

FRANCESCA FERLICCA

RACHEL L. MELLON POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (CERI) AND URBAN SCHOOL

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Research Interest(s): Urban Informality, Environmental risks; community-led adaptation

Discipline(s): Political Science, Anthropology

Subdiscipline(s): Latin American Politics, Urban Planning

Geographical Area(s): Latin America and the Caribbean

Country(ies): Argentina, Mexico, Paraguay

Language(s): Italian, Spanish, English, French

BIOGRAPHY

Francesca Ferlicca is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Sciences Po Urban School and Early Career Officer at the Latin American Geography Research Group (LAG-UK) of the Royal Geographical Society. She is an urban scholar working at the intersection of urban informality, climate risk, and community-led adaptation in Latin America.

Francesca holds a PhD in Regional Planning and Public Policy from the University IUAV of Venice (IT). Before joining Sciences Po Paris, she was a postdoctoral researcher at IEALC – Instituto de Estudios de América Latina y el Caribe (University of Buenos Aires). Her doctoral thesis, "*Popular Urbanization and Planning Practices in Buenos Aires*," takes a relational approach to planning practices, providing a cross-cutting analysis of integral regularization policies in Buenos Aires' informal settlements across different stakeholders and their engagement with regulatory frameworks. The thesis was awarded the "Best Thesis on Sustainable Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean 2021-2022" prize by CEDEUS (Chile) and REDEUS_LAC.

Since 2015, she has accumulated teaching experience across Italy, France, and Argentina, delivering courses, seminars, and invited lectures on urban planning, Southern theory, and urban informality at institutions including the University of Buenos Aires, UNSAM – Universidad Nacional de San Martín, IUAV University of Venice, Cornell in Rome, the School of International Training, and Sciences Po Paris, where she has also held visiting positions. Her research has been published in leading journals including the *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (IJURR) and *Equilibri*, alongside book chapters with

Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan, and policy reports for CIPPEC. She has presented her work at major international conferences including RGS-IBG, RC21, AESOP, and the ISOCARP World Planning Congress. Her professional experience includes consultancy roles for the Provincial and City Governments of Buenos Aires, the policy think tank CIPPEC, and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Francesca is currently leading the ["Nature in the City." research project](#), a postdoctoral project funded by the Gerard B. Lambert Foundation examining climate adaptation across informal settlements in the Global North and South. The project advances two connected lines of inquiry on water-related risks and urban informality in Latin America, with a focus on Buenos Aires and Mexico City.

The first line examines community-led climate adaptation in flood-prone informal settlements. Against scholarship that has tended to frame residents of informal neighbourhoods primarily as passive subjects enduring risk and state absence, this research foregrounds the collective agency through which residents reduce flood exposure—through everyday maintenance and repair, small-scale infrastructural interventions, neighbourhood coordination, and organised claims-making around services and protection. Here, adaptation is understood not merely as coping but as a political practice that produces situated expertise, citizenship, and claims to urban belonging.

The second line investigates how flood risk is not only managed but actively manufactured through the progressive expansion of informality into high hydrological-risk zones. Focusing on informal land markets, incremental subdivisions (*loteos piratas*), and speculative pressures that push settlement into floodplains and ecologically sensitive areas, this research bridges the literatures on urban informality and environmental governance—frequently analysed in parallel—to offer a fine-grained account of how informal land markets and regulatory grey zones reorganise peri-urban ecologies, generate new contested risk landscapes, and force institutions to govern through selective enforcement and uneven recognition.

Within the project, she has organised two annual events: [Harnessing Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient and Sustainable Cities](#) (2024) and [Urban Nature at the Margins: Contested Climate Adaptation Governance in Urban Informality](#) (2025). She has also supervised two capstone projects: [A City Comparison of Nature-Based Solutions for Urban Water Management: Experiences from Mexico City, Cape Town, and Paris](#) (2025) and [Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Risk Adaptation in Informal Settlements: A Comparative Analysis of Mexico City and Asunción](#) (2026).

TEACHING

09/2024 – 12/2024. Lecturer at the Sciences Po Urban School. *Subject:* "Nature-Based Solutions." Master *Governing the Large Metropolis*, Sciences Po Urban School. *Total hours:* 12.

09/2024 – 12/2024. Lecturer at the Sciences Po Urban School. *Subject:* "Comparative Urban Planning." Master *Governing the Large Metropolis*, Sciences Po Urban School. *Total hours:* 12.

11/2024 – 12/2024. Lecturer at the Sciences Po Urban School. *Subject:* *Professional course* "Seeing like a planner" Master *Governing the Large Metropolis*, Sciences Po Urban School. *Total hours:* 12.

PROJECTS

P.I. [Nature in the city](#)

PUBLICATIONS

- Ferlicca, F. (Co-Editor). *Special Collection: "Nature in the City: Harnessing Nature-Based Solutions for Resilient and Sustainable Cities."* *npj Urban Sustainability* (Nature Portfolio), 2025. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/collections/dghddbjeftd>
- Ferlicca, F. (2025). *National urban policies as instruments for global urban agendas localization: Lessons from Argentina.* *Urban Planning*, [Special issue "Future Urban Sustainability: Lessons Learned From the SDGs and Perspectives for a Post-2030 Agenda"], edited by F. Koch, S. Beyer, K. Krellenberg, & J. Wesely. <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.i433>
Ferlicca, F. (2025). Book review: Recycling Class: The Contradictions of Inclusion in Urban Sustainability. *Urban Studies*, 62(10), 2169-2172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980251349454>
- Ferlicca, F. (2025). *Natura Urbana: ecological constellations in urban space:* by Matthew Gandy, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2022, 432 pp., \$30.00 (hardcover), ISBN 9780262046282. *Urban Research & Practice*, 18(3), 505-507. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2025.2479625>
- Ferlicca F.; Apaoloza, R.; Venturini, J. P. (2024). "Resilient Co-Production of Peripheral Popular Urbanization in Buenos Aires Metropolitan Region. The Case of Guernica Land Reappropriation". In Lakshimi R.; Delle Odeleye N.; Can. A., (ed.) *Learning Resilience from the Global South: Re-conceptualising informalities as an urban planning and design paradigm*, Taylor and Francis (Routledge): London.
- Ferlicca, F., Murillo, F. (2022). "Towards a National Urban Policy in Argentina". En: Gelli, F., Basso, M. (eds.). *Identifying Models of National Urban Agendas. Comparative Studies of Political Agendas.* Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 163-188.
- Ferlicca, F. (2021). "Doing Fieldwork in Informal Settlements in the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area During the Pandemic", *Spotlight On, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*.
- Ferlicca, F. (2020). "Housing informality in Buenos Aires", *Equilibri-Rivista per lo sviluppo sostenibile*, (Special issue: Souths of the world), Il Mulino: Bologna, pp. 197-210. ISSN: 1594-7580. e-ISSN: 2612-2197.

LINKS

[Orcid](#)

[Google scholar](#)

[Nature in the city](#)