composition, and in terms of economic class and educational level. Most households are formed by the middle class, young, highly educated, heterosexual couples with young children. Although being slightly more diverse in terms of household composition, a contributor indicates that in La Borda the traditional family is also dominant. Excepting some rare cases, most of the households are formed by young couples with children, or couples wanting children.

Although female representation in collaborative housing is indicated by a contributor to be higher than male, the representation of households headed by women is considerably low. The absence of household diversity is evidenced by the fact there is only one household headed by a woman in each of the projects. Both women contributed to this research and one of them described herself as being *"the different of the different"* when reflecting on their place within the community. Elaborating on the everyday experiences of these women is highly significant to better understand how the socio-spatial needs of research participants could be met by the collaborative housing experiences.

Everyday experiences

Despite the low representation of their household makeup, motherhood was of great significance in joining collaborative housing for representatives from Las Carolinas and La Borda. The main motivation was the possibility of collectivizing care by optimizing efforts. Among the wide range of care, child-rearing was highlighted as a principal aspect to be collectivized. Enabling their children to grow up with peers was a second motivation that encouraged women to become involved. However, both contributors underlined that further work regarding care collectivization and children upbringing is needed, so that coexistence is not *"left to improvisation"*. Coexistence is here understood by women as a dynamic and nonlinear learning process under construction.

A topic that emerged in this regard is the notion of female-headed households. In the context of the housing community, raising children without a partner can be understood as a deficiency rather than a particularity. One contributor suggests the generalized understanding of female-headed families as being 'incomplete families' seems to have been translated into the housing community. In this sense, including household diversity as a positive value in line with feminist perspectives is not an issue. It is especially concerning if the idea that female-headed families are incomplete or imperfect families are transferred to the children. This ultimately perpetuates family stereotypes and hinders the inclusion of household diversity at a societal level. In this regard, a contributor said:

"You have a child to whom you work hard to transmit that we lack nothing. I am extremely happy in my family unit! There are so many good things about single motherhood, so many! In terms of empowerment and autonomy, but also symbolically from a feminist point of view."

In this line, the integration of a gender perspective in child education within the housing community is of vital importance, according to one of the contributors. She underlined that the spatial appropriation that male children made over collective areas are evidence of the lack of gender education among the youngest. While boys are playing ball, girls "stand in the corners against the wall until the ball hits them". The contributor explained that men looking after the children, or cooking dinner, is not enough to provide an integral gender education, and rather women need to *"use the drill [...] to take a space that breathes feminism."*

Another issue is the collectivization of care activities, which is closely related to child-rearing. In Las Carolinas, due to the composition of their residents, child-rearing is a central topic. Parents organize activities such as watching movies, holiday excursions, childminding during group meetings or performing collectivized tasks. Despite the centrality of childcare, a contributor affirms that collaborative forms of living improve everyday life beyond question for child-rearing. By thinking collectively in the face of a collective need, *"the response is generally better, faster and cheaper"*.

In the case of La Borda, child-rearing is not central to the framework of the housing community. This might be guided by the composition of residents. Child-rearing tends to be managed in the intimacy of the household, and the collectivization of care is an exception rather than the norm. A contributor said when she joined the housing project, her *"idea was also to participate in more of a parenting thing, but it's not like that"*. She continues explaining that the particularities of female-headed families are frequently not considered in the everyday life of the community. Nevertheless, an incipient exchange is being developed around the topic of care, such as when neighbors take kids to school while their mothers are at work.

However, the pandemic has triggered extreme circumstances in which questions of care were placed at the center of everyday life. For instance, a group of families started to use the common spaces more intensively during confinements. In this respect, a contributor commented that:

"This appropriation has been very nice. I felt that I was living more in a community because my home was more than four walls [...] But on a daily basis, care is not normally shared. Just because it is collaborative housing and common spaces are available, care is not going to be shared. I think a lot of work needs to be done to place care at the center, and sometimes you have to fight too hard for it."

Contributors from both collaborative housing experiences struggle considerably to discuss the topics mentioned above with others in the housing community. In this regard, one of them remarks that *"the female voice must be valued in the participative process of housing"*.

Housing participation

Enabling residents to decide on their housing is a principal feature of the collaborative housing projects. This includes the design of spaces and social dynamics as well as self-management. According to the survey conducted among research participants, all women would be interested in housing participation. The main motivation behind their interest lies in their knowledge about their own needs and the needs of their children. From this view, drawing parallels between the housing participation experiences of contributors and the needs of research participants is highly valuable to identify learnings and opportunities.

Although most research participants were willing to meet regularly with neighbors to debate matters around housing, a contributor explains that both the planning stage to materialize the project and the coexistence phase after its completion are intense processes that require a great deal of time. And insufficient time is one of the regular difficulties facing women. One contributor commented that during the phases of the project before coexistence, the housing community would meet once per month, and even once per week during the high points of participation. In some cases, the encounters would last between 4 to 7 hours. During the phases before coexistence, discussing economic matters or housing units distribution could be quite challenging.

The duration of the phases before coexistence depends substantially on the characteristics of the project. In the case of the housing experiences considered here, these phases lasted between 5 and 10 years. A contributor explained that such a long period of time can lead to frustration among the community. Not only the difficulties that such groundbreaking projects must face can become exhausting, but also the lives and needs of prospective residents might change considerably over the course of 5 to 10 years.

Once the project was materialized, active participation continued. The housing communities tend to organize themselves in working groups and commissions. In one case, all members must get involved in activities regarding the self-management of housing such as cleaning, administration, or communication. When distributing activities or scheduling meetings, a contributor highlights that household particularities are not considered. The difficulties that combining child-rearing and housing participation may cause are frequently overlooked. In this sense, the contributor underlined that being a female-head of household *"is an obstacle for participation"* and added:

"As a single mother there are many unseen needs. From whom to leave the child with when you go shopping, to not being able to throw the rubbish out because the child is sleeping [...] With a child you can't participate as much. But if you don't participate you can't be in the process. You feel left out. Participation is not thought about according to the characteristics of each household but is obligatory for everyone. The particular needs of the households are not measured!"

Meanwhile, participation is an option in the other community. A contributor describes her housing community as a *"group in which making demands is found difficult [...] a very generous group in which people work hard and little is demanded of others"*. Despite the burden of self-managing, neighbors participate in relation to their desires and possibilities. But the more involvement in participation, the more personal expectations meet reality. The contributor emphasizes that *"while there are people who have participated very little, other people have participated a lot, and by 'a lot', I mean if we had had to pay for that work we would have been ruined."*

Knowledge sharing is here underlined as highly significant to developing the collaborative housing project, particularly academic knowledge. Housing community members commonly offer (for free) the service to their neighbors their capacities in managing participatory processes, analyzing legal documents, or understanding solar panel systems. The contributor remarked:

"(The collaborative housing case) is a project that exists thanks to a lot of free and generous work performed by many people who have been thinking about the housing problem in Madrid for a long time."

The different experiences Las Carolinas and La Borda representatives shared about housing participation can be understood from their expectations of the community. According to a contributor, there is a kind of a myth in collaborative housing in which community is *"a space of love, tranquility, and harmony in which all your problems will be solved, and your life will be cared*

for and sustained collectively". But in practice, the definition of community is comprehended differently according to the diverse lifestyles and needs of residents. This is translated into dissimilar expectations which could ultimately lead to personal disappointment.

The contributor noted the myth around the community is found more frequently in collaborative housing cases where political ideology is highly present. In these cases, the housing community tends to avoid dissidence which could hinder participation. Participation is essential to detect care synergies among neighbors and collectivize care, which has been proved to have a high potential in improving the everyday experiences of research participants. For this reason, working on contextualized definitions of community is of great importance for coexistence.

Socio spatial analysis

Although the housing projects have their own particularities, from a visit to the sites and analysis of the architectural plans it can be observed that fostering coexistence spaces is a major focus of both projects. Studying the socio-spatial dynamics of these areas is particularly important to learn how study cases can meet the socio-spatial needs of research participants.

Throughout the analysis, special attention has been paid to 'transitional spaces', which according to contributors have proved to be highly important in encouraging interaction within the community, as well as with the surrounding neighborhood. Transitional spaces of coexistence are places of daily casual encounters that have a great relevance in revealing care synergies. Transitional spaces are zones in-between that link the public sphere of the urban, the collective sphere of common areas, and the private sphere of the housing unit. Likewise, transitional spaces can be overlapped with public spaces such as the entrance hall, and collective spaces like the corridor networks, and private spaces such as balconies facing the street.

A contributor emphasized the importance of transitional spaces in increasing the well-being of residents. The existence of transitional spaces allows residents to feel watched without surveillance. It means that rather than control, co-presence is encouraged. Unlike the case of most crowded urban environments where surrounding people are anonymous, collaborative housing enables residents to feel they are accompanied by those around them. Hence, transitional spaces are of great potential to improve the wellbeing of research participants when encouraging socialization and ideally, to foster care collectivization.



Figure 5 | Ground floor, Las Carolinas (Source: satt.es)



Figure 4 | Top floor, Las Carolinas (Source: satt.es)

In Las Carolinas, open and covered common spaces are partly distributed on the ground floor where a multipurpose room and a longitudinal courtyard can be found (Figure 4, Figure 6). Other common facilities such as a shared kitchen and a terrace are located on the top floor (Figure 5, Figure 7). There is also a basement with car and bike parking, and the laundry and storage areas.



Figure 6 | Building entrance, Las Carolinas (Source: Source: Andrés Valentín-Gamazo, sAtt Arquitectura Triple Balance)



Figure 9 | Terrace, Las Carolinas (Source: Andrés Valentín-Gamazo, sAtt Arquitectura Triple Balance)



Figure 8 | Corridor, Las Carolinas (Source: Andrés Valentín-Gamazo, sAtt Arquitectura Triple Balance)



Figure 7 | Balconies, Las Carolinas (Source: Andrés Valentín-Gamazo, sAtt Arquitectura Triple Balance)

The corridors network that connects the different housing units are not just simple aisles but spaces that facilitate encounters within the housing community as well as with the neighborhood (Figure 8). These corridors are genuine transitional spaces between private and collective spheres. But in being situated on the construction line facing the front streets, corridors have the additional function of balconies. These balconies link urban and housing life, or in other words, public and collective life. Particularly on the first level, collective spaces which include corridors and a multipurpose room, are in spatial continuance with the street (Figure 9).



Figure 10 | Section, La Borda (Source: laborda.coop)



Figure 11 | Corridors, La Borda (Source: laborda.coop)

When looking at La Borda, the ground floor is mainly dedicated to collective spaces such as an entrance hall, a common room with a kitchen, and a bike parking area (Figure 10). The bike parking is located in the middle of the layout. Corridor networks located on the higher floors face this central area and have a significant function of materializing spaces of transition between the private housing unit and the collective common space (Figure 11, Figure 12).

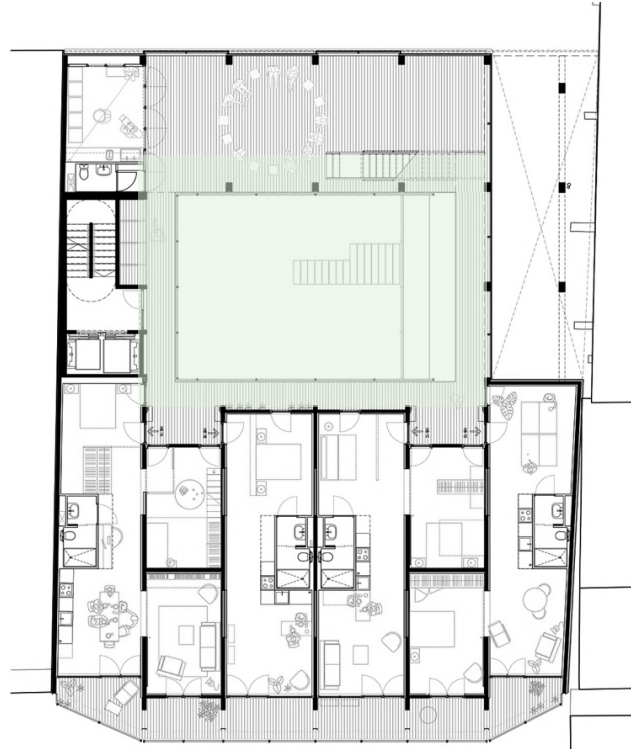


Figure 12 | First floor, La Borda (Source: Lluc Miralles, Lacol)



Figure 13 | Street facade, La Borda (Source: Lluc Miralles, Lacol)

Transitions between the collective and public spheres are partly structured at the ground level. Facing the front street there is a cooperative of ecological consumption accessible to the neighborhood and a public passage over the partly walled area of the plot that connects the front street with the center of the block (Figure 13).



Figure 14 | Common area, La Borda (Source: Lluc Miralles, Lacol)



Figure 15 | Terrace, La Borda (Source: Lluc Miralles, Lacol)

Another transitional space is on the first floor, where a multipurpose area facing the front street, and washing machines can be found (Figure 14). Another common area is placed on the top floor, where a terrace with hammocks and ropes for hanging clothes is open to the community (Figure 15). The back façade mostly consists of balconies that connect the housing units with the public space placed at the center of the block. But instead of being separated, these balconies are joined and form a continuous collective space (Figure 16).



Figure 16 | Back facade, La Borda (Source: Lluc Miralles, Lacol)

From the socio-spatial analysis, it can be seen that La Borda dedicates substantially more space to collective areas than Las Carolinas. This could be due to technical aspects derived from the plot features, but is more likely due to economic limitations. The contributor from Las Carolinas explains that the main architectural intention of the project was to generate more collective spaces, particularly on the top floor, which would have been completely devoted to common areas. But the community decided to build more housing instead, because of the economic incapacity to afford more square meters of common spaces.

However, more collective areas seem to not necessarily mean more collective life. Common spaces are intensively used in Las Carolinas, principally by children. Care in these spaces is clearly collectivized by the housing community. But in La Borda, even though there is a clear intention of making care visible when placing washing machines or ropes to hang clothes in some of the most qualified common areas, these spaces seem not to be collectively appropriated with frequency. In this regard, a contributor emphasized that she *“wanted it*

(common space) to be a space that goes beyond my home, where I could generate relationships between neighbors, but this is still being worked out."

These findings seem to show that even if space defines a high level of coexistence through the creation of common and transitional spaces, this is not necessarily followed by the housing community. In accordance with this, a contributor remarked that *"space conditions but does not construct"*.

Not to arrive like a Martian

In line with collaborative values, there is a willingness from the provision side to incorporate a collaborative socio-spatial approach in the relationship between the housing and the neighborhood. From this perspective, collaborative housing could be a potential agent of urban regeneration (Rosa et al., 2016). When looking at this issue through research participants, building collaborative networks at the scale of the neighborhood is of great significance. Although the collaborative strategies vary from one project to another, one contributor underlines that efforts are generally brought together so the building *"does not arrive like a Martian"* in the neighborhood.

Due to its nature, in La Borda there was a solid connection with the local community even before the beginning of the project. In the case of Las Carolinas, some of the collaborative housing members were already engaged with the social fabric of the neighborhood. But a contributor emphasizes that in most collaborative housing projects, there are always residents who find themselves living in a neighborhood they have never lived in before. Also, mistrust can be aroused among locals who might think that available land in their neighborhood should be used for the needs of the existing community rather than the needs of outsiders.

Despite the level of prior knowledge between the housing community and the neighborhood, working on integration is always present. In both case studies, special commissions particularly concerned with neighborhood relationships were created. These commissions worked during the planning, execution, and coexistence phases of the project.

Particularly during the first years of coexistence, and in order to avoid creating "niches of reality" within the community, a contributor believes that new residents have the responsibility of building ties with the neighborhood. To this end, it is essential to understand the needs of the local community:

"Instead of asking what facilities I am going to need in the neighborhood, the question is what facilities do not exist so I can offer them [...] I think this is a slightly more

interesting approach because you make a participatory process not only internally but also with the neighborhood, therefore you get to know each other little by little.”

An integrational approach is to work with local institutions and collectives to better understand the neighborhood. This approach comprehends reaching small businesses to generate economic wellbeing or contacting parenting groups to facilitate the inclusion of children in the schools. Another strategy for integration is to allocate space within the collaborative housing area for general neighborhood use. The functions of these spaces are generally meant to have a political dimension and encourage the participation of neighbors.

Accessing land

A contributor highlighted that collaborative housing *“is trying to do something innovative in one of the most important Spanish market segments.”* In doing so, collaborative housing projects struggle with the speculation over land which has worsened in the last years. In this sense, access to land is the major difficulty when trying to develop collaborative housing projects.

A contributor indicates that in rare cases such as in La Borda, the municipality agrees with the housing community to lease a particular plot that has been claimed by locals for a long time. But generally, there are two mechanisms through which urban land can be accessed. In both scenarios, there is not much room for plot selection.

One possible option to solve the land access issue is that instead of the community asking for land from the municipality, the latter offers a specific plot it owns through a public tender. This is one instrument the municipality of Barcelona is currently implementing. Another alternative is to acquire land via a purchase in the private market as happened in Las Carolinas. Here, the plot selection greatly depends on the economic capacity and the common vision of the housing community. The contributor commented that given a group of mothers or parents with young children, with the purpose to share upbringing, the existence of a school with an enriching educational project close to the plot was of great importance.

The latter assumption is the case of Las Carolinas, in which the proximity to everyday services and infrastructure was a priority when searching for land, particularly those services and infrastructure related to child-rearing. A contributor residing in Las Carolinas also remarked the importance of the location respecting her emotional territories:

“Before this plot appeared, there was another one. But transport to get to my mother's or my sister's neighborhood was impossible. At that time the child was very young. I had to move around with the pram and everything. I couldn't take an hour to get to my mother's or my sister's house! So I dropped out of the project [...] My family has

been my companions in the upbringing of my daughter. They are fundamental resources for me. If I have any unforeseen situation, in the end, I rely on my family."

The economic capacity of the housing community is highlighted as a great limitation to meeting residents' expectations, particularly when the project is formed by young people. In this respect, a contributor remarked:

"The value of land is an important element, more than anything else because it is a limiting factor. Plots that are well located or that have another special characteristic are too expensive [...] rather than deciding on the priorities of the group, you end up deciding a little bit according to what is available"

Las Carolinas illustrates this point when accessing land. The housing community had to forget the political intention of materializing a groundbreaking housing project in the urban core of the city due to land speculation in Madrid, which hindered the possibilities of accessing a plot inside the M30 artery. Eventually, they accessed a plot in the neighborhood of Orcasitas where members of the housing community were already involved in local activism.

Economic concerns

Although further details regarding the economic aspects of housing exceed the scope of this research, contrasting the economic requirements of the case studies and the economic capacities of participants shed light on important discrepancies and challenges. Particularly for female-headed households, unaffordability is a major barrier when assessing their housing needs. In conducting a comparative analysis, two main topics emerged.

The first relates to the initial payment needed to join the housing projects, the so-called 'social capital'. In Las Carolinas, the social capital was about 62,500 euros, while in La Borda this amount decreased to 17,500 euros. This difference is due to the land plots, which influenced significantly the higher social capital of Las Carolinas. Apart from the land leasing, La Borda also received a subsidy from the public administration to develop the project. This subsidy impacted positively in the reduction of the social capital. Although public assistance was also afforded to Las Carolinas, it was only a small economic boost, as the use of renewable energies had very little impact on the initial social capital.

In doing a comparison with the economic capacity of research participants for an initial payment, it resulted that more than half of participants could not afford any of the social capitals that correspond to the case studies. Besides, a very low percentage of participants could afford a social capital such as that of Las Carolinas. In this respect, a research participant who was a

prospective member of Las Carolinas commented *"I was involved in the project, but I couldn't continue because I had to allocate a very large amount of money for the initial payment."*

The second issue involves the difference between the monthly housing spending of research participants and the monthly payment. In order to conduct a comparative analysis, the monthly payment of housing units in Las Carolinas and La Borda were used as a reference. The selection of the housing units was based on the spatial needs of participants in terms of square meters.

The monthly payment for a three-bedroom apartment of approximately 75 square meters is around 620 euros in Las Carolinas (Figure 17) and 600 euros in La Borda (Figure 19). For a two-bedroom apartment of around 60 square meters, this amount decreases to 500 euros in Las Carolinas (Figure 18) and 500 euros in La Borda (Figure 20). When contrasting these values with the household spending of participants, the findings showed 40% of participants would have to devote more money to housing costs after becoming part of a collaborative housing project. Spending more money on housing would increase the financial housing burden to which most participants are already exposed. To calculate this comparison, the smallest housing unit was taken as a reference.



Figure 17 | 75 square meters typology, Las Carolinas
(Source: satt.es)



Figure 18 | 60 square meters typology, Las Carolinas
(Source: satt.es)

This gross monthly housing cost corresponds to either rent or mortgage payments and does not include essential services such as electricity or water consumption. These expenses vary considerably according to numerous factors, thus it was decided not to include them.

However, it should be noted this is a lively topic of debate among the housing community of Las Carolinas, in which not only the expenses from common areas and activities are collectivized but also water and the internet. The debate centers on whether these services costs should be shared in a more traditional form according to the square meters of the residential unit or if adjustments should be made in consonance with the household income and the number of dependents.

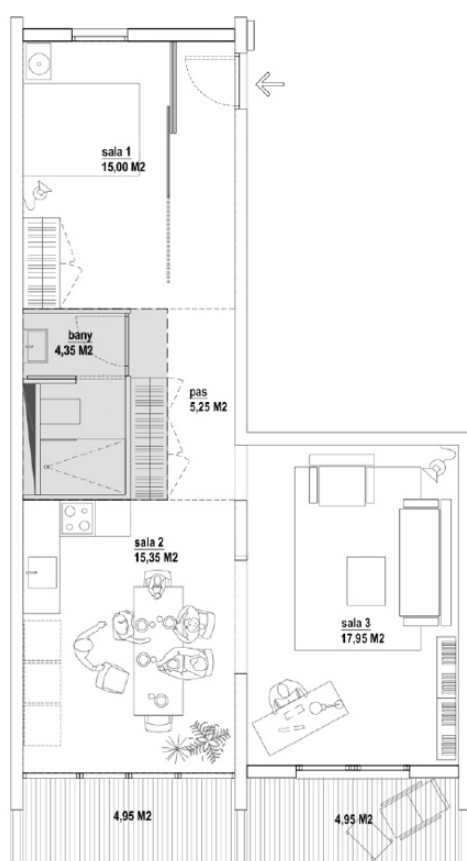


Figure 19 | 75 square meters typology, La Borda (Source: lacol.coop)

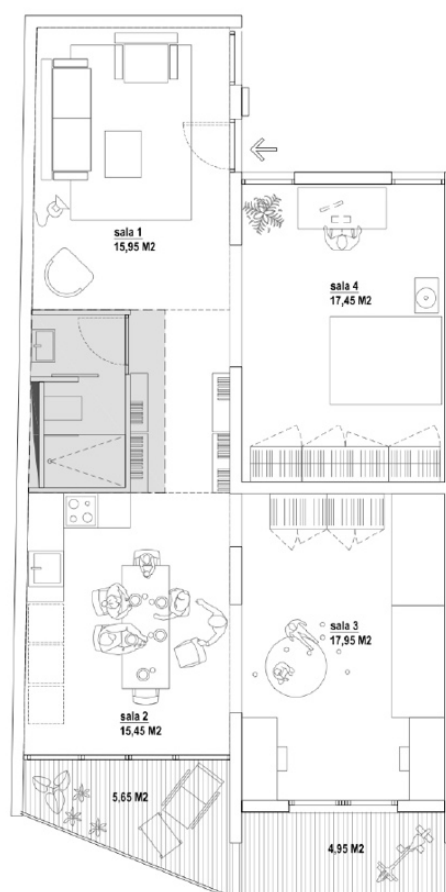


Figure 20 | 60 square meters typology, La Borda (Source: lacol.coop)

Integrating diversity

Although the collaborative housing projects do not necessarily meet the economic needs of all the women who participated in this research, inclusive dynamics have been generated concerning economic matters.

In both housing projects, reserve funds have been created to bear the cost of economic contingencies. If a household can not meet its monthly payment, the reserve fund would cover this eventuality. Collaborative housing providers in Barcelona have employed another instrument to overcome these situations by using residential units part of the social housing

stock from the municipality. For some reason, the municipality does not require these units, which are made available to collaborative housing providers when the need arises. One contributor explained that this stock of residential units is offered by the collaborative housing cooperative for a much lower monthly cost than a unit in a collaborative housing building, but the living conditions are 'modest'.

Economic support among the housing community was also present in La Borda regarding raising social capital. Community members who had the economic capacity contributed to others with less economic resources so the latter could reach the required social capital. This practice is also extended to other collaborative housing projects in Barcelona. In this sense, one contributor raised questions about the economic solidarity between neighbors. The problem is that these kinds of resolutions might generate dynamics of control over the person who is being helped, which ultimately, could be harmful to the entire housing community.

Mechanisms to include economic diversity and other aspects of diversity in collaborative housing projects are being devised at the provision level in Barcelona. A contributor explained that to expand the range of profiles frequently found in collaborative housing, a minimum of 5% of residential units will be reserved for particularly vulnerable groups. This initiative would be supported by entities that must be involved in the integration process of the housing community. Under certain circumstances, accessing financial aid for housing costs is feasible for vulnerable groups, to ease economic constraints. This initiative is particularly important when considering the economic situation of many female-headed households.

Discussion & Conclusion

Housing is understood by the women who participated in this research as an intimate place of safety to care for their children and themselves. However, most participants struggle hard to meet social-spatial housing needs. Findings showed that collaborative housing forms such as Las Carolinas and La Borda have a strong potential to meet these needs and ultimately encourage the emancipation of women-headed households from the domestic sphere.

In line with the literature (Vestbro and Horelli, 2012), collaborative housing experiences under research provide alternative spatial and temporal alternative patterns that encourage care collectivization among neighbors. This was highly valued by participants because the collectivization of care activities contributes to the conciliation of production and reproduction spheres which, which is one of the major challenges that participants face (Del Olmo et al., 2011). For the participants, care collectivization understood as the optimization of individual efforts by sharing house chores and child upbringing is advantageous from a pragmatic as well as from an emotional perspective.

While the participants principally comprehend collaborative housing from their roles as mothers and with a focus on care, the collaborative is understood from other angles in Las Carolinas and La Borda. And upon this matter is where the first discrepancy is found. From the view of most of their residents, engaging in the collaborative housing experiences is primarily an act of political activism to stand for sustainable forms of housing. This does not mean that upbringing is not an issue, but it is not as central as for participants. The results of this work demonstrated that women heads of households can become frustrated due to dissimilar expectations about collaborative life. Thus, a challenge for collaborative housing in terms of addressing the needs of female-headed families is to find ways to ensure that care is placed at the center of collaboration. In connection with this, a contributor highlighted the importance of “raising the level of debate about needs and lowering the level of politicization, in reality, it is not even about politicization, it is about being all the time talking about politics, which is different.”

The findings also yielded that collaborative housing dweller’s openness to care collectivization and, specifically, childcare is related to the household arrangements of the housing community. It seems that the more households formed by young couples with children, the more care synergies are generated among residents. Yet, even when the housing community is mainly formed by young families with small kids, the symbolic and practical needs of women who head

households are somehow in dissonance with those of the nuclear family. When a woman head of household contributor was asked whether she thought that collectivization of care would be improved if the collaborative housing households were exclusively headed by women, she responded:

"I think it would totally change everything. At the end of the day, parenting is lived as a couple, isn't it? The concept is that parenting is at home, with your partner, and in intimacy. When you are a single mother, you look for other alliances, and those alliances go beyond the couple."

The fact that mother-headed families are underrepresented in Las Carolinas and La Borda the housing community of study makes more evident dissonance between the needs female-headed households and nuclea' households. This raises questions about how collaborative housing can generate collectivization of care among community members while maintaining household diversity, which according to the literature is in increment (Sánchez, 2019).

Moreover, women who head households often have different needs, responsibilities, and obligations that make their participation in collaborative housing difficult. This is a major issue because while 'participation' is considered a pillar of collaborative forms of housing, in some cases, it can become a demand rather than an option. Demanding participatory processes proved to increase the burden on women which ultimately, isolates them from the housing community. In order to better meet the realities of research participants, collaborative housing must develop mechanisms so household particularities are not a limitation for women who head families and want to engage with the housing community.

Another discrepancy between collaborative housing characteristics and the realities of women who participated in this research is that the phases of the projects before coexistence are long-lasting. This is in dissonance with the urgent housing needs that the collective of female-headed households confront. Instead of building new housing buildings, this problem could be partly solved by reconditioning existing housing buildings. However, some needs of participants such as those related to spatial aspects might be difficult to meet. Further research that dives deeper into this matter would contribute to solving situations where a housing solution cannot wait for five years.

Continuing with the subject of participation, most residents of Las Carolinas and La Borda engaged with their academic knowledge to make the projects possible. It suggests a high educational level from the housing community. Similarly, the majority of research participants received post-secondary education. On this issue, there are three questions I would like to raise. First, it suggests a relationship between educational attainment and involvement, or at least an

interest, in exploring emancipatory mechanisms from the domestic sphere. Second, even though it does not intend to be representative, this work lacks the perspectives of women who received lower levels of education. Lastly, it demonstrates that collaborative housing processes must provide instruments so the fact of not having academic knowledge to offer is not a limitation to engage in innovative forms of housing. Future studies on the work that local cooperatives conduct in facilitating collaborative housing could be enriching in this regard.

Apart from being highly educated, the residents of the collaborative housing under research are mostly middle-class. In consonance with the literature, the economic perspective is a great concern for the vast majority of research participants. Even when the monthly payments of Las Carolinas and La Borda do not exceed social housing prices, a considerable part of the participants of this research maintains that they would not be able to meet the payments. The greatest challenge would be to meet the initial payment, the social capital. Moreover, even when the plot is leased to the housing community, access to land does not necessarily mean that the project will be affordable for everyone. The city of Barcelona is experimenting with some mechanisms to provide subsidies so economically limited households can be included in collaborative housing. In this sense, gaining political will for the promotion of innovative housing forms is essential. Further research in this regard could draw interesting lessons from the Barcelona case.

When looking specifically at the spatial housing needs of participants, the women value common and private spaces that make reproductive work easier to manage. They are willing to share common spaces, particularly those related to care activities such as kitchens, laundries, playrooms, or working spaces. A high number of research participants would prefer to have quality common spaces, even if it implies having a smaller residential unit. All this if spatial collectivization does not compromise the privacy of women and their families. The case studies seem to consider all these needs but, despite encouraging care collectivization through the creation of highly qualified spaces, the findings showed that incorporating collective areas do not necessarily lead to more collective life. Collaborative housing is challenged to place more efforts on the coexistence of the housing community. Throughout this research, it was clear that space enables community (Horelli, 2013) but does not build it.

But space matters nonetheless. Not surprisingly, the pandemic confinements have encouraged the appropriation of collective spaces. The findings show that, particularly during the highpoints of the pandemic, the domestic space was almost the single scene of everyday life. Care activities, which used to be spread in the territory, were suddenly concentrated in one housing space. In this respect, a workshop participant commented:

"I was at home for the whole pandemic. Living, sleeping, working, working, TV, working, eating, and sleeping in the same room [...] The state of mind of feeling like a mouse confined in a box of used matches was terrible."

In both projects, the pandemic has triggered extreme circumstances in which care strategies had to be adopted by the housing community. This was translated to the appropriation of common spaces, which were used more intensively during confinements. The pandemic context made visible the urgency of rethinking housing in view of the ethics of care.

It was also found that care is not static in the domestic sphere, but it is spread from the housing unit to the emotional territories of participants. The collaborative housing under research aims to integrate the project with the territory, particularly with the neighborhood scale where the everyday infrastructure is located. The exchange with participants confirmed that the neighborhood is relevant when carrying out care activities but also when building networks of care. In this sense, and as it was emphasized in the literature (Vestbro and Horelli, 2012; Rosa et al., 2016), both projects make efforts to create spaces of integration that ultimately might facilitate care reciprocity with the local community and foster urban regeneration. Although the topic exceeds the scope of this research, this approach to the neighborhood raises questions about the potential of collaborative housing projects in fostering revitalization processes in the so-called 'emptied rural Spain' (Edelmira Barreira Diz, 2021). Participants have shown their interest in residing in rural environments if the housing projects are well connected through transport networks. The perception is that living in rural environments would contribute to the development of their children. Moreover, land in these areas might be easier to negotiate with local authorities, making collaborative housing projects more feasible.

Although collaborative housing in Spain is still experimental and represents a tiny percentage of the total housing stock, this innovative housing form is gaining increasing acceptance and challenging social and economic systems, from cultural values to land speculation. In line with the ethics of care (Gilligan, 2014), this research has shown that collaborative housing can greatly contribute to producing dwellings and potentially, urban environments, capable of taking care of their residents and of enabling people to take care of others and themselves (Valdivia, 2018). This ultimately contributes to the emancipation of female-headed households from the domestic sphere. But problems must be overcome in the short term to work towards a future that includes more female-headed households.

Certainly, power structures based on gender inequalities will not be transformed solely by collaborative housing, there is an urgent need to reformulate power structures, and restructure public policies aimed at families (Ayuso & Bascón, 2021). But collaborative forms of housing can create the circumstances for women to have the power to decide how they want to live in and appropriate their own spaces.

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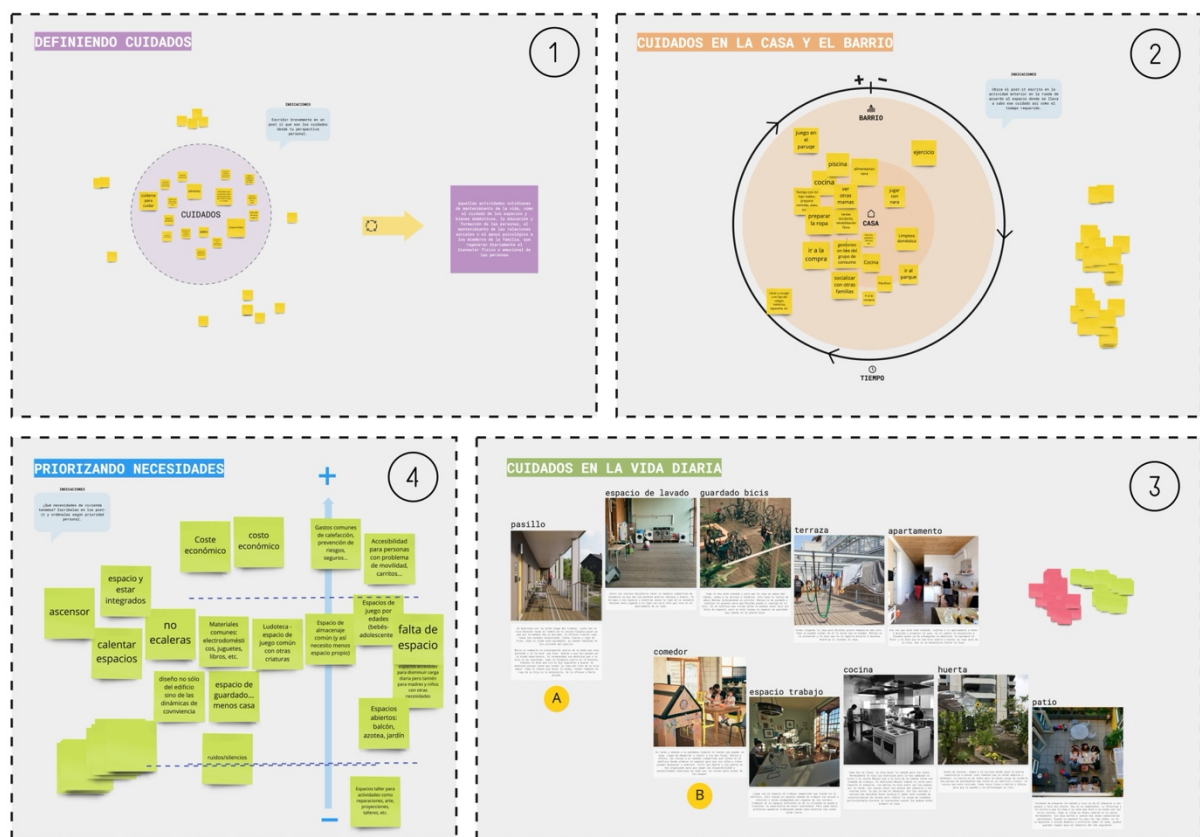
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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Workshop design

The final structure of the workshop was composed of an introduction, four activities, and a closing. The encounter started with a researcher and research presentation which included the reasons and motivations behind this work. This was followed by an icebreaker which purpose was to warm up the conversation and gain insights about previous knowledge about collaborative housing from attendants. In turns, women were required to introduce themselves and share their notions about collaborative housing.

Afterward, a Miro link was sent through the Zoom call and the first workshop activity called 'defining care' was presented. This one is aimed to gain an understanding of the concept of care by defining it collectively. Using the digital wall offered by Miró, women were asked to fill the sticky notes with their first thoughts when considering care and place them on the circle. Next, a discussion was opened, and the definition of care activities referenced above was shared (1).



The second exercise 'caring in the home and in the neighborhood' is intended to raise awareness about the significance housing environments have in the development of caring activities. This is achieved through the reflection on how the private sphere transcends domesticity by considering spatial and time aspects. Care activities usually carried out by participants were required to be located in the wheel according to the space in which these actions occur and the time that they demand. This was followed by a group exchange (2).

A third exercise called 'caring in the everyday life' had the purpose of comprehending how socio-spatial dynamics have the potential of contributing or hindering caring activities. Based on an invented illustrated story about a lived experience of a woman who resides in a collaborative, women had to provide their opinions about the tale and engage in the conversation. The illustrations that joined the narrative are photographs from exiting collaborative housing, including the ones taken as case studies (3).

A final activity was intended to open the conversation to other needs that have not been previously discussed as well as to inquire about the priority given to these needs. Still using the digital wall, participants were required to write their needs on posts and stick them along an axis according to priority. This was followed by an exchange around the topic which eventually led to the close of the workshop (4).

As conclusion, women were thanked for their contribution to the research and last comments from their part were welcomed. Previous being dismissed, attendants were asked to respond the digital survey which will be detailed in the next section. General information about the digital survey was provided, the link was sent after the completion of the workshop. Through the survey questionnaire, women who participated in the encounters were also allowed to share their opinions about the workshop as a method.

Appendix 2: Survey design

The first part of the survey had the role of presenting the method and introduce participants to the questionnaire. After a brief introduction that explained the indications to complete the survey and thanked respondents for their participation, more general questions about the meanings attached to housing and the effects that the pandemic had on them were posed. The segments that followed were more specific and focused on understanding how the topics previously identified on collaborative housing meet women's interests and needs.

The second and third sections dealt with structural features of collaborative housing such as economic and participatory aspects. More direct questions were posed regarding the issues around economic difficulties to face housing expenses and the existence of public help in this

respect. Inquiry about housing tenure modality and household income was also raised within this part. The capacity and willingness to engage participatory processes during and after housing production was also conferred. The time dimension was brought here as a theme that might be of great importance for the participants.

The two parts that followed were centered on the collectivization of caring activities that collaborative socio-spatial dynamics might entail. Specifically, questions were posed around difficulties in conciliating paid and unpaid work as well as the interest in collectivizing caring activities. When inquiring about socio-spatial dynamics, the eagerness to share housing spaces and imaginaries about these spaces were consulted.

Interrogations related to the neighborhood were presented in the sixth section. The information resulted from this segment intended was meant to understand the significance that urban proximities and housing location had for the respondents. When making questions, particular attention was placed on the everyday infrastructure (Horelli, 2009) and the distance to the city center.

The last part of the survey had the purpose of producing demographic data related to age, education, and household income. Participants were given the opportunity of giving feedback and suggestions related to both the workshop and the survey. As a closing question, women were asked whether living in a collaborative form of housing would improve their everyday experience.

The questions of the survey were as follows:

- Introductory questions
 - What does home mean to you?
 - Do you think the pandemic transformed the way you relate to your home?
 - Do you think your housing meets all your needs?
- About affordability
 - Do you consider the affordability of your housing to be a difficulty?
 - Do you receive any public support such as subsidies or grants to help you meet your housing costs?
 - In case you rent or pay a mortgage, what is the monthly cost?
 - In case you pay a mortgage, how many years is its duration?
 - To access a collaborative housing it is necessary an initial contribution that will be returned in the case of leaving the apartment granted. Considering your financial situation, what contribution could you afford?
- About participation

- Would you be interested in being part of a participatory collaborative housing process?
- How often would you be willing to participate in the meetings of the participatory process?
- How much time would you be willing to dedicate to each of these meetings?
- Would you be willing to give part of your time for the community self-management of your home?
- About care
 - If you do pay work, do you find it difficult to conciliate this work and your caregiving tasks?
 - Do you think that the collectivization of caregiving tasks with your neighbors would have a positive impact on reducing your daily caregiving workload?
 - If you answered yes to the previous question, what type of tasks would you be willing to collectivize?
- About socio-spatial dynamics
 - Would you consider that the spaces in your home meet your needs?
 - Would you be interested in participating in the design of your living spaces?
 - Would you be willing to share some living spaces with your neighbors such as laundry, gardens, terraces, workplaces, etc.?
 - Would you consider that establishing collaborative and supportive ties with your neighbors would have a positive impact on your daily experience?
- About urban relationships
 - Would you consider the connection between the city center and your home to be of great importance?
 - What services such as kindergartens, schools, supermarkets, or hospitals do you think should be within a 10-minute walk from your home?
- Closing questions
 - What is your age?
 - What is your level of education?
 - What is your monthly household income?
 - Do you think living in collaborative housing would improve your daily experience?

Appendix 3: Expert interviews' design

After a personal presentation and research introduction, the interview started with an icebreaker question about the meaning that the contributor attached to collaborative housing was posed. The first nucleolus of the guide was concerned about intended housing users and the

representation of women-headed families. The set of issues that followed was more focused on the location of the housing building and its relationship with the neighborhood. Then, inquiries around economic accessibility and housing security were posed. The next nucleolus comprehended questions about participation requirements both during and after the production process. The topic around socio-spatial dynamics from a care perspective was brought subsequently.

Before concluding the interview, questions regarding possibilities of scaling up collaborative housing models and strategies to include women-headed households on collaborative forms of housing. Finally, contributors were thanked for their participation and asked about the impacts of the pandemic on spreading collaborative housing ideas.

The questions of the interview guide were as follows:

- Ice-breaker
 - How is collaborative housing understood?
- About intended-users
 - In general terms, what is the composition of collaborative housing residents like? Do you think there are differences with non collaborative housing models?
 - Do you think there is a type of household or residents that are more represented in collaborative housing models?
 - What do you think are the values that collaborative housing residents hold most dear?
 - Would you say that female-headed households are represented among collaborative housing models? What do you think are the reasons?
- About the neighborhood
 - What is the role that the neighborhood generally plays in collaborative housing cases? What are the services that are prioritized to have in close proximity to housing?
 - How does the collaborative housing community select and evaluate sites for potential projects? What is the role of the association in relation to local governments and their planning/urbanism areas?
- About affordability and security
 - As I understand it, in the cooperative housing models the contribution of a social capital is necessary to be part of the project. What is the approximate value of this capital for a family household? Is there any strategy on the part of the cooperative for those households that are interested in the project but cannot

cover this social capital? Any type of promotion by the state such as subsidies or grants?

- What is the approximate monthly contribution for a family housing unit? What do the variations of this contribution depend on? Is there any tool within the cooperative for those households that cannot contribute for any reason? Public aid?
- About time
 - I understand that participatory processes in the process and design of cooperative housing requires considerable time on the part of future residents. How long might this process take before accessing housing? How frequent would be the meetings in the framework of this process? How long does it take? What are the biggest challenges in this aspect?
 - I understand that cooperative housing promotes self-management. How do you ensure the support of neighbors in this aspect? How are these activities normally distributed? What do you think are the biggest difficulties?
- About socio-spatial dynamics
 - In which daily situations do you think that mutual help and solidarity among neighbors is promoted? What role do the spaces of the dwelling play in these aspects? Where do these meetings take place? What are the characteristics of these spaces? Are these spaces provided by the residents or by the association?
 - How do you think these dynamics collaborate with the daily tasks of care? Do you think these dynamics collaborate in the upbringing of children?
 - What specific needs of single-parent households do you think collaborative housing could address?
- Closing questions
 - How do you think collaborative housing could increase the inclusion of single-parent households? What would be the current and future challenges?
 - Do you think cooperative housing models that include single-parent households could be scaled?
 - How do you think cooperative housing has impacted the way in which ideas about cooperative housing are promoted and received?

Appendix 4: Informed consent



Estimad@,

Muchas gracias por la participación en la entrevista enmarcada en investigación “La emancipación de hogares monomarentales desde la esfera doméstica. Aprendizaje y desafíos de las experiencias de viviendas colectivas en Barcelona y Madrid” que forma parte del programa académico del Máster de Estudios Urbanos 4Cities (<https://www.4cities.eu/>).

La entrevista se realizará de forma digital a través de la plataforma “Zoom” y tendrá una duración de aproximadamente una hora. La participación en esta entrevista es voluntaria y desde ya no involucra ningún tipo de riesgo. Usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento sin que deba dar razones para ello.

Toda la información que se proporcione a través de la entrevista es de carácter estrictamente confidencial y se guardará en el anonimato. Será utilizada únicamente por la investigadora, Marina Comojo Soto, y no estará disponible para ningún otro propósito.

Los datos globales recopilados pueden ser vistos por la dirección del curso o por la supervisora de tesis con el fin de evaluar el desempeño de la investigadora, siempre guardando confidencialidad y anonimato de los entrevistados. Los resultados de este estudio se le informarán y serán publicados con fines académicos, pero se presentarán de tal manera que los entrevistados no podrán ser identificadas.

Agradezo su colaboración y saludo cordialmente,

Marina Comojo Soto

Madrid, 24 de junio

Para preguntas legales fundamentales en relación con la investigación de los estudiantes, póngase en contacto con el Oficial de Protección de Datos de la Universidad de Viena, Dr. Daniel Stanonik, LL.M. (verarbeitungsverzeichnis@univie.ac.at). Además, existe el derecho a presentar una reclamación ante la autoridad de protección de datos (por ejemplo, a través de dsb@dsb.gv.at)

Estimad@,

Muchas gracias por la participación en la entrevista enmarcada en investigación “La emancipación de hogares monomarentales desde la esfera doméstica. Aprendizaje y desafíos de las experiencias de viviendas colectivas en Barcelona y Madrid” que forma parte del programa académico del Máster de Estudios Urbanos 4Cities (<https://www.4cities.eu/>).

La entrevista se realizará de forma digital a través de la plataforma “Zoom” y tendrá una duración de aproximadamente una hora. La participación en esta entrevista es voluntaria y desde ya no involucra ningún tipo de riesgo. Usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento sin que deba dar razones para ello.

Toda la información que se proporcione a través de la entrevista es de carácter estrictamente confidencial y se guardará en el anonimato. Será utilizada únicamente por la investigadora, Marina Comojo Soto, y no estará disponible para ningún otro propósito.

Los datos globales recopilados pueden ser vistos por la dirección del curso o por la supervisora de tesis con el fin de evaluar el desempeño de la investigadora, siempre guardando confidencialidad y anonimato de los entrevistados. Los resultados de este estudio se le informarán y serán publicados con fines académicos, pero se presentarán de tal manera que los entrevistados no podrán ser identificadas.

Agradezo su colaboración y saludo cordialmente,

Marina Comojo Soto

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