

**Territory, intersectionality, and class
composition: 'Neighbouring migrants' in
Buenos Aires**

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*For Martin who sha'n't
get to read this.*

“The snobbish character of the night life...the generous flow of champagne in night clubs and the brilliance of...Buenos Aires's cosmopolitan ambience provoke exclamations by foreigners that it is the Paris of South America. Little consolation for the working classes, who drag out their lives between sweatshop and hovel.”

Raúl Prebisch

“[T]he economic substructure is also a superstructure. The cause is the consequence; you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich.”

Frantz Fanon

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Abstract

In this thesis I explore the experiences of, and the attitudes towards, ‘neighbouring migrants’ – immigrants from Peru, Bolivia, and Paraguay, as well as certain internal, Argentine migrants – in Buenos Aires. I argue that these experiences and attitudes are shaped by intersectional relationships of class, race (in particular whiteness), and national identity, yet are mediated by territorial identities – themselves constructed by various intersectional processes. The thesis also contrasts the consequences of contemporary flows of immigration with the waves of European immigration that were central to Argentina’s nation-building project, demonstrating the persistent power of these early migratory patterns.

Drawing on a range of theories influenced by autonomist Marxism, anarchism, and feminism, the thesis demonstrates the importance of reengaging with ideas of class when considering immigrants’ everyday experiences and struggles, and relationships with social/labour movements. However, it argues that while understandings of class must be intersectional, intersectionality has to recognise the unique nature of the class relationship, and how this extends far beyond the workplace and processes of production. The thesis therefore adopts an ‘intersectional class struggle analysis’, which is combined with the autonomist Marxist idea of ‘class composition’ to explore both the difficulties and possibilities of ‘neighbouring migrants’ political activity.

In the thesis I also explore the importance of space and territory, arguing that Buenos Aires has seen a rise in ‘territorial subjectivities’. These territorial subjectivities are themselves constructed intersectionally, but can go on to normalise and obfuscate the processes that form them, and thus need unpacking. Through an engagement with radical conceptions of territory – themselves heavily influenced by contemporary Latin American struggles and social movements – the thesis demonstrates how territorial identities, subjectivities, and attachments can both help and hinder intersectional class struggles.

Ultimately this thesis shows that territorial identities, subjectivities, and attitudes cannot be decoupled from intersectional class, and vice versa.

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Abbreviations, acronyms, and glossary

Argentinazo: The unrest that took place on the 19th and 20th of December, 2001.

Asamblea: Neighbourhood assembly. These meetings take various forms typically on street corners or communally used buildings, and were commonplace in the months that followed the *Argentinazo*. Although there are fewer now, many neighbourhoods and organisations still hold weekly *asambleas*.

BAMA: Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area.

Barrio: Neighbourhood. All of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires' *barrios* can be seen in Figure 5.4.

Boliguayo: A general derogatory term for immigrants that conflates *bolita* and *paragua*.

Bolita: Derogatory term for a Bolivian.

CABA: The Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (*Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires*).

Cabecitas negras: Little black heads, a term used to refer to internal migrants to Buenos Aires. It was first coined by anti-Peronists during the 20th Century, and demonstrates both class and racial discrimination. While the phrase is less common today, in many ways it has been replaced by 'neighbouring migrant'.

Cacerolazo: A form of pot banging protest, most famous from the 19th of December, 2001.

Cartoneros: Cardboard recyclers. *Cartoneros* typically pull carts full of cardboard they collect from the street and businesses to then sell to bigger processing plants. Their numbers increased hugely following the 2001 economic crisis, and they are disproportionately poor, 'neighbouring migrants'.

Comuna: The *comunas* are the 15 administrative divisions of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, and each of which contains at least one *barrio*. The *comunas* and the *barrios* they contain can be seen in Figure 8.2

Conurbano: The urban periphery of Buenos Aires. As this thesis explores the term is extremely loaded.

Escrache: Noisy and visible street protests that are designed to make residents aware of a person/location in their neighbourhood. For instance, these have been used to make people involved with the military dictatorship visible and alert residents to the presence of brothels.

Kirchnerismo: A broad term referring to the brand of *Peronism* adopted by Néstor Kirchner and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.

La Alameda: A social movement based in the *Parque Avellaneda barrio* of Buenos Aires who seek to combat organised crime, drug trafficking, and labour and sexual exploitation. Much of their work focuses on the clandestine textile workshops across the city.

MERCOSUR: Southern Common Market (*Mercado Común del Sur*), a sub-regional regional bloc comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru are associate members.

Mestizxs: People with a mixed European and Latin American indigenous heritage.

MTD: Unemployed Workers' Movement (*Movimiento de los Trabajadores Desempleados*).

'Neighbouring migrant': A common term that refers to people from Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, as well as black, indigenous, and some *mestizx* Argentines. The importance of the term is discussed throughout the thesis.

Okupa: A derogatory and colloquial term for people who carry out land occupations.

Paragua: A derogatory term for Paraguayans.

Patria Grande: The immigration policy that started in 2006. It allows any immigrant from MERCOSUR (as well as Bolivia and Chile) to work in Argentina freely as long as they have no criminal record in the last five years and a passport.

Piqueteros: Protestors that use pickets of roads as a tactic. The term also often refers to people involved with the MTDs.

Porteños: Residents of Buenos Aires, although as the thesis explores the term is loaded.

Punteros: Type of community leader most commonly found in *villas* and poor *barrios*. *Punteros* carry significant power in their areas and are associated with Peronist clientelism.

Simbiosis Cultural: A group of Bolivian researchers and activists.

Talleres clandestinos: Textile workshops. These are normally small, illegal, and hidden in normal looking houses. Also referred to as 'sweatshops'.

UNASUR: Union of South American Nations (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*) comprises the MERCOSUR and CAN (The Andean Community – Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) blocs.

Vecino: Literally translates as neighbour, but Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate the powerful connotations of the concept.

Villas miserias: 'Informal' urban settlements.

Villeros: People living in the *villas*, but is also applied to those presumed to live there – typically 'neighbouring migrants'.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Argentina is a country of immigrants. Or at least that is the story. Such is the influence of the 19th and 20th century waves of European immigration that indigenous groups have been consistently written out of the country's history (Guano, 2004). Historically the vast majority of these migrants have settled in Buenos Aires, a process that remains the case today. But patterns of migration have changed, and now immigrants from Latin America far outweigh those from Europe. And although immigrants from neighbouring countries have never made up more than 3.1% of the total population (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014), since the 1980s, discourses of 'invasion' and 'uncontrolled immigration' have been promoted and supported by various prominent members of the Buenos Aires city government, sections of the mainstream media, and significant proportions of *porteño*¹ society (see Gavazzo, 2012; Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; Magliano, 2009). Immigration is therefore a key issue in Buenos Aires, but not all immigrants are equal. What is more, such is the persistence of the 'Argentine myth' – which claims that it is a country without black and indigenous people – that internal migrants often become excluded from their own nation, and classed as 'neighbouring migrants'² (Grimson, 2006).

In this thesis I explore the contemporary lives of 'neighbouring migrants' as well as the attitudes towards them – from both Argentines and other migrants. Locating the current situation in historical perspective, I explore how these attitudes are made up of the intersection between class, race, and national identity. However, migrants' experiences vary across the city, and in the thesis the territorial attachments and identities that influence these attitudes and relationships are also examined. Crucially, therefore, the overlaps between the intersectional and the territorial are investigated.

¹ *Porteño* refers to inhabitants of Buenos Aires, as well as the language and culture related to the city more generally. It has extremely strong connotations, the identities associated with the term will be developed further in later chapters.

² The term 'neighbouring migrant' is a category that refers to migrants from Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay, as well as internal migrants from the border regions with Bolivia and Paraguay. Its usage is loaded and typically derogatory, and a central component of this thesis. Crucially, it is different from 'migrants from neighbouring countries' which refers to specific immigrant groups and lacks the same connotations. Both terms will be used, purposively, to distinguish the former grouping from the latter.

1.1: Locating the thesis

Buenos Aires is suffering from a severe housing crisis (Benwell et al., 2013), but its effects are experienced very differently. While the city's middle classes have grown by over 50% across the last decade (Ferreira et al., 2012), in the same period so has the population of the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area's (BAMA) *villas miserias*³ (UTPMP, 2011). As the Autonomous Capital of Buenos Aires (CABA) becomes increasingly gentrified (Herzer et al., 2015), there are fewer and fewer areas of the city where 'neighbouring migrants' can afford to live in. Consequently, on the one hand, specific immigrant *barrios* (neighbourhoods) have emerged within CABA (Bastia, 2015; Bermudes, 2012), and on the other hand many 'neighbouring migrants' have been ejected to the *conurbano*⁴ that makes up the rest of BAMA. As mentioned, Buenos Aires has long been the principal destination for immigrants to Argentina, and it has very much been shaped by immigration. This clustering continues to take place with contemporary migration, but migrants from different countries tend to have specific spatial distributions (Caggiano and Segura, 2014), and thus remake, and interact with, the city in various ways. What is more, nationalities also tend towards specific employment niches (OIT, 2011), and these divisions have far-reaching consequences for migrants' everyday lives and political activity.

However, there remains a serious shortage of work focusing on these interrelated processes in Buenos Aires – particularly regarding the involvement of 'neighbouring migrants' with labour and social movements. Given the fundamental role migrants play in Buenos Aires's economy (see Bastia, 2007), this is an important oversight that this thesis combats. What is more, although much of the thesis is grounded in the testimony and experiences of 'neighbouring migrants' themselves, in it I also explore the attitudes *towards* these 'neighbouring migrants', resulting in further original contributions. The attitudes examined are not just those of other migrants, but in particular those of the re-emerging *porteño* middle class. While this is of course a heterogeneous group, its intersectional

³ 'Informal' urban settlements.

⁴ While the word means 'conurbation' or 'suburbs', this straightforward translation misses a significant part of the meaning ascribed to the *conurbano* by many inhabitants of CABA. A very loaded term, the *conurbano* is typically viewed as inferior, irrespective of its heterogeneity. This distinction between CABA and the *conurbano* will be explored in much more detail below, and, as it is extremely important to this thesis, the Spanish term shall be used throughout.

construction is also traced, with an emphasis on the power of whiteness⁵ that underpins its multiple identities (see Joseph, 2000). Therefore, beyond the focus on ‘neighbouring migrants’, in this thesis I also engage with broader debates about the relationships – political, intersectional, and territorial – among different groups. These discussions also feed in to larger, longstanding ones about the relationship between national and city identities, and about the presence of different types of migration and migrants (see Ko, 2013). But, in particular, the focus on the causes and effects of the territorialisation of these relationships greatly extends contemporary work on migrants in Buenos Aires.

Theoretically the thesis is located within and against a number of literatures. By bringing together a diverse range of approaches I am able not only to create an original theoretical framework, but also to help combat various oversights and weaknesses of other theoretical positions. The specific nature of the framework and these contributions is explored in detail in the next chapter, but broadly speaking I emphasise the need for a territorially sensitive, ‘intersectional class struggle analysis’. This refers to a form of class analysis that is explicitly radical and anti-capitalist in its intent, and to achieve this aim I combine insights from, among other schools of thought, anarchism and autonomist Marxism. In particular, drawing from the autonomist Marxist tradition, I employ the idea of ‘class composition’, which recognises that class has two components: its technical and political composition (Wright, 2002). The former refers to the structural divisions within the labour force, and the latter refers to the political activity/inactivity of the working class, something always related to the technical composition (Marks, 2012). If struggles unite and build solidarity within the working class this constitutes ‘class *recomposition*’, while fractures and divergences are referred to as ‘class *decomposition*’. In recognising that these processes are inherently territorial and intersectional, I develop the ideas further, and create a critical, holistic framework with which to approach, understand, and unpack the topic of the thesis.

The thesis is based on eight months of fieldwork in Buenos Aires, taking place across two trips in 2012 and 2013. My methodology is discussed in detail in Chapter 3: I adopted a

⁵ Although it is a social construct, whiteness will be used without inverted commas. This is not to essentialise or reify the concept, but instead to acknowledge the very real material benefits it affords people (see Saldanha, 2006).

mixed qualitative approach, using a range of ethnographic methods and interviews. Particularly central to this thesis was my work with two organisations: *La Alameda* and *Simbiosis Cultural*. Although the focus of both groups overlaps, their approaches are very different. *La Alameda* is a social movement that emerged from the 2001 economic crisis, and, alongside other struggles, it seeks to combat labour exploitation in ‘*talleres clandestinos*’⁶, where work is carried out predominantly by Bolivian migrants. *La Alameda*’s aim is to end ‘slave labour’, and they have gained a significant local and national profile, even beginning to form international links with like-minded NGOs. Although the majority of members are Argentine, a number of migrants are also involved with the organisation. *Simbiosis Cultural*, on the other hand, is an entirely Bolivian group and all its members either work, or have worked, in the textile workshops. Yet while they acknowledge the terrible conditions of the *talleres clandestinos*, they fundamentally disagree with ‘slave labour’ discourses which they see as extremely disempowering. Through working with these two groups – who approach similar issues from very different perspectives – I was able to gain invaluable insights in to the lives of, and attitudes towards, Bolivian migrants – against which examples of other ‘neighbouring migrants’ have been contrasted.

1.2: Research aims and questions

This thesis has explicitly and radically political intentions. The situation facing ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires is an extremely important issue, as many suffer from serious discrimination on a daily basis, endure terrible (and at times lethal) working conditions, and bear the brunt of the city’s housing crisis. I therefore investigate and understand these processes and issues, ultimately with the intention to change them radically. I am well aware that this is an ambitious undertaking. In fact, given my positionality⁷ and connection to a western research institution, it is at times a problematic one (see Jazeel and McFarlane, 2010; Noxolo et al., 2012). But nevertheless it is a fundamental part of this thesis. However, these are lofty ambitions, and I acknowledge that this thesis is only a first step. Thus, as much as the empirical findings are intended as part of this radical process, so is the theoretical framework that is developed, used, and ultimately tested by the thesis.

⁶ ‘Informal’ textile workshops, or ‘sweatshops’.

⁷ This is discussed in much more detail in Chapter 3.

An important component of this has been the use of literatures from outside the traditional Anglo-American canon, with a particular emphasis on Latin American and Argentine writing and work produced by social movements themselves. Accordingly, the thesis situates itself within broader attempts to decolonise academic knowledge production (see Walia, 2013). The overarching research aim, therefore, is to produce a piece of radical academic work, elements of which can be applied and used elsewhere, by various groups in struggle.

More specifically the thesis will, as mentioned, explore the territorial and intersectional identities of ‘neighbouring migrants’ and how these identities affect their lives. As part of this, I focus on how these structures and identities influence attitudes towards ‘neighbouring migrants’ and shape the types (and successes) of political activity that are carried out by various groups in in Buenos Aires. Therefore, in this thesis I ask a number of specific – if overlapping – research questions:

- 1)** How do class, race, and national identity intersect to create the ‘neighbouring migrant’ identity?
 - a. What are the consequences of these intersections for migrants? Do migrants from different countries have the same experiences?
 - b. How do these intersections influence attitudes towards ‘neighbouring migrants’ from non-‘neighbouring migrants’?
 - c. What is the role of the ‘neighbouring migrant’ in *porteño* identity construction? What role does whiteness play in this relationship?

- 2)** What relationship do ‘neighbouring migrants’ have with the labour movement?
 - a. How are they engaged in (intersectional) class struggles more broadly?
 - b. How do the technical compositions of ‘neighbouring migrants’ affect their political struggles?

- 3)** How do territorial identities and attachments affect the lives of ‘neighbouring migrants’? Are these experienced differently in the federal capital and the *conurbano*?

- a. How do these attachments and identities mediate relationships between groups?
- b. How does territory contribute to class de- and recomposition?
- c. What role do territorial identities play in intersectional analyses?

1.3: Thesis structure

Writing intersectionally is a challenging task. So while in this thesis it is argued that, fundamentally, the territorial and the intersectional should be understood together, each of these two main strands is developed in its own right. However, as the thesis develops, the overlaps between findings and arguments are emphasised. This builds cumulatively until the penultimate chapter, which draws various threads together through a case study of a 2010 land occupation by ‘neighbouring migrants’.

In order to answer the above research questions, this thesis contains nine chapters. Following this introduction, **Chapter 2** provides the theoretical context and framework for the thesis. It is divided into two main sections, the first focusing broadly on class and intersectionality, and the second exploring the concept of territory. The first section begins by identifying a problematic gap in the literature surrounding the relationship between immigrants and social/labour movements in Argentina, as well as a broader lack of dialogue between studies of migrants/migration and radical conceptions of class. To combat this, an intersectional conception of class is developed through engagement with a number of literatures. This not only resolves issues facing problematic understandings of class, but also helps provide the tools for a critical ‘class struggle analysis’. Following this, the focus turns to the ways in which class, race (in particular whiteness), indigeneity, and national identities intersect in Latin America and Argentina. Finally the autonomist Marxist idea of class composition is explained and its strengths highlighted. But in tracing the concept’s contours, its territorially underdeveloped nature becomes apparent, leading to the discussion of territory.

In the second section, therefore, overviews of territory and its (re)turn to the critical geographical fold are provided. But while territory may well be back, the unpacking of its normative underpinnings remains incomplete. These issues are combated through an engagement with territorial ideas found in Latin American works – written by both

academics and social movements. Following this, the connections between territory and identity are explored, as is the way in which territories and spaces are ‘intersectionally produced’. Finally, these territorial ideas are used to complement and extend the thesis of Tim Cresswell’s book *In Place/Out of Place*. Ultimately, this chapter demonstrates the need to understand territorial and (intersectional) class struggles within the same framework, and provides the tools with which to do this.

Chapter 3 then develops the methodology of the thesis. Grounded in the idea of reflexive research design, it demonstrates how, despite a number of setbacks, I was able to retain my commitment to carrying out a form of radical/militant research through (ab)use of my own whiteness. The structure of the fieldwork is then explained, before I focus on the particular methods I used. Broadly locating them within an ethnographic framework, I explore the productive combination of interviews, participant observation/observant participation, *autoethnography*, and mobile methods. Next comes the way in which the data produced was analysed and written up, before I consider issues of ethics and consent.

The first of two context chapters, **Chapter 4**, looks at the history of immigration into Argentina, and into Buenos Aires in particular. It highlights three main stages of immigration, exploring the move from the nation-building period of the late 19th century, through Peronism and the military dictatorship, to the present day. The causes and consequences of these different flows of migration are explored, and the idea of the ‘neighbouring migrant’ is developed. Particular focus is then placed on Bolivian, Paraguayan, Peruvian, and Uruguayan immigration, which helps to unpack further the intersections between class, race, and national identity that are so fundamental to not only migrants’ lives, but also to *porteño* identity more broadly. This chapter therefore provides the context required to answer **Research Question (RQ) 1**, as well as elements of **RQ2**.

Buenos Aires itself is the focus of **Chapter 5**. Changes to the city through time are noted, with a particular focus on the differences between the ‘privileged territory’ of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, and the consistently ‘othered’ *conurbano*. Throughout the chapter the ways in which migrants engage with and (re)produce the city are explored, highlighting the connections between territory and intersectional class. These links are emphasised through a focus on territorial politics and subjectivities, exemplified by the

social movements that emerged in the wake of the 2001 economic crisis. The final sections then consider the ‘recovery’ from the crisis, and describe the housing crisis of the present day. Caused by gentrification, this housing crisis disproportionately affects ‘neighbouring migrants’ and is leading to the growth of the *villas miserias* and forcing people into the *conurbano*. Ultimately this chapter tells a story of an extremely divided city, and in the process completes the framing of **RQ2** and **3**.

Chapter 6, the first of three empirical chapters, is closely related to the context developed in Chapter 4, and answers **RQ1** and **2**. It focuses on the attitudes of ‘neighbouring migrants’ towards the ideas of class and class politics, and shows how discrimination along the lines of race, not class, tends to play a bigger part in their everyday lives. The particular ways in which race, class, and national identity intersect are then discussed, and this is complemented by a focus on the *porteño* middle class and its relationship to whiteness. Class composition is then used to unpack pervasive immigrant stereotypes, before the way these stereotypes are often perpetuated by migrant leaders is explored. The consequences of these stereotypes are demonstrated by a discussion about ‘slave labour’ in the Bolivian community, and this is related to possibilities of resistance.

Just as Chapter 6 relates to Chapter 4, **Chapter 7** can be seen as an extension of the ideas developed in Chapter 5, and although it focuses predominantly on answering **RQ3**, it also extends answers to **RQ1** and **2**. Gentrification is shown to play an important role in striating the city in such a way that ‘neighbouring migrants’ are becoming increasingly ghettoised. The consequences of the multiterritorial nature of *barrios* are then considered, and territorial identities are shown to have real impact on the lives of ‘neighbouring migrants’. To expand on this, territorial subjectivities are examined through the figure of the *vecino* (neighbour) and the types of politics associated with it. Finally, the *conurbano* and its relationship with CABA is discussed and dissected, and the potential for territorial resistance explored.

Chapter 8 is a case study of the 2010 *Parque Indoamericano* occupation, when over 13,000 people – many of whom were migrants – set up camp in CABA’s second-largest park. The occupation was unique not only because of its unprecedented scale and the violent response that followed, but also because it took place within the ‘privileged territory’ of

CABA. While this chapter provides context for the occupation and describes the events themselves, its main focus is the reactions to it. It draws together arguments made in the previous four chapters, relates to **RQ 1** and **3**, and demonstrates the need to understand the territorial and the intersectional together.

To conclude, **Chapter 9** begins with a recap of the empirical findings of the thesis. After this the theoretical and methodological implications of the research are outlined, as are suggestions for future research related to this thesis. Finally the political motivations of the thesis are reiterated, as is the importance of this area of study.

CHAPTER 2

Framing the thesis: Class, intersectionality, and territory

This chapter provides the theoretical framework of the thesis, and argues that ideas of class, intersectionality, and territory are all extremely important when understanding migrants' social standing in Buenos Aires. However, these ideas should be understood together rather than as distinct identities. In this sense it is important to not only 'territorialise' an intersectional approach to class, but also to 'intersectionally class' approaches to territory. Similarly, the importance of territorial identities should not be overlooked when carrying out intersectional analyses.

In order to build this framework, the chapter begins by highlighting the links between class and labour migration, as well as certain key gaps in the literature. It then critically reflects upon nuanced readings of class, arguing that class should be understood as a relationship not a location, and a contextual 'historical formation' not a universally applicable abstraction. Class can be further enriched through an engagement with intersectionality, and it will be argued that class is a relation of both exploitation *and* domination, and that class, while unique, both mediates, and is *mediated by*, other social relations. Examples of these intersections in the Latin American and Argentine contexts are then discussed in detail. The section on class finishes with a discussion of the idea of 'class composition analysis', which, it will be argued, is well suited to understanding the changing nature of classes, thus carrying out the intention of the thesis: an effective 'class struggle analysis'.

However, ideas of class composition tend to lack a sufficient engagement with the spatial nature of capitalism. Given this, the chapter then turns to the idea of 'territory', which it argues can complement an intersectional class analysis, and help better understand attitudes towards migrants in Buenos Aires. Territory has an extremely powerful naturalising power that can serve to legitimise/delegitimise various behaviours and attitudes. A focus will be placed on the intersectional production of territories, as territory is not neutral, and should not be removed from the intersectional class formations within

which it is created. The chapter therefore highlights ways in which discussions about migrants, class, intersectionality, and territory can be fruitfully combined, and in doing so provides an original theoretical contribution.

2.1: Migrants and Class

Lying at the heart of this thesis is a focus on migrants. Migrants often embody a variety of transgressive identities/social relations, and this focus therefore allows for a grounded point of entry into broader debates about issues such as class, race, indigeneity, gender, and national identity. However, instead of focusing on processes of labour migration and their causes, this thesis will instead look at migrants *in situ* in Buenos Aires, and the broader consequences of certain migratory flows. A number of such studies have been undertaken in Buenos Aires, with excellent work focusing on migration networks (e.g. Bastia, 2007, 2011b; Gómez and Galassi, 2009), gender (e.g. Bastia, 2007; Magliano, 2009, 2013), child/youth migration (e.g. Bastia, 2005; Punch, 2007, 2010), indigeneity (e.g. Canelo, 2006, 2008, 2009; Charlone, 2012; Gavazzo, 2012), and migrant culture (e.g. Grimson, 2005, 2006; Pizarro, 2009a, 2009b; Sassone and Mera, 2006).

However, there is a paucity of work engaging explicitly with ideas of class, and the effects of migration on Buenos Aires's class structure. As will be argued throughout the thesis, class plays a unique role in both the perpetuation of, and resistance to, capitalism. Capitalism also plays a large (but, importantly, not absolute) role in shaping processes of (labour) migration. Studies of migration that are critical of capitalism should therefore engage seriously with class, and this is especially important given the impact migrants can have in changing the structure and political activity of classes (Bacon, 2008). For example, this thesis's focus on predominantly low-paid and 'informally' employed labour migrants makes an analysis of class extremely important – especially as different migrant groups occupy specific niches within the economy⁸, and are central to Argentina's changing processes of capital accumulation on the one hand, and Buenos Aires' diverse range of social and labour movements on the other. What is more, despite the existence of significant literatures that focus, individually, on migrants/migration and social/labour movements, there is a problematic lack of work that brings these two areas together. While

⁸ An overview of this will be provided in Chapter 4.

migration theory does engage with class structures, these approaches can become extremely structural, and tend to ignore the role of autonomy (e.g. Bastia, 2013a; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013), and ideas of migration as ‘protest’ (e.g. Bastia, 2011a; van Schendel and Abraham, 2005) or ‘escape’ (e.g. Mezzadra, 2004, 2005; Papadopoulos et al., 2008). What is more, the literature that does explicitly engage with class (for a review see Bastia, 2013b; Brettell and Hollifield, 2008) tends to adopt a more ‘sociological’ understanding of class as a synchronic location, which, as will be argued, is insufficient for the form of class analysis adopted by this thesis.

The thesis therefore seeks to plug the gap created by this lack of dialogue between the studies of migrant (political) activity and ‘radical’ approaches to class. This is especially important given that a focus on class is important to work which seriously considers the political subjectivities of migrants (Bacon, 2008; Boswell, 2007, 2008; Collinson, 2009; Simbiosis Cultural, 2011; Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011; Walia, 2013). It is within these debates – as well as within those surrounding intersectional takes on migrants’ class position (e.g. Bastia, 2014; Bastia et al., 2011; McDowell, 2003, 2008b; Schimiz, 2013; Wills, 2008a) and their abilities to (re)create space, place, and territory (e.g. Gielis, 2009; Hardwick, 2008; Marcus, 2009; Waite, 2009; Winders, 2012) – that the thesis positions itself, and through a focus on Buenos Aires and Argentina, the research not only extends the remit of such debates, but also combats the specific and significant lacuna mentioned above. However, before continuing any further, it is necessary to define and explain the understanding of class and ‘class struggle analysis’ adopted by the thesis.

2.2: Class and its discontents

This section will argue for the importance of an understanding of class that is contextual and sensitive to how it interacts with other structures: class is thus understood as an intersectional ‘historical formation’ (Camfield, 2004). It is then argued that a broader understanding of class, developed through engagement with anarchist and heterodox Marxist ideas, can help tease out these intersections, and complement the idea of a ‘class struggle analysis’ (Miliband, 1989: 3). Miliband defines ‘class struggle analysis’ as: research on “the nature of this struggle, the identity of the protagonists, the form which the struggle assumes from one period to another and from one country to another, the reasons for the

differences in these forms [and...] the consequences which flow from these differences” (1989: 3). However, it is beyond the remit of this thesis to carry out such an ambitious undertaking properly, and so the definition will be used as a point of departure. For the purposes of this thesis, a ‘class struggle analysis’ is a critical and explicitly anti-capitalist analysis of a class structure which intends to explore the potential for resistance within the working class and attempts to locate weak points in capital. Once examples of the relationships between class, race, indigeneity, and national identity in Latin America have been discussed, the section will end with an exposition of ‘class composition’.

Although central to much geographical thought in the 1970s and 1980s, class increasingly fell out of favour in the decades that followed (Smith, 2000). This move away from class came about in response to both the emergence and consolidation of ‘identity politics’⁹ and the rise in popularity of more postmodern and poststructural analyses. These critiques reflected the weaknesses (and at times intransigence) of certain 20th century Marxisms, which failed to engage seriously with non-class identities and structures, seeing them as secondary issues to be resolved ‘after the revolution’ (see Smith, 2010b; Swyngedouw, 2010).¹⁰ However, despite the strength of such critiques, many of them relied on a somewhat crude and stereotyped depiction of a singular Marxist class analysis that conflates the political element of class with a purely economic understanding (Fine and Saad Filho, 2010; Wood, 1995). But although more recent work avoids this narrowly economistic, teleological analysis of a supposedly omnipotent working class (for overviews see Hall, 1997; Brenner, 2000; Camfield, 2004), class remains very loosely defined in Marx’s work and beyond (Linebaugh 1976; Mohandesi, 2013). In fact, it has been noted that much Marxist-inspired work features relatively little exposition of the composition of the working class, instead focusing much more on the make-up of capital (Wright, 2002), leading to criticisms of the ‘capitalocentric’ nature of labour geographies (Gibson-Graham, 2006: 6).

However, the retreat from class analysis has brought problems. It has been argued that it has stymied (or even precluded) analyses that can mount significant challenges to

⁹ Dowling (2009) provides a thorough review of debates about class and identity politics in human geography.

¹⁰ There is of course a huge amount of literature that approaches class from a non-Marxist position. However, as will be shown below, this approach to class analysis is not the focus of this project. What is more it will also be argued that anti-capitalist class analysis is not the sole preserve of Marxism, and that an anarchist class analysis has the ability to enrich study.

capitalism (Wood, 1995; Smith, 2000; Grimson, 2009): “its omission obscures significant aspects of contemporary social dynamics and deprives us of a valuable analytic tool” (Portes and Hoffman, 2003: 42). This is especially problematic given the role capitalism has played in widening and deepening inequalities, a conclusion which has once more been asserted by recent studies from both Marxist (e.g. Harvey, 2014; Kliman, 2011) and non-Marxist (e.g. Piketty, 2014) perspectives.¹¹ It is therefore argued that class ‘counts’ in a very real way (Wright, 1997), and the thesis will primarily engage with literature that focuses on more recent attempts to ‘update’ class analysis, and in particular those that focus on the use of class analysis in areas outside of the traditional sphere of class politics¹² (e.g. Barker et al., 2013; McNally, 2013; van der Linden, 2008), in Latin America (e.g. Cecena, 2009; Schaumberg, 2013; Webber, 2011a, 2011b; Webber and Carr, 2012), and those that consider the increasingly important role of ‘informal labour’¹³ in the promotion of, and resistance to, capital accumulation (e.g. Barnes, 2013; Chang, 2013; Martin and Brady, 2007; Shukaitis, 2013; Spronk, 2012).

But before going any further, it is important to address the large literature surrounding what are often referred to as ‘sociological’ definitions of class (Camfield, 2004, 2007). Wood argues that “there are really only two ways of thinking about class: either as a structural *location* or as a social *relation*” (1995: 76). The former therefore understands class in terms of a socio-economic and cultural position that can be occupied¹⁴ (Crompton, 2010; Skeggs, 2004), although there is no absolute consensus as to what exactly constitutes definitions of the variety of classes such analyses identify (Cannadine, 2000; Wright, 1985, 1997, 2005). Through deep readings of social, economic, and cultural behaviour these approaches have undoubtedly contributed significantly to the understanding of society and interactions between different groups¹⁵, and it is within this understanding of class that

¹¹ The link between capitalism (especially in its neoliberal incarnation: Harvey, 2005) and inequality is especially strong in Latin America (e.g. Munck, 2001, 2004; Portes and Roberts, 2005). As will be discussed in Chapter 5, these processes can be seen extremely clearly in Buenos Aires.

¹² Typically understood as the party and the union (Cleaver, 2000).

¹³ This idea can be seen in the emergence of discussion about the so-called ‘precariat’ (Standing, 2011). However, while increasingly ubiquitous, the idea has been criticised from an Argentine perspective (Munck, 2013c).

¹⁴ This position is often linked to occupation (McDowell, 2013).

¹⁵ A recent example of this deep understanding is the BBC’s ‘Great British Class Survey’ (see Savage et al., 2013).

much contemporary geographical work falls (see Barnett, 2011; Dowling, 2009; Herod, 2011; McDowell, 2013).

[such approaches] pervade the sociology of class, and have led to unproductive debates about where to place particular occupations [within] classes...In the course of these discussions about synchronic structures, the relational and antagonistic character of class and therefore class struggle itself has been eclipsed (Camfield: 2004: 423).

Therefore for the purpose of this thesis this approach will not be used, as it provides insufficient tools with which to carry out a 'class struggle analysis'.

In this thesis class is therefore understood as neither a location nor a position, but instead as an asymmetrical, antagonistic, and dialectical relationship, grounded in processes of production and exploitation (that is, the appropriation of surplus value: Ollman, 1968, 2003; Gunn, 1987). But while class is fundamentally related to the means of production, this alone is insufficient: it is a necessary but not sufficient component that should be understood as a point of departure for any form of thorough class analysis (Camfield, 2004; Woods, 1995). For instance, Marxist feminists rightly criticised the narrowness of some class analysis, arguing that there was typically an over-focus on the production process, and emphasised the important role of the social reproduction of labour in capitalism (e.g. Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Dalla Costa, 1995; Federici, 2004, 2012; Fortunati, 1995, 2013).

What is more, the dialectical, asymmetrical, and antagonistic nature of the class relationship means that it is always in struggle (Gunn, 1987). In this sense class must be understood as processual (Thompson, 1968; Wood, 1995):

Classes do not enter history fully formed, but are rather the products of concrete historical processes. They never cease to change, even when the invariant characteristics of the mode of production that generates them has [sic] finally taken hold. Every class is always caught up in a process of reconstitution and deconstitution, variation and transformation, emergence or disappearance (Mohandesi, 2013: 75).

Therefore forms of proto 'class struggle' predate the emergence of classes (e.g. Linebaugh, 2006; Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000; Thompson, 1968): "the exploitative relations of

production generate class struggle, and...class formations develop as workers experience this struggle” (Camfield, 2004: 437). Accordingly, the relationship between classes is neither static nor universal, and instead emerges from specific class formations borne of different times and places (Wood, 1995). Such an understanding moves away from the problematic idea of classes as structures outside of history, where, as Stuart Hall puts it, they are “always really in [their] place, at the ready, and can be summoned up for socialism” (1981: 384), and instead sees them as structured processes (Wood, 1995). Therefore, classes can be understood as ‘complex and heterogeneous historical formations’ (Camfield, 2004, 2007), an idea explored in the work of, among others, Antonio Gramsci (1971) and E.P. Thompson (1968).

However, despite the enormous richness of these works they suffer from some important oversights. Primarily, while it is crucial to pay attention to both the spatial and temporal specificities of class formations, some context specific analysis can unfortunately be seen to “reproduce a kind of provincial...nationalism in which the working class can emerge only as a political subject limited to a clearly delineated cultural and demographic space” (Mohandesi, 2013: 83). This is not to say that the nation and nationalism have no bearing on class formation, simply that it is important to problematise and denaturalise these processes (see Anderson, 1983; Jones 2009b, 2010).¹⁶ However, by adopting uncritical approaches to nationalism that over-extended context-specific conclusions – typically reached in western and northern European countries – class analysis has been open to criticisms of Eurocentrism (Bartolovich and Lazarus, 2002). This has been exacerbated by a fetishisation of a predominantly white and male industrial proletariat that fails to map on to the heterogeneous realities of the (global) working class (Franks, 2006: 163; Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009). However, these problems stem not from understanding class as a historical formation, but instead from attempts to universalise specific – typically European – formations (Munck, 2007; Nimitz, 2002). It is therefore important to adopt a critical approach to nationalism – particularly when considering the class position of migrants – as it can both shape class formation and obfuscate the class divide.

¹⁶ Nor is it to claim that sub-/supra-national factors have no bearing on class formation. In fact, this thesis focuses on the links between place/territorial attachment and class composition.

Similarly, it is also crucial to understand that class interacts with a plethora of other social relations and identities in historical formations. Because class does not in some sense happen ‘out there’ in the abstract, but is instead grounded in concrete examples of struggle, analyses of class are “never only about class”. In this regard, the roles of, for example, gender, race, and sexuality in class formation must be taken seriously, as “class is mediated through all other social relations, and vice versa” (Camfield, 2004: 425-427). To understand classes as historical formations properly, it is therefore important to adopt a multifaceted approach that avoids being trapped within forms of ‘methodological nationalism’ (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Walia, 2013).¹⁷ The next section will therefore develop an intersectional understanding of class that is well placed to carry out such an endeavour. However, before turning to this it is of course crucial to note that class analyses must also consider the relations *within* and not just *between* classes (Camfield, 2004; Gunn, 1987; Wood, 1995). These relationships, bonds of solidarity, and fractures play a determinate role in dictating the (in)activity of the working classes, and thus a broad and multifaceted approach to class is required (see Albert and Hahnel, 1979; Spannos, 2008; Shannon et al., 2012), and it will be demonstrated that the idea of ‘class composition’ is particularly attuned to analysis of the internal heterogeneity of classes (Wright, 2002).

2.2.1: Intersectionality and class

There is a wide range of empirically and theoretically rich work that seeks to understand the myriad ways in which class – as understood above – interacts with, (re)produces, and is (re)produced other structures and identities. From within the (heterodox) Marxist canon these works have helped to update and make more nuanced more traditional, orthodox Marxist readings of class which seemed staid, and even reactionary, in the face of a wide range of legitimate critiques. A diverse and heterogeneous array of Marxist feminists (e.g. Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Ehrenreich, 1976; Hartmann, 1976, 1979; Dalla Costa, 1995; Fortunati, 1995; Vogel, 2000; Gonzalez, 2011, 2013; Federici, 2012), black feminists (e.g. Weathers, 1969; Beal, 1976; Davis, 1981; Lorde, 1996; Brewer, 1999), postcolonial Marxists (e.g. Spivak, 1999; Bartolovich and Lazarus, 2002), and authors engaging with a range of struggles involving people of colour and indigenous groups (e.g. Hall, 1978; Hall et al., 1978;

¹⁷ Again, this is especially important when considering the class position of migrants given the large number and shifting nature of ‘identities’ they can embody.

Robinson, 1983; Mills, 2003; Chen, 2013; Walia, 2013) have looked at the ways in which capitalism, and thus the class structure, are broad and multifarious beasts that can reinforce subalternity in a number of ways – furthermore, as the next sections will examine, through innovative, irreverent, and at times almost heretical readings of class and its relationship with other structures/identities, Latin American Marxisms have played an important role in these debates (Munck, 2007). In a variety of ways these works recognise that class analyses, as Camfield (2004) says, are never only about class, something which critical geographical scholarship has consistently emphasised (e.g. Gibson-Graham et al., 2000, 2001; Gidwani, 2008; McDowell, 2008; Brahinsky, 2014).

Anarchist inspired work has long made similar points, emphasising the multiplicity of oppressions within a capitalist (and therefore class) society and the need to challenge all these forms of domination. As will be argued, therefore, it provides a neat framework within which to develop an ‘intersectional class struggle analysis’, something which emphasises the fruitful synthesis of anarchist and heterodox Marxist ideas. In particular, anarchist understandings of class¹⁸ have consistently viewed class as a social relation of exploitation¹⁹ *and* domination:

[an anarchist understanding of class] is not just about the relations of production but also the *relations of domination*, not just about the ownership of the means of production but also about the ownership of the means of *coercion* – the capacity to physically enforce decisions – and the means of *administration* – the instruments that govern society (Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009: 109).

While under capitalism exploitation and domination are intertwined, anarchism’s rejection of economic determinism rejects the primacy of one over the other. Anarchists oppose all hierarchy and forms of economic and social inequality, recognising that there is of course a multiplicity of oppressions. Anarchists hold the belief that only oppressed agents are able to bring about ‘liberatory social change’ (Franks, 2006: 154), yet because there are many more sources of oppression (through exploitation *and* domination) the working class is much

¹⁸ Given anarchism’s broad church and commitment to autonomy there are of course many anarchist understandings of ‘class’, while certain currents reject the value of the concept outright (for an overview see Franks, 2006: Chapter 3). Nevertheless, the understanding developed here is in keeping with most class struggle anarchists.

¹⁹ This is meant in the Marxian sense: the appropriation of surplus value.

broader than some Marxist conceptions (Clark and Martin, 2013).²⁰ Oppression and therefore resistance are found far beyond the solely economic sphere, and it is impossible to reduce all oppression to one ultimate source: capitalism (Franks, 2006).

This therefore begs the questions: why class at all? If there are many forms of interlinking oppressions why should class receive particular focus? These questions seem especially pertinent in the face of problematically rigid and economistic interpretations of class. However, the post-Marxist (e.g. Laclau and Mouffe, 1985, 1987; Merrifield, 2009, 2010, 2011) and post-anarchist (e.g. Day, 2004, 2005; May, 1994; Newman, 2010; Rouselle and Evren, 2011) approaches that respond to such concerns by collapsing class into an identity face serious problems. Such stances see class as one of many oppressions that combine within a 'decentralised multiplicity'. But while various forms of oppression certainly do intersect and reinforce each other²¹ – as Stuart Hall famously put it, race “is the modality in which class is lived” and “the medium in which class relations are experienced” (1978: 394) – class is qualitatively different, as it is the only social relation that involves exploitation²² and domination (Nappalos, 2012; Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009: 111; Shannon et al., 2012). Instead it is better to think of an overlapping network of oppressions with class at its centre (Bowman, 2012; Price, 2007).

In this regard it is possible to explore the overlaps between ideas put forward by anarchism and intersectionality, and such a synthesis is commonly found in anarcho-feminism and queer anarchism (e.g. Breton et al., 2012; Daring, 2012; Rogue and Volcano, 2012; Shannon, 2012; Shannon and Rogue, 2009).²³ Emerging from black feminism (e.g. Anzaldusa and Moraga, 1981; Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 2000; Collins, 2009), intersectionality highlights “the myriad ways that categories and social locations such as race, gender, and class intersect, interact, and overlap to produce systemic social inequalities” (Rogue and

²⁰ It was for this reason that anarchists have historically clashed with Marxists over the revolutionary potential of the *lumpenproletariat*, peasants, and the 'underclass' (Woodcock, 1986; Marshall, 1993; McDonald, 1997).

²¹ An idea that anarchism is especially sensitive to given its opposition to, multiple and interlinked, hierarchies (see Day, 2005; Gordon, 2007).

²² Again, this is meant in a Marxian sense, not simply as synonymous with 'taking advantage of'/'abusing'. Under the latter understanding, social relations such as gender and race (as well as discriminatory attitudes such as transphobia) of course involve exploitation and domination. This is not to downplay these social relations/forms of oppression, but as shall be argued they have fundamental differences.

²³ Intersectionality has been taken even further within critical animal studies (e.g. Nocella II et al., 2013; Socha, 2012), where it has been argued that a synthesis with anarchism can help combat speciesism (White and Cudworth, 2013).

Volcano, 2012). Importantly, at different times and situations, different identities (and therefore forms of oppression, domination, and discrimination) can come to the fore. However, crucially, these multiple forms of identity and oppression cannot be understood in isolation from each other. For example, the experience of a queer woman of colour cannot simply be reduced to atomised instances of discrimination on the basis of, among other things, gender, sexuality, and race. So while in certain circumstances her gender may play a less determinate role and her race may become more prominent, they can never be fully decoupled.

This emphasis on the interlinking nature of oppressions means that an intersectional approach is productive for the study of attitudes towards migrants given the multiple forms of discrimination they can face (e.g. Alberti et al., 2013; Anthias, 2008, 2012; Brooks, 2009; Bürkner, 2012; La Barbera, 2013; McDowell, 2008). However, despite these obvious strengths, certain forms of intersectional analyses have come under criticism for their (over) focus on identity, which can lead to the type of issues discussed above, where the asymmetrical and antagonistic nature of the class relationship is overlooked:

Although the theory suggests that hierarchies and systems of oppression are interlocking, mutually constituting, and sometimes even contradictory, intersectionality has often been used in a way that [simply] levels structural hierarchies and oppressions (Rogue and Volcano, 2012).

If class is a location or position, intersectionality becomes a form of 'identity politics' (Choo and Feree, 2010; May, 2014). However, whether or not this approach is successful in challenging certain social inequalities, it overlooks the unique nature of the class relationship, and this limits the ability to challenge capitalism (Burgmann, 2005; Neary and Winn, 2012).

In this sense, while much work on intersectionality may consider class, it often does not provide a 'class struggle analysis'. A class struggle intersectionality, such as is found in much anarchist work, emphasises the plurality of forms of oppression but recognises the unique nature of class. This is not to say that class is in some sense more important than any other form of oppression (and thus simply (re)producing the staid form of class analysis critiqued above), but simply that it is specific, and as such needs its own form of analysis

(Camfield, 2004; Wood, 1995).²⁴ An intersectional class struggle analysis therefore recognises that struggles about gender and race, for example, must not and cannot be reduced to class struggles, yet it argues that they must be understood within a class framework (Bowman, 2012; Price, 2009; Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009):

[C]apital relations are dominant in most contexts, but not the sole organizing force...Capitalism interacts with [all] other forms of oppressive practices that may not be wholly reducible to economic activity. Here different subjugated identities are formed...However, as capitalism is still a significant factor, economic liberation must also be a necessary feature (Franks, 2006: 181).

Class analyses that fail to engage seriously with intersectionality become far too narrow and economistic, but at the other extreme, those positions that deny the unique nature (and in some extreme cases the very existence) of class have been seen to come from a position of privilege (McKay, 2008) that becomes little more than a form of ‘militant liberalism’ (Christie and Meltzer, 2010; Volcano and Shannon, 2012). As mentioned above, Camfield (2004) argues that in order to understand class as a historical formation it is crucial to incorporate other, non-class identities: class means very little in the abstract and must instead be context specific and understood in an intersectional manner, something which a combination of anarchist and heterodox Marxist approaches is well placed to do. Further, as will be discussed below, it is vital to recognise the role class plays beyond the workplace, and consider the importance of social reproduction (Bhattachayra, 2015; Rübner Hansen, 2015; Serra, 2015), and the intersectionally gendered and racialised nature of socially reproductive labour (see Cramer, 2015; Ferguson and McNally, 2015) – given the nature of much immigrant work (see Farris, 2015) this is therefore something especially pertinent to this thesis²⁵.

While it is necessary to understand that class and other identities and forms of oppression intersect, this alone is not sufficient: it is of course vital to understand *how* they intersect, as well as the way in which at different times and places different identities may come to the fore. As mentioned above, an intersectional approach to class struggle analysis considers how all forms of oppression can interrelate and form a co-constitutive

²⁴ As will be argued below, a class composition analysis is well placed to fulfil this role.

²⁵ See Chapter 4 for an overview of immigrant work in Buenos Aires.

relationship. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, a fully intersectional analysis of migrants in Buenos Aires is beyond the remit of this thesis (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion). Instead, the thesis will focus on the intersections between class, race, indigeneity, and national identity, and how they support, and at times even undermine, each other. In order to do this the next section will turn to literature (contemporary and historical) that explores the role of these intersections in Latin America. However, given the difficulties associated with writing intersectional research (see Choo and Ferree, 2010; Taylor, 2009; Valentine, 2007), each example will have to be discussed in turn and their intersections merely flagged up along the way.

2.3: Class, race, indigeneity, and national identity in Latin America

Although some research on Argentina has a history of adopting a class analysis approach (e.g. Alimonda, 1986; Hollander, 1977; Johnson, 1983; Laclau, 1970; Munck, 1987; Portantitiero, 1974), elsewhere in the continent it has long been argued that the transposition of typically European class categories is inappropriate (for examples across time see Beals, 1953; Portes and Johns, 1986; Portes and Hoffman, 2003; Munck, 2013c). This was in response to large amounts of research which emphasised the extremely fragmented nature of the class structure and the large ‘informal working class’ in Latin America (e.g. Snow, 1969; Portes, 1985; Portes and Johns, 1986; Roberts, 2002; Portes and Hoffman, 2003; Scott, 2005; Whitson, 2007a; Biles, 2009; Brady et al., 2011; del Bono et al., 2012).²⁶

What is more, even within Marxist-influenced Latin American scholarship, repeated dissatisfaction with methods of class analysis contributed to the ‘modes of production debate’ (Foster-Carter, 1976, 1978; Henfrey, 1981; Jhally, 1979) which discussed whether or not Latin America could be classed as a feudal or as a capitalist society (Gunder Frank, 1967, 1968, 1969; Laclau, 1971). These debates focused on Latin America’s large indigenous population which, in its attachment to communal property rights, formed a ‘peasantry’ that was far removed from its 19th century European counterpart that was often seen as the necessary archetype in class formation (Wolf, 1955; Durston, 1982; Smith, 1989). Linked

²⁶ The work of Alejandro Portes in particular has sought to challenge and update traditional Marxist class categories to reflect these issues (e.g. Portes 1985; Portes and Johns, 1986; Portes and Hoffman, 2003).

to this was the emergence of theories of marginality (e.g. Goetze, 1976; Nun, 1971, 1972, 1999, 2000; Nun et al., 1968; Quijano, 1971a, 1971b, 1983) and dependency (e.g. Cardoso and Faletto, 1969; Dos Santos, 1968, 1970, 1973, 1998; Munck, 1984) which reflected perceptions about Latin America's position in a world system of capital accumulation (Wallerstein, 1974). While many of the ideas put forward by these theories have received much critical attention (see Alves and Escorel, 2012; Caldeira, 2009; Johnson, 1979; Kay, 1989, 1991; Perlman, 1976, 2005; Singer, 1973), the work undoubtedly raises important points about the appropriateness of 'traditional' class analysis in the Latin American situation

While in some sectors these concerns contributed to another 'retreat from class' (Chilcote, 1990), for other scholars they were instrumental in shaping more nuanced approaches to class analysis that were better able to capture the historically fragmented nature of the class structure (Aguilar, 1978; Löwy and Pearlman, 1992). As Munck argues, Latin American understandings of Marxist-inspired class analysis have traditionally been much more open and fluid, much less dogmatic, and more attuned to the contextual and historical nature of class formation than some of their European counterparts, understanding Marxism as:

a method based wholly on reality, on facts. It is not, as some erroneously believe, a body of principles with rigid consequences, the same in all historical climates and all social latitudes (2007: 157).

It is thus important to recognise that Latin American scholarship has made many contributions to understandings of class analysis and Marxism²⁷ throughout the 20th Century (see Bosteels, 2005, 2012; Munck, 1998, 2002, 2007, 2011b; Parry, 2002; Rodríguez, 2001). Therefore, despite the problems discussed above surrounding inappropriate transpositions of Eurocentric class concepts to Latin America, certain elements of class struggle analyses have retained an enduring appeal in to the new millennium (see Hirsch, 2011; Webber and Carr, 2012), and the approaches that have found most success have been those which are

²⁷ Particularly relevant to this thesis, Latin America (and Argentina in particular) has also been extremely important in the development of anarchist (e.g. Berry and Bantman, 2010; Hirsch and van der Walt, 2010; Schmidt, 2013; Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009) and autonomist ideas (e.g. Colectivo Situaciones, 2002, 2003; Holloway, 2005; Motta, 2013; MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Zibechi and Hardt, 2013).

least dogmatic, most contextual, and well attuned to the heterogeneous nature of the (predominantly informal) working class (Barnes, 2013; Portes, 2001a, 2001b; Martin and Brady, 2007).

A rise in 'de-proletarianisation' (see Davis, 2006; Standing, 2011; Wacquant, 2007, 2008) across Latin America has made traditional class analyses seem problematic. Informality has grown in the face of neoliberal economic policy, globalisation, and increasing flows of migration (e.g. Portes, 1997, 2009, 2010; Munck, 2001, 2004, 2008, 2013a), and at the same time there has been a serious decline in the numbers and strength of 'traditional' labour movements in Latin America (e.g. Anner, 2011; Drinot, 2011; Lazar, 2012; Moody, 1997; Munck, 2010; Munck and Waterman, 1999; Schiavone, 2007; Waterman, 1993). This has led to a situation where much working class activity takes place outside the traditional spheres of class politics, as can be seen in the growth of more 'autonomous' movements across the region (see Dangl, 2010; Ross and Rein, 2014; Zibechi, 2012; Zibechi and Hardt, 2012) as well as Argentina in particular (e.g. Ranis, 1991, 2004, 2005; Veltmeyer, 1997; DuBois, 1999; Petras, 2004; Sitrin, 2006, 2012; Lavaca, 2007; Garay, 2007; Trigona, 2007a, 2007b, 2012, 2014; Whitson, 2007b; Schaumberg, 2008; Palomino et al., 2010; Norden, 2011).

This has lent further credibility to the argument that class analyses are inappropriate, and that these processes are better understood through a focus on social movements (for an overview see Barker et al., 2013).²⁸ Others, however, have seen the often powerful and vibrant nature of these movements as proof that class struggle takes place on a much bigger stage (Webber and Carr, 2012). Of course, caution is required here not to subsume all forms of resistance under the class banner, even if class becomes recast in the guise of a nebulous 'multitude' (see Hardt and Negri, 2000, 2004). But even if many of these movements are little more than crude examples of 'class struggle without class' (Spronk, 2007, 2012) there has been a move back towards the recognition of the critical value of class struggle analyses among Latin American social movements (e.g. Barker et al, 2013; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2010; Webber and Carr, 2012). In fact, it has been argued that far from undermining the

²⁸ However, the very idea of 'social movements' has been problematised by Zibechi (2012), who argues that the concept separates political activity from everyday life and is Euro-American. Instead he proposes the idea of 'societies in movement' in order to capture more appropriately the many types of prefigurative and open-ended forms of resistance that are carried out by a number of groups across Latin America.

efficacy and relevance of class struggle analysis, the ‘multidimensional kinds of resistance’ practised by Latin America’s social movements have, once again, reinvigorated it (Cecena, 2009), and this is supported by recent work that adopts similar frameworks when analysing movements across the continent (e.g. Layfield, 2008; Diniz and Gilbert, 2013; Ellner, 2013; Motta, 2013) and in Argentina itself (e.g. Hirtz and Giacone, 2013; Malamud, 2015; Schaumberg, 2008, 2013).

These works, as well as this thesis, can be seen as part of wider moves to decolonise Marxist and anarchist theories (Bartolovich, 2002; Ramnath, 2011; Zibechi, 2012), attempts to grasp the increasingly important role of informal and precarious labour in class struggle analyses (Barker et al., 2013; Barnes, 2013), and to move away from restrictively canonical readings of explicitly class-based politics (Bosteels, 2011; Gilman-Opalsky, 2014). However, once again there is a lack of dialogue between these bodies of work and the political activity of migrants – much like literature on migrants in Latin America and Argentina can fail to engage with class properly. The thesis is therefore attempting to plug both of these gaps. Further, as many social movements in Argentina and Buenos Aires – including *Simbiosis Cultural* with whom I worked – explicitly draw on anarchist and autonomist ideas (see Chatterton, 2005; De Souza, 2009a; Holloway, 2005b), this theoretical approach is appropriate. As mentioned above, however, it is vital to understand how class intersects with other forms of oppression, and so it is necessary now to discuss the links between class and race, indigeneity, and national identity in Latin America and Argentina.

2.3.1: Race in Latin America and Argentina

Racism in Latin American societies is commonplace, yet it has been described as a ‘region in denial’ (Dulitzky, 2005). The extent of racial discrimination is such that Latin America has been described as a ‘pigmentocracy’ (Canache et al., 2014; Chasteen, 2001; Telles, 2014), however racism is frequently downplayed and overlooked. In some cases discussion of ‘ethnicity’ has replaced troubling biological approaches towards ‘race’ (see Spickard, 2005; Tilley, 2005), but while this move towards social construction is, in many ways, a positive step (Madrid, 2012; Wade, 2008, 2010), the elision of ethnicity and race has, at times, had alarming consequences (Ng’weno, 2007). It has been argued that this has frequently paved the way for called ‘interpretative denial’, wherein people’s previous racial

prejudice becomes dressed up as a more 'legitimate' dislike of a supposedly 'cultural'/behavioural trait. Further, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, it has also contributed to the more straightforward form of outright denial of racism that can be found in Argentina, where an apparent lack of indigenous and Afro-Argentines, and thus lack of 'racial difference', leads to a lack of racism (Dulitzky, 2005). Key to these debates surrounding pigmentocracy and the lack/prevalence of racism is the idea of *mestizaje* which refers to people of combined European and Amerindian descent. But, as the next section will explore, far from a simple concept, *mestizaje* should be understood "as a plurality of local processes and as a contested terrain of elite and subaltern discourses and practices" (Chavez and Zambrano 2006:7).

Despite a range of contested definitions, broadly speaking there are two main approaches to the idea of *mestizaje*, each of which typically favours/privileges one of the contributing cultures as the dominant force: white European or Amerindian (Burke, 2008). Immediately this raises certain problematic issues. On the one hand it reinscribes the idea of Europe as homogeneously white, while also establishing a link between culture and a biological understanding of race. On the other, it overlooks Amerindian diversity, conflating all people of indigenous and Afro-Latin background into a homogeneous, non-white 'other'. Through this elision not only are important differences overlooked, but extremely problematic and patronising racist attitudes are promoted. This can be seen in the predominant, state-led understandings of *mestizaje* commonplace in the 19th and early 20th centuries.²⁹ These ideas underpinned nation-building projects across the continent³⁰ (Martinez-Echabazal, 1998), and were used to build a series of imagined communities, inhabited by a supposed 'cosmic' race portrayed as hegemonic and superior (Amado, 2012). But far from progressive, these ideas and practices and were fundamentally essentialist and social Darwinist. The promotion of *mestizaje* was not only an explicit move to whiten (and thus civilise) the population, but it was also grounded in the idea that it could improve the cultured, cerebral, yet physically inferior Europeans (Golash-Boza and Bonilla-Silva, 2013), something which again (re)produced and reified troublingly (and inaccurate) biological understandings of race. The insidious power and racism of this commonplace understanding

²⁹ Although, as will be argued, far from disappearing these ideas still find resonance today.

³⁰ Reiterating the intersectional relationships between ideas of race and nationality.

of *mestizaje* is therefore apparent. Whiteness was valued and re-centred through an ‘all-inclusive ideology of exclusion’ (Stutzman, 1981); an apparently ‘colour blind’ approach that hid racism behind attempts at national/regional homogenisation (Amado, 2012; Wade, 2005). More recent work on, and conceptualisation of, *mestizaje* has emphasised the identity’s possibility for resistance, grounding it within critical approaches to race that emphasise the anti-essentialist potential of hybridity (e.g. Burke, 2008; De La Cadena, 2005). However, even within this literature caution is still present, due to the levels of discrimination that come with a ‘pigmentocracy’, and the fact that many *mestizxs*³¹ have a liminal existence that is always in a social, geographic, and cultural borderland (Amado, 2012: 449). It is important, therefore, to consider the lived experience of *mestizaje*, and look at its affective nature, thinking of it as more than an ideology, discourse, or set of state-led policies (Wade, 2005) – something that Chapter 6, in particular, touches upon.

As Chapter 4 will explore, in 19th and early 20th century Argentina, state-led discourses and practices of *mestizaje* were not couched in ostensibly progressive terms, and there was no attempt at dressing-up exclusory ideologies as somehow all-inclusive (Karush, 2012). Instead, there was a very clear and explicit desire to whiten the nascent nation through the promotion of European immigration (Shumway, 2001), something which was required to combat issues associated with non-white groups, who were deemed by political elites to be ‘childlike quasi-humans’ (Di Pietro, 2015: 5). Central to this process was the extreme marginalisation of the Afro-Argentine population, most obviously through the removal of the category ‘Afro-Argentine’ from the census in 1895. This intentional omission has played a key role in the ‘myth of black disappearance in Argentina’ (Edwards, 2014), something which has been central to the interrelated myth that Argentina is a white country. In fact, Argentina – and in particular, Buenos Aires – has an extremely rich black heritage, with historically significant Afro-Argentine and Afro-*porteño* populations, newspapers, and civil society organisations (see Geler, 2014; Maffia, 2010; Maffia and Zubrzycki, 2014; Monkevicius and Maffia, 2014). As Segato (2007: 225) puts it:

³¹ The ‘x’ is used to indicate a non-binary, gender-neutral version of the word. This slightly clunky way of writing is a response to the gendered nature of the Spanish language. Initial written responses to the commonplace practice of defaulting to male spelling of nouns were attempted through the use of the ‘@’ symbol (e.g. *mestiz@*). However, while in some ways an improvement, this reinscribes a gender binary, and therefore marginalises those who do not define as either male or female. Instead an ‘x’ was/is used by some of the groups and movements I encountered in Buenos Aires in order to acknowledge all those within the trans spectrum, and it will be used thus where appropriate.

the disappearance of black people in Argentina was ideological, cultural and literally constructed instead of strictly demographic...[but] their presence was first excluded from the official representation that the nation gave to itself.

Furthermore, dominant historical and historiographical trends in Argentina have not challenged these ideas (Cirio and Cámara, 2014). Consequently there has been a failure to engage properly with Argentina's links with the slave trade (Schavelon, 2014), and Afro-Argentines have been relegated to an existence in an 'abominable past' (Ghidoli, 2014: 152).

Recent attempts have been made to combat these issues in a number of ways. Most famously, in 2010 the Afro-Argentine category was reintroduced, with great fanfare, to the census (Ko, 2013), while elsewhere there has been a significant rise in events and organisations that celebrate Afro-Argentine culture (Anderson, 2015). However, although among some sectors of the population this has brought a shift from explicit racism, this has often been replaced by heavily exoticised (re)presentations which reinforce the subaltern position of Afro-Argentines (Aguiló, 2014), ultimately reiterating the incompatibility of blackness with the Argentine national identity (Knight, 2011). Similarly, at the state level, moves towards multiculturalism have been limited at best, and in fact reliant upon groups deemed to be non-white having to play up to a form of racial otherness in order to gain acceptance. Again, this only serves to perpetuate discrimination and social hierarchies grounded in race and its supposed link to (often nationally-bound) ideas of culture (Ko, 2013). As Anderson (2015: 74) puts it, in such a limited, neo-liberal multiculturalism (see Hale, 2005):

it might appear that brown and black bodies are being incorporated into Argentina's public sphere, yet it is still very clear the Euro-centric imaginary is privileged above all in every form. The few instances when non-white bodies are included in media, they are done so in stereotypical forms, and the social problems that accompany the lived embodiment of blackness remain unaddressed.

Of particular interest to this thesis, such stereotypes are consistently applied to, and frequently performed by, specific migrant groups. Most common among migrants who self-identify and/or are racialised as indigenous, the consequences of these stereotypes are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

Returning to the *mestizx* identity in Argentina (and in particular Buenos Aires, which was the epicentre of the interrelated process of whitening and nation building), it is clear that while *mestizaje* failed to map perfectly onto the desired white/European identity, it was not wholly incompatible. Such is the mutability of both *mestizaje* and ideas of whiteness (see below), that, alongside the real examples of whitening through state-led eugenics (Stepan, 1992; Reggiani, 2010), this invisibilisation of black and indigenous Argentines combined with the promotion of discourses of white European immigration to create simultaneously an ‘imagined’ whitening of an already imagined community (Golash-Boza, 2011: 76-78) – this will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5. Accordingly, at times (in particular during Perón’s first period of power) there was a limited congruence between *mestizaje* and the Argentine and *porteño* identities, but overall *mestizxs* have long been marginalised, both socially and spatially. A significant factor in this marginalisation is the relationship between class and race in Argentina. While indigenous and black Argentines (if not invisible) were deemed to make up some sort of underclass (Andrews, 1980), the *mestizx* identity has long been firmly working class, and as a corollary working-class identity have always been racialised (Karush, 2012). What is more, a consequence of this racialisation of (working-) class position is that middle-class identities have a similarly mutually reinforcing relationship with whiteness – in fact it has been argued that the racialisation and othering of *mestizaje* is central to the formation and (re)production of the *porteño* middle-class identity (Guano, 2004). With the persistence of Peronism and its nationally bound understanding of class (see Section 2.3.3), the inextricable and complicated intersections between class, race, and national identity in Argentina are therefore apparent. The causes and consequences of these intersections are examined throughout the thesis, as are the ways in which immigrants and immigration throw them into sharp relief.

To put it concisely, however, immigrants from neighbouring countries tend to be racialised in a way that precludes them from the predominantly white national identity. Likewise, groups of Argentine that are racialised as (sufficiently) non-white are portrayed as immigrants in order to protect this erroneous and fragile national identity. Finally, as we shall see, immigrants deemed to be white are so fully accepted that they are no longer

classed as immigrants (Joseph, 2000). Thus we witness a profound contradiction in Argentina, where, as Gordillo (forthcoming: xx) notes:

claims to racial homogeneity and tolerance [coexist with the] reality of a profoundly racialized [sic] and racist society...[I]n Argentina the same person can claim to live in a white nation without racism and add, shortly thereafter, that half the population is made up “negros de mierda”³²...[and this] tense oscillation is...at the core of the specific configuration of whiteness in Argentina.

This therefore brings us full circle to the conceptualisation of race. While firmly pigmentocratic, a further contradiction lies at the heart of understandings of race and race relations in Argentina: they are simultaneously extremely specific yet incredibly vague. For instance, the national stereotypes mentioned above carry with them a whole host of racially-bound tropes, and there is often a significant difference in attitudes towards indigenous, black, and *mestizxs*. Yet in other situations these groups are often homogenised and made invisible – under the ubiquitous phenotypical descriptions *negro* and *morocho*³³, for example (Karush, 2012). These catch-all terms for non-white people produces a hegemonic discourse that celebrates a rich diversity of whiteness, “which is continuously produced and negotiated with [*negros* and *morochos*] as...constitutive counter-race[s]...[and is] purposefully disdainful of national origins” (Ko, 2013: 3-4). As argued, race cannot be fully decoupled from class and nationality/national identity, and despite being a social construction is often based in the crude yet specific phenotypical categories mentioned above. This thesis therefore examines the way in which phenotype remains an important, but, crucially not totalising, part of race and racialisation in Argentina (Saldanha, 2006). It is part of an assemblage of discourses, practices, and (re)presentations that combine in such a way that the materiality of race remains extremely pertinent and powerful (Saldanha, 2007, 2012).

These discourses, practices, and (re)presentations take place at a number of interweaving ‘scales’, and it is for this reason that Wade (2010) has therefore argued for ‘archaeological’ or ‘genealogical’ understandings of race in Latin America. Such a deep and contextual description of the state-led construction of race in Argentina is provided in

³² Fucking black people.

³³ Most simply translates as dark, but is typically used in the pejorative.

Chapter 4, where it is argued that dominant discourses of race, class, and national identity are not only intermeshed, but in fact shaped by processes of migration.³⁴ It is important, however, to move beyond the idea that race and racism in Argentina is, simply, constructed and imposed from above, and experienced from below (cf. Anderson, 2014). Instead, discussions in Chapter 6 and 7 will consider the performative, affective, and everyday lived-experience of race, racialisation, and racism. In particular, it will consider how shifts towards a more inclusive multiculturalism have not only failed to gain traction among much of the wider population, but retain an attachment to a disciplinary form of whiteness (explored in more detail below). This means that not only is “the racial subject is constituted and naturalized [sic] through repeated references to itself and reiterations of the very norms that constitute that subject”, but also that through “staged performances that render visible presumed racial differences” non-white Argentines and immigrants can (re)produce their own subalternity (Ko, 2013: 3). Beyond this, Chapters 5, 7, and 8 will also explore how race (in particular whiteness) is also a ‘geographical project’ (Gordillo, forthcoming: xx), linked to the territorialisation of intersectional structures and identities and conceptions of public space. Before moving onto a discussion of indigeneity in Argentina, however, the next section will unpack the idea of whiteness.

There has been a relatively recent turn³⁵ towards critical engagement with whiteness, much of this work attempting to unpack its associated privileges and powers (for an overview see Meer, 2014; Nayak, 2007). While phenotype and ideas of ‘pigmentocracy’ should not be overlooked, whiteness is understood as a socially constructed ‘organising principle’ (Nayak, 2007). Crucially, it is often held up as some sort of yardstick against which other bodies are measured and potentially declared ‘deviant’ (Lorde, 1996). In occupying such a position, whiteness can become “both invisible and normative” (Rhodes, 2013: 52), or some sort of ‘habitus’ (Meer, 2014: 154) in which “culture and ideology constantly re-cloak whiteness as a normative identity” (Duster, 2001). So although there has been a move away from ideas of ‘monolithic white supremacy’ (Winant, 1997), its insidious and structuring powers remain and construct an almost self-evident social hierarchy leading to ‘white privilege’ (Lipsitz, 1998; Twine and Gallagher, 2008; Rothenberg, 2012). Whiteness

³⁴ This approach therefore shares obvious similarities with the idea explored above of class as a ‘historical formation’ (Camfield, 2004).

³⁵ Although there has been earlier work attempting to do similar things (e.g. Jackson, 1998).

has also been constructed in such a way that is often elided with conceptions of Westernness and/or Europeanness (Bonnett, 2008; Fenton and Mann, 2010), creating a mutually constituting relationship that can marginalise migrants, people of colour, and indigenous groups (Walia, 2013).³⁶ Postcolonial critiques have therefore problematised this conflation, further emphasising the way the construction of whiteness intersects with and reinforces a range of power dynamics (e.g. López, 2012a; Mishra, 2012), which are themselves related to the perpetuation of global capitalism (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). It is also important to consider the ways in which whiteness is multiple, contingent, and relational (Nayak, 2003b, 2007): “[it] is not just constituted in relation to blackness...but is also fashioned *thorough and against other versions of whiteness*” (Nayak, 2003a: 320). Whiteness is therefore felt and experienced differently, something which is associated with/inflected by class (Garner, 2006; McDermott, 2006): an individual’s constructed/performed whiteness can affect their social class position, while conversely class position can preclude whiteness. This has led Telles (2014: 59) to argue that in Latin America people can claim a white identity *despite* their skin colour. It is therefore necessary to understand whiteness intersectionally, and attempt to unpack the ways in which it interacts with other structures and identities (Meer, 2014). Returning to Telles’s point, the claim is supported by examples of migrants, for instance, who ‘become white’ by moving country/location³⁷ (see Roediger, 1994, 2005), something which emphasises the relational and mutable nature of whiteness. This thesis will therefore contribute to critical work on whiteness, and problematise its construction and (re)production throughout, with particular focus on the way in which it becomes ‘territorialised’³⁸ and normalised (Ko, 2013; cf. Harris, 1993).

2.3.2: Indigeneity

Analyses of race in Latin America must also be complemented by discussions of indigeneity. Indigenous struggles have been at the forefront of many of the continent’s most dynamic movements across the last decades (see e.g. Dangl, 2010; Zibechi, 2012). These movements have perhaps been most successful in forcing state recognition of territories (see below), and have adopted a variety of approaches, running the gamut from working with civil

³⁶ This is of particular importance to this thesis.

³⁷ The way this played out in Argentina is discussed in Chapter 4.

³⁸ These links between territory and whiteness will be explored later in this chapter.

society organisations in order to gain political rights and citizenship (e.g. Beltrão and da Costa Oliveira, 2012; Lazar, 2012b; Postero, 2007; Postero and Zamosc, 2004; Singh, 2011) to the formation of radical, anti-state movements (e.g. Holloway, 2002, 2005b; Vergara-Camus, 2009a, 2009b; Zibechi, 2004, 2010). Most obviously these currents have combined (often uneasily) in Bolivia with the government of Evo Morales. An inflammatory relationship between various indigenous groups has come to dominate many political spheres, and has been analysed through critical approaches to indigenous class politics (see e.g. Dangl, 2007; Harris, 2007; Lazar, 2008; Webber, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Zibechi, 2010). In many countries indigenous claims to rights have become so strong that they have even come to replace debates previously structured around ethnic and racial lines (Hooker, 2005; Ng'weno, 2007).

The Argentine situation, however, differs from that in many other Latin American countries. Despite indigenous groups' long histories (see Logan, 2009; Miniconi and Guyot, 2010; vom Hau and Wilde, 2010), they have been consistently written out of the country's history (see Castro, 2013; Guano, 2004).³⁹ Typically, therefore, collective struggles framed around indigeneity have had only very limited success with regard to citizenship (Gordillo, 2006; vom Hau and Wilde, 2010) and claims to territory (Gordillo, 2011; Miniconi and Guyot, 2010). In fact efforts at strategic 'self-essentialism' have often backfired, leading to greater discrimination (e.g. Briones and Guber, 2009; Canessa, 2006, 2007; Kradolfer, 2011; Schwittay, 2003). The 'indigenous' identity in Argentina is constructed through a combination of class, race, and nationality which places people firmly at the bottom of the social hierarchy, and therefore poses different problems for different migrants in Buenos Aires (Canelo, 2006, 2008; Gavazzo, 2012): an intersectional approach to indigeneity and class is crucial.

2.3.3: National identity

As we shall see in Chapter 4, interplay between class, race, and indigeneity (among other structures and identities) has played an extremely important role in constructing the paradigm of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) that is Argentina.⁴⁰ Argentine

³⁹ This is explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

⁴⁰ Interestingly, although shaped by migrants, this national identity is now in tension with many contemporary patterns of migration and can even serve to exclude its own citizens.

nationalism therefore cannot be extricated from these intersections and must be considered in any form of class analysis. Even with the well-documented turn towards regionalism within Latin America (see Castañeda, 2006; Escobar, 2010; Mukhametdinov, 2007; Munck, 2001) respective countries maintain very distinct identities. As will be explored throughout the thesis, the tensions this creates are readily apparent in Argentina and play a very important role in shaping attitudes towards migrants. Exacerbating these factors is the continuing importance of Peronism, which not only obfuscates the class divide, but also frames class in explicitly national terms (see James, 1993; Levitsky, 2003b; McGuire, 1997; Milanesio et al., 2010; Munck et al., 1987; Teubal, 2001).⁴¹ Unique to Argentina, this powerful political ideology shapes attitudes towards migrants, and it will be argued that a contextual and intersectional class analysis can better help to unpack these processes. This is especially important, as, while nationalism in Argentina is perhaps most obviously linked to race (see Bastia and vom Hau, 2014), national stereotypes of migrants are frequently framed around perceived cultural traits that are supposedly linked to their position in the labour market (Vargas, 2005).⁴²

It has been argued that, for a class struggle analysis, class should be understood as a historical formation and not some form of synchronic structure. The particular context of class formations is therefore extremely important, and cannot be understood without reference to other forms of oppression and identities such as race, gender, and sexuality – something which an intersectional understanding of class captures well. However, it is important to guard simultaneously against class being an omnipotent catch-all term while recognising its unique nature based on both exploitation and domination. In this sense the intersectional approach developed here can play a role in preventing the inadvertent promotion of forms of identity politics that are in tension with class struggle analyses. Nevertheless, it is still important to understand quite how such an analysis is undertaken, and the next section therefore argues that the idea of ‘class composition’ can be productive in this regard.

⁴¹ Once more, greater detail can be found in Chapters 4 and 5.

⁴² As will be argued, this can be seen as a conflation of the political and technical compositions of various migrant groups.

2.4: Class composition

Class composition analysis first emerged from the Italian ‘workerist’ movement of the 1960s and 70s, and was a response to what it saw as an uncritical analysis of the working class (Camfield, 2004; el-Ojeili, 2004; Wright, 2002, 2008). It was argued that Marx focused predominantly on the composition of capital, and the proletariat lacked sufficiently precise discussion (Linebaugh, 1976; Mohandesi, 2013). Such analyses were thought to leave labour powerless in the face of an omnipotent, omnipresent capital (Cleaver, 1992). To rectify this, workerists sought to place the working class firmly on the front foot, leading to Tronti’s ‘Copernican inversion’ of the dialectic:

We too have worked with a concept that puts capitalist development first and workers second. This is a mistake. And now we have to turn the problem on its head, reverse the polarity, and start again from the beginning: and the beginning is the class struggle of the working class (1964: 89).

The focus was couched in a ‘heretical reading’ of *Capital* (Bowman, 2012; Dyer-Witherford, 2008), which took Marx’s ideas of the technical and organic composition of capital, and applied them to the working class in the guise of *technical* and *political* composition (Bowring, 2004).

Put briefly, the *technical* composition of class is the division of labour in terms of wages, skills, and productivity, as well as, for example, the gendered, racialised, and nationalised differences in the workforce. Intimately linked to the composition of capital, it describes the division, management, and exploitation of the workforce (Marks, 2012: 470; Mohandesi, 2013: 85-88).⁴³ The technical composition is therefore a reflection of how capital brings the workforce together, but importantly it is not solely focused on the production process, but also the (re)production and circulation of capital.⁴⁴ On the other

⁴³ The technical composition of migrants in Buenos Aires will be explored in Chapter 4.

⁴⁴ Tronti’s (1971) work explored how capital shaped life beyond the factory gates, and embraced all aspects of life: it created a ‘social factory’ (see Bowman, 2012; Cleaver, 2004; Cuninghame, 2010; Dyer-Witherford, 2008; Franks, 2006: 177-191; Gill and Pratt, 2008; Thoburn, 2003: Chapter 4). This therefore expanded the remit of the technical composition, and with it the political composition of what Negri described as the ‘socialised worker’ (Cleaver, 2004; Day, 2002). As capital attempted to “extend its control all throughout the social fabric” this meant that resistance outside of the factory became part of the class struggle (Shukaitis and Figiel, 2013: 4), and so changing compositions opened up new political subjectivities, and the possibility for recomposition (Cleaver, 1992, 2004; Dyer-Witherford, 2008). Related arguments were also put forward by Marxist feminists

hand, the *political* composition is how the working class uses and responds to this technical composition to struggle (or not) against capitalism (Shukaitis, 2013: 656-657). Technical and political composition therefore resemble the ideas of class *in itself* and class *for itself*, or the economic/political elements of class (Mezzadra, 2005; Mohandesi, 2013). However, the real importance of class composition lies in the relationship between the two, as opposed to the mere categories themselves (Roggero, 2010). Far from proposing a simple, mechanical or causal linkage between technical and political composition, a class composition analysis recognises their complicated, reciprocal, and dialectical connection (Mohandesi, 2013; Smith, 2010a). Tronti's Copernican inversion is important here, as shifts in technical compositions are seen as responses by capital to militant political compositions, which in turn affects future political compositions and so on.

Linked to these ideas are the concepts of class *re-* and *de*composition. Again, briefly, recomposition represents increasing "concordance of actions across a widening diversity of the class" (Marks, 2012: 470) through "the overthrow of...division, the creation of new unities between sectors of the class, and an expansion of the boundaries of what the 'working class' comes to include" (Zerowork Collective, 1975: 4). This recomposition is caused by the 'circulation of struggle' across the geographical and social diversity of the class (Shukaitis et al., 2007: 111). Importantly these struggles can, and do, take place independently from not only the traditional organs of working class power (the party, the union), but also from each other (Cleaver, 2000).⁴⁵ Decomposition is the opposite. It represents the emergence of increasing weaknesses, divisions, and contradictions among the class, leading to the slowing down of the circulation of struggles (Marks, 2012: 470).

Class composition analysis is therefore explicitly a form of class struggle analysis, designed to gain a better understanding of the (ever-) changing political subjectivities of the working class (Bologna, 2007 [1977]), and to locate capital's weak points (Panzieri, 1980 [1961]: 61). In this sense it is a grounded, empirical way to recognise and study the changing patterns of struggle (Cleaver, 2004; Dyer-Witherford, 2008; Wright, 2002). It focuses on the specificities of different stages of capitalism, and how these distinct methods of

in their discussions of the role of 'social reproduction' (e.g. Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Dalla Costa, 1995; Federici, 2004, 2012; Fortunati, 1995, 2013).

⁴⁵ It is in this sense that it is an autonomist Marxism.

accumulation shape, but, crucially, do not and cannot fully explain resistance/oppression (Kolinko, 2003): while the technical composition plays an important role, the ‘radical subjective becoming’ of the political composition is privileged as “the basis of analysis and political strategy” (Shukaitis, 2013: 656). It is therefore a dynamic, rigorously materialist analysis that attempts to explain and understand working class activity/inactivity without recourse to (largely) idealist conceptions of class/false consciousness (Mohandesi, 2013). It is also noted that while shifts in the organic composition of capital could change the technical composition of the class and cause decomposition, periods of downturn were never permanent: new methods of accumulation brought with them new opportunities for resistance as “the new antagonistic subjectivity is [always] immanent to the class composition” (Roggero, 2010: 205).

2.4.1: Contemporary class composition

Class composition was most commonly used throughout the 1960s and 70s in Italy (for a thorough overview see Wright, 2002, 2008), while, in the USA, the short-lived autonomist Marxist-influenced journal *Zerowork* published three editions between 1975 and 1977 that made extensive use of class composition analysis. Since then – in Anglophone academia at least – reference to class composition has been sporadic at best (e.g. Cleaver, 1992; Holloway, 1992; Midnight Notes, 1992; Negri, 1991a; Neill et al, 1996), but of late it has started to make a reappearance (see Bowman, 2012; Bowring, 2004; Caffentzis, 2013; Camfield, 2004; Dyer-Witherford, 2008; Midnight Notes Collective and Friends, 2008; Mohandesi, 2013; Roggero, 2010; Shukaitis et al., 2007; Shukaitis, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013; Smith, 2010a). Responding in part to the rise of social movements openly influenced by elements of autonomist and anarchist ideas (see Cuninghame, 2010; Day, 2004, 2005; Graeber, 2002, 2009; Graeber and Grubacic, 2004; Gordon, 2007; Ibrahim, 2009), this new wave of work interested in class composition seeks to find ways to understand political action carried out across a range of locations and by a variety of actors. In a world of post-Fordism, immaterial labour, and financial capital, class politics has not disappeared, but rather mutated. While the class structure has fractured, the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour (capitalism) remains.

Nevertheless, despite sustained periods of decomposition, cycles of struggle have begun to contribute to a radical recomposition, often from unexpected sources, such as migrants, the unemployed, and indigenous groups. Contemporary work on class composition therefore seeks to better understand these multiple processes, be they taking place in European call centres (Berardi, 2009a, 2009b), within sites of high-tech immaterial labour (Brophy and de Peuter, 2007; Fisher, 2008), among Chinese agricultural workers (Marks, 2012), in urban environments (Cumbers et al., 2010; Shukaitis and Figiel, 2013), or among Latin American indigenous movements (Vergara-Camus, 2009). While very little work focuses explicitly on class composition in Argentina⁴⁶, many studies have long explored Argentina's extremely fragmented class structure, the diversity of class-based social and labour movements, and thus certain problems with more 'traditional' and rigid class analyses (Grant, 2005; Motta, 2009a, 2009b).⁴⁷ Importantly, class composition analysis does not apply a pre-determined class structure to a new time and place. Instead it seeks to understand the specificities of the situation. What is more, the use of a class composition analysis in the Argentine context responds to Shukaitis's suggestion that the strengths and weaknesses of the theory should be critically considered, by helping to "creatively rework [it] by using it in a different time, place, and location" (2009: 24).

There is also a growing body of work that focuses on the role of migration in changing class compositions (e.g. Ramirez, 1977; Wright, 2002; Cleaver, 2004; Mezzadra, 2005; Zanini, 2010; Marks, 2012; Pizzolato, 2013). This work considers the ways in which migration and migrants can be involved with both the de- and recomposition of class structures, as they can drastically alter both the technical and the political composition of the class. In this regard, class composition analysis can act as a useful framework for beginning to understand the specific historical formation that is the Argentine working class, and the role migrants have played in this process. This thesis will therefore combine elements from both anarchism and autonomist Marxism in order to propose an intersectional class composition analysis. Tentative steps have been made towards such an endeavour (Bowman, 2012), but this potentially fruitful synthesis (see Franks, 2012;

⁴⁶ The exception being the work of Mason-Deese (2012, 2013a, 2013b) which focuses on the changing technical and political compositions of the unemployed workers' movements (*Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados* or MTDs) found in many of Buenos Aires's poor neighbourhoods.

⁴⁷ Examples of fragmentation and resistance are explored in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Gautney, 2009) remains underexplored in critical geography (see Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Purcell, 2012). However, it is important to note that until this point, while sensitive to contexts across time and space, the form of class struggle analysis proposed is still, to all intents and purposes, aspatial.

2.4.2: Towards an intersectional labour geography

Labour geography has been crucial in understanding the inherently spatial nature of capital accumulation (e.g. Brenner, 1998, 1999; Harvey, 2008, 2010, 2012; Massey, 1984) and working class resistance (e.g. Herod, 1997, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Wills, 1998), and has emphasised the myriad ways in which space and class are therefore intertwined (Lefebvre, 1991; Thrift and Williams, 1987). However, most of this work does not take into account many of the autonomist and anarchist ideas explored above. An intersectional class composition analysis thus needs to consider not simply how class composition changes across space (and time), but also how space itself can influence both technical and political composition.⁴⁸ Talk of the ‘social factory’³⁹ began to emphasise the spatial elements of capitalism, and how (class) resistance could take place beyond the workplace, and work has emphasised how urban space can play an important role in shaping political composition, and therefore class re-/decomposition (Ealham, 2010; Lotta Continua, 1973). Therefore, in its early forms, class composition made implicit spatial/territorial claims, but these ideas have remained underdeveloped. Some work (e.g. Cumbers et al., 2010; Shukaitis and Figiel, 2013) – including research carried out in Buenos Aires (Mason-Deese, 2012, 2013a, 2013b) – has started to address this issue, but the body of work is still nascent.

This thesis will argue that, through a critical reading of territory, it is possible to spatialise/territorialise an intersectional class composition analysis. And by engaging with anarchist ideas the thesis is, therefore located in-against-and-beyond the recent (re)turn to anarchist geographies (see Chatterton, 2005; Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Hodkinson and Chatterton, 2006; Ince, 2009, 2010; Pickerill and Chatterton, 2006; Springer, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014b; Springer et al., 2012). However, as opposed to the work within this canon which is seeking to define what anarchist (and, supposedly, by extension *all* radical)

⁴⁸ Some of Romano Alquati’s work (1964, 1967, 2013 [1961]) began to consider how the spatiality of the production line affects the technical composition of the working class, but these thoughts were left undeveloped, and have less resonance in a period of post-Fordism and financial capital.

geography must be (see Springer 2012, 2014a, 2014c), by combining anarchist ideas with autonomist (and other heterodox) Marxist ideas, this thesis is seeking to contribute to a more open and pluralist radical, critical geography (see Clough, 2014; Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Ince, 2014), in keeping with work I have produced elsewhere (see Clare and Habermehl, 2016). It also seeks to engage with, and expand upon, geographical work that emphasise the importance of space, place, and territory in intersectional analyses (see Hopkins and Noble, 2009; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2013; Schroeder, 2014; Valentine, 2007). Space, place, and territory can play an important role in identity formation, and as such therefore should not be overlooked. What is more, as will be argued below, given territory's normalising and obfuscatory power, intersectional class analyses need to engage properly with it: territorial concerns and identities may come to the fore and seem to trump others at points, but they can never be fully removed from class and its intersections. Studies of (intersectional) class should therefore be territorialised, and, concomitantly, work on territory should be 'intersectionally classed'. With this in mind, the chapter will now turn to a discussion of territory.

2.5: Territory

After periods of sustained interest from the 1960s to the 1980s, a focus on space and place relegated territory to the peripheries of much geographical scholarship (Delaney, 2005). Exacerbated by the 'relational turn' and a focus on mobilities, networks, and open-ended processes of becoming (for a review see Jones, 2009a), territory's seemingly static and bounded nature was seen as increasingly outdated, anachronistic, and even 'reactionary' (Painter, 2010). But, as will be explored below, territory is firmly back on the agenda, with contemporary work proposing more nuanced, relational approaches (see dell'Agnese, 2013). However, despite this important shift, much of the work retains a statism and an attachment to sovereignty that is in tension with alternative and non-state territorial claims (see Agnew and Oslender, 2010; Bryan 2012). Nevertheless, within this territorial (re)turn a growing body of literature challenges this with ideas of 'multi-territoriality' (see Haesbaert, 2013b), and this thesis draws from, and contributes to, this body of work. It also provides a (currently lacking) territorial element to class composition analysis, ultimately arguing that a territorial focus is invaluable when considering attitudes towards migrant groups in Buenos Aires.

The section will begin by briefly exploring various uses of territory throughout the 20th century, as well as a range of criticisms. Following this, it will expand upon ideas of ‘relational territory’ and trace the territorial (re)turn. Finally, this take on territory will be used to complement the ideas put forward in Tim Cresswell’s (1996) *In Place/Out of Place*. But before taking this further it is important to provide a brief definition of territory as ‘bounded political space’ (Antonsich, 2011). However, as will become readily apparent, all three of ‘bounded’, ‘political’, and ‘space’ require significant exploration.

2.5.1: A brief history of territory

Early approaches to territory drew similarities between ‘animal’ and ‘human’ territory, viewing territory as a form of biological imperative (e.g. Wagner, 1960; Ardrey, 1966; Malmberg, 1980). This idea was later critiqued, as territory came to be seen as a social, not a biological, construction (e.g. Gottmann, 1973; Guichonnet and Raffestin, 1974; Raffestin, 1980, 1984; Raffestin and Bresso, 1979; Raffestin et al., 1975; Sack, 1983, 1986, 1987). Such works were vast in their remit but tended to focus more on processes of territoriality than territory itself (cf. Elden, 2010), simply viewing the latter as an output of the former. Sack’s work in particular made important points about the inextricable links between social life/structure and territoriality, but his project’s breadth and attempted neutrality belied a problematic Eurocentrism and modernism (Delaney, 2005). Raffestin, on the other hand, drew from an eclectic mix of theory, and focused more on territory itself. Relatively unknown in the Anglophone world (see Fall, 2012; Klauser, 2012), he emphasised a Foucauldian take on the relationality of power (Minca, 2012; Murphy, 2012a), adapted the Deleuzo-Guattarian triad of territorialisation, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation (Klauser, 2012; Raffestin, 2012), and situated territory firmly within a spatialised Marxist political economy (Raffestin, 1984). But while this final emphasis on the relationship between territory and class struggle further distances Raffestin from Sack et al., it brings his work close to that of Lefebvre (1991; Brenner and Elden, 2009), which poses the question: why territory and not space?⁴⁹ In fact, Raffestin acknowledged the many similarities

⁴⁹ This is also an important question for this thesis. As will be argued, territory is primarily adopted due to its frequent usage by groups and movements in Buenos Aires. Not only does this avoid problematic translations of concepts, but it is also in keeping with Merrifield’s discussion of the need for radical theory to ‘work backwards’ and understand that “[w]hat matters most of all is surely whether people engage in effective action. And if actions are politically effective, we might want to pinpoint the conditions for their effectiveness” (2014: xvii). Although ideas of space and place will be discussed, the main focus is territory.

between his 'territory' and Lefebvre's 'social space', but argued that 'territory' better captures the explicitly political nature of the concept, which should not be seen as neutral and pre-given space (Klauser, 2012; Minca, 2012; Raffestin, 2012). Nevertheless, despite all this rich work, territory still tended to play second fiddle to territorialisation.

Often work on territory has adopted a 'mosaic-statist metageography' (Taylor, 2003) where territory and the nation-state are synonymous (for an overview see Agnew, 1994). With such readings territory *qua* nation-state is seen as a static container of society (Taylor, 1994; cf. Jones, 2009b, 2010) leading to a situation of 'total mutual exclusion' whereby non-state spaces were overlooked. Such an ahistorical reading of the territorial nation-state created a 'territorial trap' (Agnew, 1994), which left the concept of territory open to critique (González, 2010; Murphy, 2010). With the rise in globalisation and concomitant (supposed) decline of nation-states and borders throughout the 1990s and 2000s (see Diener and Hagen, 2009), this particular type of bounded political space was therefore seen as anathema to the relational understandings of space and place that were becoming prominent (e.g. Massey, 1991). Even studies that eschewed such a nation-state focus, instead looking at the sub-national, could be seen to fall in to some form of the territorial trap as, while they took smaller spatial units as their basis for analysis, they were just as guilty of the 'total mutual exclusion' caused by ossified, bounded space (see Allen and Cochrane, 2007; Amin, 2004; Cochrane, 2012a, 2012b; Goodwin, 2013; Harrison, 2012; Macleod and Jones, 2007).

However, recent work on critical border approaches have challenged the conception of borders/boundaries as necessarily fixed (e.g. Antonsich, 2009, 2011a, 2011b; Brighenti, 2007; Novak, 2011; Paasi, 1998, 2009a, 2013), and thus the problematic consequence of territory becoming a 'container' (see Agnew, 1994; Faludi, 2013; Jones, 2009, 2010). Instead boundaries/borders can be understood as 'soft', dynamic, processual, networked, and fluid: they are social processes that are constantly being made, challenged, and remade by a variety of actors and actions. Under such an understanding territory as 'bounded political space' therefore need not be seen in opposition to the relational turn, and much of the recent territorial (re)turn has sought to challenge this false dichotomy.

2.5.2: *The territorial (re)turn*

As Painter (2010: 1090) notes, “territory is back” and no longer simply the “poor relation among spatial concepts”. A plethora of papers and books has put forward variations of dynamic, networked, and relational approaches (e.g. Painter, 2006, 2010; Escobar, 2008; Antonsich, 2009, 2011b; Brighenti, 2010; Bryan, 2012; dell’Agnese, 2013; Haesbaert, 2013b), attempts to provide ‘full’⁵⁰ histories of ‘territory’ have appeared (e.g. Delaney, 2005; Elden, 2009, 2010, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c), and numerous conference panels, special editions, and now even the whole journal *Territory, Politics, Governance* are seeking to reengage with the previously maligned concept. But while this (re)turn is testament to territory’s continuing allure (Murphy, 2012b), it is important not to over-exaggerate the decline of the territorial nation-state (Elden, 2005; Diener and Hagen, 2009), nor lapse into an ungraspable world of ceaselessly shifting and nebulous flows (Paasi, 2009a). Territory in its more fixed, bounded instantiation still plays a huge role in shaping: processes of capital accumulation and resistance (Cox, 2013; Vigneswaran, 2013); national, religious, and ethnic identities (e.g. Antonsich, 2009; Billé, 2013; Fall, 2010; Forsberg, 2003; Lois, 2012; Murphy, 2002, 2010; Penrose, 2002; Smith, 2013); as well as regional, national, and supranational forms of politics (e.g. Cochrane, 2012a; Elden, 2010; Lamour, 2014; Murphy, 2012b; Painter, 2010; Sassen, 2013a, 2013b). It is therefore important to understand how territory, while dynamic, can at times ‘stand still’ (cf. Anderson, 2012).

Territory’s strength and endurance lies in its naturalising and obfuscatory capacity: its ability to provide a seemingly obvious explanation for a variety of things, from individual property rights to national sovereignty (Murphy, 2012b; Sack, 1986). As Delaney puts it:

Territory commonly works precisely through the tendency to take power and meaning and their relationship to be simply self-evident and rather nonproblematic (2005: 18).

Power is therefore immanent to territory, and reflective of the social, political, economic, and cultural context within which territory is enacted and theorised (Delaney, 2005),⁵¹ and

⁵⁰ Albeit very specific.

⁵¹ Given that we live in a predominantly capitalist world, the majority of territories that are enacted and theorised are reflective of this, and therefore intimately linked to the class structure. However, many spaces

therefore territory has been described as a form of ‘political technology’ (e.g. Bryan, 2012; Elden, 2013b; Roy, 2013). Much of the Anglo-American work on territory (contemporary or otherwise) falls into two broad camps, adopting either liberal democratic (e.g. Elden, 2013b, 2013c; Roy, 2013; Sassen, 2013a, 2013b) or more traditional Marxist (e.g. Brenner, 1998; Cox, 2013; Jessop et al., 2008) approaches. Despite their political differences, uniting these readings is the Foucauldian understanding of “territory [a]s no doubt a geographical notion, but...first of all a juridico-political one: the area controlled by a certain kind of power” (Foucault, 2007: 176) which is predominantly the state. Even within attempts to decouple the state and territory (e.g. Agnew, 2013; Brenner, 1999; Elden, 2010; Sassen, 2013a) the state fails to receive the critical attention that autonomist and anarchist approaches demand. Critically, such understandings of territory hinge on an understanding of power intimately linked to sovereignty:

To be in...territory is to be subject to sovereignty; you are subject to sovereignty while in the territory, and not beyond; and territory is the space within which sovereignty is exercised: it is the spatial extent of sovereignty. Sovereignty, then, is exercised over territory: territory is that over which sovereignty is exercised (Elden, 2013a: 329).⁵²

As this type of power comes to be embedded in understandings of territory it is normalised and naturalised, and problematically this can lead to the marginalisation of groups, struggles, political philosophies, and attitudes towards territory that fail to fit this model (Springer, 2013). However, as will be discussed below, this is not the only reading of the relationship between power and territory, and alternative understandings exist which begin to challenge this hegemonic understanding of territory.

The problem here is not that traditional readings of territory adopt such a position, rather that they do so with apparent neutrality. Again, recourse to territory is serving to naturalise political positions and discourses, masking their contingent natures. This is especially problematic when works claim to offer a definitive exploration of the history of

are never ‘entirely capitalist’ (Gibson-Graham, 2004), and ‘cracks’ can of emerge within the current political system (Holloway, 2010), which can be exploited territorially.

⁵² This quotation reinforces the singular idea that territory is linked to a form of power *over* given its attachment to sovereignty, something challenged by work on Zapatista territories (Reyes and Kauffman, 2011), and discussed below.

territory (e.g. Elden, 2010a, 2013a). Across a number of papers and books, Elden (e.g. 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2013b, 2013c), places the birth of territory in 16th and 17th century Europe, where the advent of Cartesian geometry allowed space to become calculable and therefore its politico-economic function (value) to be quantified. For Elden, territory therefore emerged with the rise of the modern state, and control of the former was a precondition for the latter.

However, by defining territory so narrowly as a “political technology, comprising techniques for measuring land and controlling terrain” (Antonsich, 2011: 423), Elden’s work overlooks myriad territorial claims from different times and places. So while his work provides an extremely thorough exposition of one *type* of modern territory, by presenting it as the *only* type of territory (e.g. Elden, 2011) he is guilty of a politically myopic Eurocentrism (Antonsich, 2011; Reyes and Kaufman, 2011). In response to some of these criticisms Elden argues his narrow reading of territory is necessary in order to retain conceptual clarity and purchase, retorting that if “a ‘bounded political space’ is sufficient to understand territory, then we can of course find these all over the place, and at a range of different times” (2011: 426-427). But this is exactly the point. As this thesis will argue different types of politics create and require different types of territory. Given this, theorising territory does not and cannot exist within a vacuum. Contrary to Sack’s assertion, there is no neutral approach to territory; it is an explicitly political undertaking. To provide examples of alternative/multiple territories, and better explain the particular types of territory adopted in this thesis, a focus is placed on Latin America.

2.5.3: Latin American territories

Latin America has been described as making a ‘territorial turn’ (Bryan, 2012; Hale, 2005, 2011; Merino Acuña, 2012; Offen, 2004; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009), where various states have begun to recognise indigenous groups’ claims to territory, often underpinned by ideas of communal property rights (e.g. Wainwright, 2008; Hennessy, 2012). Such struggles for a more autonomous and communal approach to territory have had a large influence on urban social movements across Latin America in general (e.g. Dangl, 2010; Holloway, 2005b; Lazar, 2008; Mamani, 2006; Zibechi, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2012) as well as in Argentina in particular (e.g. Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Mason-Deese, 2012, 2013, forthcoming; MTD Solano and

Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Sitrin, 2006, 2012). This is in part due to the important links between political and cultural identities and territories put forward by indigenous groups. Given that ideas of autonomy underpin many of these movements and their conceptions of territory (e.g. Escobar, 2008; Offen, 2004; Porto-Gonçalves, 2001; Surrallés and García Hierro, 2005; Vergara-Camus, 2009), they therefore resonate with radical ideas, highlighting the role certain 'indigenous knowledges' can play in more 'traditional' political activity (Barker and Pickerill, 2012; Dinerstein and Deneulin, 2012). However, it is important to avoid the fetishisation of indigenous approaches to territory, which can inadvertently (re)create Orientalist binaries between 'indigenous' and 'western' territories and rearticulate the affiliation between indigenous peoples and 'nature' (Haesbaert, 2013b; Hale, 2011; Wainwright and Bryan, 2009). The point, then, is not to create a division between 'progressive' Latin American territories and 'regressive' Euro-American territory – nor is it to claim that these territories only exist in Latin America – but to explore how different understandings of territory have been (productively) advanced in both theory and practice. What is more, by focusing on this Latin American 'canon' the thesis is trying to avoid problems associated with the inappropriate translation of concepts: it uses the frameworks of groups often marginalised by more mainstream approaches (see Cusicanqui, 2010; Grant, 2005; Motta, 2009a, 2009b; Robinson, 2006).

Conceptions of territory with communal property rights, attachment to *use not exchange* value, and critical approaches to sovereignty (Reyes and Kauffman, 2011) can begin to challenge the links between nation-state and territory. They therefore chime with the important idea of 'multi-territoriality' (Haesbaert, 2013b) that underpins much Latin American scholarship on territory (e.g. Agnew and Oslender, 2010; Fernandes, 2008, 2009; Fernandes and Levitt, 2009; Haesbaert, 2004, 2013a; Schneider and Tartaruga, 2006). The idea is that multiple territories exist and overlap within the same area, be it at a neighbourhood, city, or state level. While not unique to Latin American readings (see Delaney, 2005), such a position avoids the 'territorial trap' and is sensitive to a range of territorial struggles and claims. Multiple territories of multiple types coexist, some in harmony, others in tension, and in Buenos Aires this can be seen in the rise of various types of 'neighbourhood movements'.⁵³ For some of these groups the neighbourhood as territory

⁵³ A historical overview of these movements is provided in Chapter 5.

can be seen as an open and inclusive site of class-based resistance (see Colectivo Situaciones, 2006, 2009; Mason-Deese, 2012, forthcoming; Trigona, 2007a), while for others it is seen as a way to exclude unwanted 'others' (Caggiano et al., 2012). Different attitudes to territory can be seen to influence the activities of these various groups, supporting the idea that the link between territory and politics is complicated, as the former both shapes, and is shaped by, the latter.

As mentioned above, different types of political action require different types of territory. For example, while traditional approaches emphasise the politico-economic value of territory (e.g. Elden, 2010a) and are centred on property rights (Delaney, 2005), other approaches focus on 'communal use value' (Zibechi, 2012). However, it is also important to consider the role of power immanent to types of territory. As explored, more traditional theories of territory are imbued with ideas of sovereign power *over*, which is seen to be in tension with horizontal, non-hierarchical, and autonomous politics (Springer, 2013, 2014b). In which case, the territorial underpinnings of such radical forms of political action require an alternative take on power altogether. This issue is neatly captured in work influenced by autonomist and open Marxism, struggles in Buenos Aires, and the Zapatistas (Negri, 1991b; Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Holloway, 2005a) which considers the difference between the two Spanish words for 'power': *poder* and *potencia*. This work translates *poder* as the aforementioned 'power *over*' and tends to be seen as more static, unidirectional, and potentially repressive. On the other hand, *potencia* can be seen as 'power *to*'.⁵⁴ It is dynamic, constantly in a state of becoming, and the basis for the autonomous politics practised by some social movements in Argentina (Sitrin, 2012) and Latin America more generally (Zibechi, 2012). *Potencia*, and not *poder*, can therefore be seen as immanent to such an alternate understanding of 'subaltern territory' (cf. Reyes and Kaufman, 2011; Stratta and Barrera, 2009). Importantly, this is not to say that all examples of 'power *to*' (nor, for that matter, all types of related territory) are necessarily progressive, simply that a different understanding of power can lead to a different type of territory, further challenging Elden's claim to a definitive history of the concept.

⁵⁴ It must be noted that this is by no means the only translation of the two words. *Potencia* can also be understood as closer to potentiality or possibility. However, work focusing on this distinction between 'power to (do)' and 'power over' can also be found in work in the French anarchist canon, and makes an important point that underpins much anarchist and autonomist thought (Lotringer and Marazzi, 2007; McKay, 2008, 2012)

2.5.4: Territory, identity, and the ‘intersectional production of space’

Links between territory and identity can be very powerful, be they at a predominantly national (e.g. Antonsich, 2009; Billé, 2013; Forsberg, 2003; Murphy, 2002, 2010, 2012b) or more localised scale (e.g. Delaney, 2005; Escobar, 2008; Offen, 2004).⁵⁵ Such a connection can be seen in the work on ‘place attachment’ and ‘place making’ in urban environments (Lombard, 2014; Taylor, 2010), particularly relevant to this thesis when applied to studies of migrants’ lives (e.g. Blunt, 2005, 2007; Ehrkamp, 2005; Logan et al., 2002) and the activities of social movements (e.g. Conway, 2007; Martin, 2003; Pierce et al., 2011). This work demonstrates the connections between identities/subjectivities and the production and (re)production of territory, as Porto-Gonçalves puts it: “new subjects emerge by instituting their new territorialities” (2001: 208). Focusing on Argentina in particular, Zibechi’s work on territorially focused social movements⁵⁶ discusses how they adopt an understanding of territory which

see[s] land as more than a means of production, thereby going beyond a narrow economist conception of it. Territory is [therefore] the space in which to build new social organisations collectively, where new subjects take shape and materially and symbolically appropriate *their* space (2012: 19).

Not only does this resonate with ideas of ‘subaltern territory’ (Stratta and Barrera, 2009): it also emphasises how the (re)production of territory and identity can be linked. Central to this is the idea that territory is constructed, and Lefebvre’s (1991) ideas about the ‘production of space’ are useful in unpacking this.⁵⁷ Lefebvre explores the way space is neither neutral nor pre-given, but is instead contested and constructed through processes of class struggle. However, although his work therefore emphasises the important linkages between class and space (and therefore territory), as has been argued, its over-emphasis on class is problematic. But while it is crucial to recognise the production of, for instance,

⁵⁵ These linkages are often particularly strong among indigenous groups (see Surrallés and García Hierro, 2005), where instead of land/territory belonging to them; they belong to it (Walia, 2013). This inversion again challenges the ideas of ownership/sovereignty, property rights, and exchange value that are associated with more ‘traditional’ understandings of territory. However, the links between culture, identity, and territory can be overplayed (cf. Wise, 2000), as a construction of a necessary linkage can become extremely problematic and perpetuate racism and xenophobia (Grimson, 2007, 2010, 2011).

⁵⁶ These are discussed throughout the thesis.

⁵⁷ As has been mentioned Raffestin saw many similarities between his work on territory and Lefebvre’s ‘social space’, while Brenner and Elden (2009) have applied Lefebvrian ideas on the production of space to territory.

gendered or racialised spaces/territories, these need to be understood within a class framework. Based on this and earlier ideas developed in this chapter, it is therefore important to understand the '*intersectional* production of space'. Certain social practices/relationships may play a more prominent role in the production of spaces and territories, but these should not then be decoupled from others, nor removed from broader processes of capitalism and the class relationship. Migrant territories provide a good example. These could be at once racialised, gendered, and shaped by ideas of nationalism, but are also, in the case of poor migrants, likely to emerge in less-gentrified areas. Or on the other hand, exclusive parts of cities are often produced by processes linked to whiteness and high social class. Territories and their associated identities are thus linked, and in intersectionally deconstructing the production of the former, it is possible to better understand the power of the latter – Chapters 5 and 7 focus on this.

The thesis thus fits within contemporary geographical debates about the role and importance of spatial politics (e.g. Cumbers and Routledge, 2012; Davies, 2012; de Souza, 2009a; Featherstone and Painter, 2013; Ince, 2012; Leitner et al., 2008; Wills, 2012; Winders, 2012). But in particular it explores how at times territorial concerns can seem to trump those related to class, race, indigeneity, and nationality when explaining relationships between groups. Therefore, not only should the production of territorial identities be understood intersectionally, but once constructed these identities should be incorporated in to intersectional analyses: territory shapes, and is shaped by, (intersectional) class compositions, and as such needs unpacking and denaturalising. Territorial identities matter, and given territory's naturalising capacity can become extremely powerful and at times almost self-evident. Although they are constructed by intersectional processes this makes the identities no less real, and it is therefore necessary to understand them alongside identities and relationships such as race, nationality, and class, and explore the ways in which they reinforce and undermine each other. The thesis therefore recognises the need for geographical contributions to understandings of intersectionality (see Valentine, 2007), and critically contributes to such debates.

Territory's capacity as a useful and productive 'spatial grammar' has been demonstrated (see Macleod and Jones, 2007; cf. Jessop et al., 2008). The next section

explores how territory can enrich the ideas put forward in Cresswell's 1996 book *In Place/Out of Place*, in order to explain attitudes towards migrants in Buenos Aires further.

2.5.5: Territorialising In Place/Out of Place

In "*In Place/Out of Place*", Cresswell (1996) undertakes the important task of attempting to denaturalise place. He argues that place, like territory, has a powerful capacity for making things seem self-evident – it can make the contentious seem neutral, and vice versa. The book focuses on transgression, and how certain behaviours are seen as appropriate when they are 'in place', and inappropriate when 'out of place'. It is the presence of these particular behaviours in particular places that is seen as transgressive, not necessarily the behaviours themselves. This reveals how place is far from apolitical, but is instead inextricably linked to ideology, and can thus insidiously perpetuate dominant power relations by making the contingent seem necessary. It therefore provides an invaluable spatial/platial corrective to social and cultural theory.

However, *In Place/Out of Place* arguably fails to realise its full potential, as certain key elements frustrate its intentions. First, despite adopting a relational approach to place, it points the book's approach is problematically static (Dovey, 2010). It is therefore important to provide a more dynamic reading of the issues put forward by Cresswell, and explain how certain behaviours can at one time be seen as in place, and at another out. Second, Cresswell is unable to follow through on his promised focus on practices of resistance, as he fails to explain adequately how marginalised groups and behaviours can *come to be* 'in place'. In fact, the only example in the book of typically 'out of place' behaviours losing their transgressive edge focuses around processes of co-option. Agency is therefore stripped from 'dominated' groups, and little room is left for (successful) resistance (cf. Paddison et al., 2002). Finally, Cresswell is guilty of some of the problems discussed above. While he is of course right to remove class from its hegemonic position, arguing that it alone cannot determine what is deemed appropriate in certain places, he goes too far and reduces it to another identity. As discussed earlier in this chapter, class occupies an extremely important role in the creation and (re)production of territory, and accordingly must feature more explicitly in the analysis. The approach outlined above can combat these

problems, and help make previously overlooked territorial struggles visible. Therefore, combining territory with Cresswell's ideas can provide the thesis with a powerful heuristic.

It is also especially appropriate for a thesis with a focus on migrants and migration. The very presence of migrants can itself be seen as transgressive as they are often 'out of place', and through this framework it is possible to unpack not only why this is, but also explore how, through a variety of methods, migrants can begin to challenge this. What is more, this territorialisation of in place/out of place allows the thesis to talk to ideas around 'territorial stigmatisation' (e.g. Giménez and Ginóbili, 2008; Jensen and Christensen, 2012; Musterd, 2008; Wacquant, 2007, 2008), where people living in deprived areas of 'advanced marginality' come to embody the stigma attached to those places/territories. However, such approaches can be extremely disempowering and guilty of dystopian scaremongering (see Caldeira, 2009; cf. Davis, 2006), and so it is crucial to understand how people are able to resist and challenge this stigma. Therefore, just as periods of class decomposition can open up new possibilities for resistance (see Cash, 2010), it is argued that territorial fragmentation can create spaces for resistance (Stratta and Barrera, 2009; Zibechi, 2012).

2.6: Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the concepts and theoretical approaches adopted in the thesis, while simultaneously highlighting a number of significant gaps and disconnections in the literature surrounding immigration and social/labour movements in Argentina. It is argued that through a focus on migrants, their political subjectivities, and attitudes towards them, it is possible to unpack important issues relating to the intersections between, among other things, race, class, national identity, indigeneity, and territory. Given the aims of the thesis – a critical, qualitative study into the forms of oppressions faced by migrants in Buenos Aires, and the possibilities for resistance that could emerge – a form of 'intersectional class struggle analysis' has been proposed. This simultaneously recognises the unique nature of class in the perpetuation of/resistance to capitalism without committing the error of making class omnipotent. Understanding class as 'historical formation' can help grasp the processual and contextual nature of class, as well as the way in which class formation mediates, and is mediated by, a number of different social relations. It has also been argued that this approach can help combat the lack of dialogue

between studies of migrants and more 'radical' understanding of class, which has often led to the power of migrant political activity being overlooked.

The chapter has explored some of the many debates about the use of class in a Latin American context, and argued that – far from undermining the idea of class struggle analysis – these debates and the many forms of political activity across the continent, have in fact reinvigorated and nuanced the idea. The ideas of class as an intersectional, historical formation is then returned to through a discussion of the linkages between class, race, national identity, and indigeneity. In order to carry out the type of class struggle analysis proposed by the thesis, the idea of a 'class composition analysis' is proposed. The analysis of technical and political compositions provides an empirical and grounded way in to important debates, while the related concepts of class decomposition and recomposition are attuned to myriad forms of class struggle. What is more, it is argued that the ideas of class composition are well suited to exploring the roles migrants play in shaping classes and their political activities. The thesis therefore uses a synthesis of ideas inspired by anarchist and autonomist/other heterodox Marxist literatures as a productive way to focus on migrants, class, and other social relations/identities, something that contributes to contemporary debates in radical geography.

The thesis is therefore situated within a (re)turn to the importance of class. Class composition provides a framework that can help explore how class is inevitably linked to, but ultimately cannot be fully explained by, production. Processes of reproduction and circulation also play an important role, as do the various identities that intersect with class and each other. However, importantly, none of these processes takes place 'on the head of a pin' (Cresswell, 1996) and therefore territory, which shapes both technical and political compositions, must be taken seriously. It is vital, then, to look at both the technical and the political composition, and how each shapes, facilitates, and limits the political action of, as well as the attitudes towards, migrants in Buenos Aires. The chapter therefore turns to another important concept in the thesis: territory.

It has been argued that far from being theoretically defunct, territory has much to offer. While it has faced a series of legitimate critiques, these have tended to apply more to particular applications of territory than to the concept itself. Defining territory as bounded

political space need not be in tension with the relational turn, and in fact territory is best understood as a dynamic, processual network. Nevertheless, it is important not to go too far, seeing everything in a constant state of flow, and overlooking how territory can at times 'stand still'. Therefore there is a need to understand the various processes of territorialisation, deterritorialisation, and reterritorialisation. It is also crucial to denaturalise territory, and understand how it legitimates specific intersectional power relations and perpetuates the accumulation of capital, often under the guise of the state. However, this is far from the only role territory can play. It can also be the base for forms of anti-capitalist resistance, but such endeavours rest on a radical understanding of territory's role as both cause and effect of struggle, and an understanding that (intersectional) class struggle and territory therefore constantly reshape each other.

However, given the power of territory to normalise and naturalise, it can often play a dominant role in explaining relationships and contribute as much to class decomposition as it can to recomposition. Nevertheless, territory is always constructed by, and reflective of, a variety of relationships and identities, all mediated by class. By studying the composition of class and territory, as well as transgressions, it is possible to unpack how these identities interact. Migrants provide an ideal entry point to these debates as they embody many of the factors in play, and similarly the proposed framework is sensitised to the roles that migrants play in processes of class de/recomposition and de/reterritorialisation. This understanding of territory can therefore help enrich understandings of class, which, despite being a crucial determinant of critical understandings of labour migration, has often been overlooked entirely, or instead stripped of its 'radical' nature.

In order to build on the ideas explored in this chapter throughout the thesis, Chapter 4 will consider the history of migration into Argentina, and begin to explore how class, race, and national identity are co-constituted. This archaeological approach will also provide in-depth detail about the technical compositions of different migrant groups. Chapter 5 will focus on Buenos Aires itself, and consider how various territories have been created and challenged within the federal capital and *conurbano*. This exploration will help unpack the links between class, territory, and other identities, and argue that, far from being a neutral

backdrop; the (extremely fragmented) city plays an active role in shaping attitudes towards migrants. However, before all this, Chapter 3 outlines the methodology adopted by the thesis.

CHAPTER 3

Confronting privileges and learning a city: Constructing a critical methodology

This chapter describes the thesis's research process, focusing on the methods adopted and the reflexive processes of data analysis. Taking place over two trips to Buenos Aires (between September-December, 2012 and February-June, 2013), the fieldwork adopted a mix of qualitative methods based on an ethnographic approach (see Mason, 2002; Meth and McClymont, 2009). The chapter also explores the influences of activist and feminist methodologies on the research design (e.g. Hesse-Biber, 2012; Shukaitis et al., 2007). However, given the inevitably 'messy' nature of research (Feyerabend, 1975; Routledge, 2009), a mix of qualitative methods can confuse as much as it can deepen understanding (Barbour, 2006). The chapter therefore reflects critically on both the problems and the opportunities that emerged, as well as on difficulties and dilemmas faced throughout the fieldwork (see Lunn, 2014). In particular it discusses how and why the methodology was modified (see Delamont, 2009; Hamilton et al., 2008), emphasising a 'grounded' approach (see Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Bailey et al., 1999; Clarke, 2012) which has been maintained throughout the analysis and writing (Charmaz, 2012; Hodkinson, 2008).

3.1: Reflexive research design

Fieldwork is challenging, and despite best-laid plans (see Binns, 2006; Phillips and Johns, 2012) is riddled with unforeseen problems and difficulties (Kitchin and Tate, 2000). However, these difficulties and unexpected events can produce interesting insights (Lunn, 2014). This section documents the realisation that my initial proposed methodology was unworkable, and then discusses how the modifications I made to it actually contributed to critical reflexivity.

3.1.1: From 'radical research from below' to 'radical research from above'

Initially I had intended to carry out an embedded 'activist' ethnography (see Emihovich, 2005; Ferrell and Hamm, 1998; Graeber, 2009a, 2009b; Lyon-Callo, 2008; Shukaitis et al.,

2007) by working *with* and *for* two unemployed workers' movements (MTDs)⁵⁸, an approach framed within the ideas of '*militancia de investigación*' developed by an MTD and a Buenos Aires-based radical research group (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003, 2005; MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002). The concept has a dual-meaning – both 'research militancy' and 'militant research'. The former is a process of radical and reflexive knowledge production, and the latter views knowledge production *itself* as a form of radical activism. 'Militant research' is therefore useful to the groups with which it is co-produced (Chatterton et al., 2010), and is similar to 'solidarity action research' (see Chatterton et al., 2007; Ince, 2010). Such methodological approaches have underpinned radical research in Buenos Aires (e.g. Chatterton, 2005; de Souza, 2009a, 2009b; Gordon and Chatterton, 2004; Mason-Deese, 2012; Motta, 2009a, 2009b; Zibechi, 2012), contact had been made with the MTDs (and a number of other social movements) before my arrival in Buenos Aires, and I had arranged a series of initial meetings. The proposed methodology therefore seemed theoretically coherent and workable. However, upon arrival to Buenos Aires it soon became apparent that the research would not go as planned.

Initially, several groups entirely stopped responding and failed to turn up to our agreed meetings. Although I later discovered a reason for this was the infiltration of social movements by police posing as investigative journalists (see Buenos Aires Herald, 22/05/13), at the time it felt like I had caused the issues. These worries were exacerbated by the problems I faced when meetings took place, as these tended to be awkward affairs: except in the cases of two organisations *Simbiosis Cultural*, a group of young Bolivians who produce research on their collective experiences, and *La Alameda*, a social movement focused on labour struggles, I was treated with great suspicion. Luckily, these two groups make appropriate case studies. While their focuses overlap (particularly surrounding the hyper-exploitation of Bolivian workers in textile workshops) their approaches are completely different. *Simbiosis* argue for a Bolivian-led struggle from *within* the workshops and are extremely critical of the 'slave labour' discourse that is central *La Alameda's* anti-'sweat shop' struggles.⁵⁹ *La Alameda* is a much bigger organisation with international links and

⁵⁸ The groups had been selected in view of their history of working with researchers, their spatial distribution (one MTD in the north and the other in the south of Buenos Aires, and the various social movements spread throughout the city), and their differing levels of engagement with migrant workers.

⁵⁹ These differences are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

influence in the labour movement. It is also a much more hierarchical organisation, with a leader sitting on the Buenos Aires City Legislature. *Simbiosis*, on the other hand, are influenced by autonomist Marxist ideas, and thus organise horizontally and do not seek to 'take power' in the same way. More prosaically, they were also two of the groups most willing to work with me, but as discussed below this still created difficulties.

While individual members of groups – usually those I had been in contact with – were friendlier, the majority either ignored me or were very dismissive of my research intentions. My perceived⁶⁰ status as an extremely rich, Western researcher was invoked as problematic, and I was accused of imperialist attitudes as my presence apparently implied arrogant assumptions about my right to carry out research in the 'third world' or 'periphery'.⁶¹ These feelings of animosity were also grounded in the social movements' 'research fatigue' (see Clark, 2008). Since the 2001 economic crisis⁶², Argentina has become something of a 'laboratory' for radical, anti-capitalist theory and praxis (Colectivo Situaciones, 2014), leading to many Western researchers and activists coming to the country to study and learn. Consequently, many movements feel inundated and over-researched, something exacerbated by extractive research practices (see Graeber, 2004; Ince, 2010); such feelings were clearly shared by many movement participants.

Consequently I faced a dilemma: retain my proposed methodology in the face of these difficulties, or rapidly reassess my research. The former seemed impossible, as the methodology was becoming increasingly self-defeating. Given the large focus on self-education and publishing among Argentine social movements (Sitrin, 2012; Zibechi, 2012; Mason-Deese, 2013a, 2013b), it was unclear what I could usefully and originally 'offer back' (cf. Fernandez, 2009; Ferrell, 2009; McIlwaine, 2006; Walia, 2013). This made me reluctant to continue as the proposed research seemed to be for my sole benefit, and was causing friction among some movements, and therefore my desire to carry out radical research *from below* seemed in tension with '*militancia de investigación*'. Instead, responding to these experiences, I modified my research questions and design, and through critical reflection about my positionality I constructed a methodology that remained consistent with key

⁶⁰ As discussed below, I was often assumed to be much better-off than I am. However, this is not to deny my relative affluence compared to many (but certainly not all) Argentines.

⁶¹ This terminology is that of the groups and my own choice.

⁶² This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

concepts of militant research/research militancy, as well as with feminist and postcolonial methodologies more broadly (see Hesse-Biber, 2012; Noxolo, 2009; Noxolo et al., 2008, 2012; Raghuram and Madge, 2006).

Reflecting upon the problems I faced, I realised that my position as a white, Western researcher obviously affected the research process. Consistently my social class position was assumed to be higher than I would self-define, and even for some left-wing activists more affluent than I was (in both relative and absolute terms), my being white and European was problematic. This was extremely frustrating, particularly when those very activists were of recent European descent and members of the white bourgeoisie, but it did reinforce the multiple identities and social powers bound up in whiteness and Europeanness (see Joseph, 2000). However, while my whiteness was an obvious cause for mistrust, it also afforded me many privileges. People and groups I assumed would be suspicious of my presence and research – such as middle-class neighbourhood groups and members of both city and national governments – were often welcoming. In these situations, being white and from a European university was far from problematic, and instead was positive. Initially this put me in a difficult position. The gap between how others read me⁶³ (extremely rich, white, and European) and how I viewed myself (white and European certainly, but most importantly a radical activist and researcher interested in migrants' struggles) indicated a need for critically reflexive and 'holistic' understandings of positionality that understand the personally-political within broader, intersecting power structures (see Hesse-Biber and Piatelli, 2012; Kobayashi, 2001, 2003; Lynch, 2000; Nagar and Ali, 2003; Sultana, 2007).

In many situations, therefore, my beliefs and how I viewed myself were of little obvious importance, given how my appearance and perceived social status either closed or opened doors of opportunity. Consequently I realised that I was unable to carry out the research I had intended in the time available. However, I was also becoming aware of the ease with which I could gain access to more affluent, non-migrant groups and arrange 'elite'⁶⁴ interviews. Crucially, while discussing this with members of *Simbiosis Cultural* and *La*

⁶³ In order to distinguish between these two I will refer to the former as my *perceived* positionality and the latter my *performed*. However, it is important to recognise partiality (Rose, 1993) and the fact that full knowledge of either type of positionality is difficult if not impossible (Mohammad, 2001; Skelton, 2001).

⁶⁴ 'Elite' is a contested and relational term (see Herod, 1999; Smith, 2006), but in this situation it is used in a very broad sense to refer to a wide range of people including members of the city and national governments,

Alameda it became apparent that this was not always something they could achieve as easily. With the former their nationality precluded such interactions, while for the latter it was their political reputation.⁶⁵ Therefore, I was able to produce a methodological approach with the potential to be useful to groups in struggle: I could conceive of militant research once more.

Instead of radical research *from below*, the (ab)use of my whiteness and associated privileges to gain access to various ‘elites’⁶⁶ can be seen as radical research *from above*, as I was able to ask pertinent questions of appropriate people, and potentially provide useful feedback to social movements. Rather than downplaying my social status and privilege, I instead sought to confront, embrace, and subvert it, and this also enabled me to carry out research that was not covering similar ground to that carried out by social movements themselves. In this sense, certain parallels can be drawn with the work of Routledge (2002: 487) who recognised that when “[d]ifference is not denied, essentialised, or exoticised but rather engaged with in an enabling and potentially transformative way” (see also Lorde, 2003), the (ab)use of privileges associated with whiteness and an ‘outsider’ status can have radical potential.

However, there are important differences between my research practice and that of Routledge. While he intentionally deceived interviewees, I never denied my involvement with *La Alameda* and *Simbiosis Cultural*. Instead, my experiences shared similarities with Oglesby (2010) and Sabot (1999) whose roles as white researchers (their ‘outsider’ status) meant that ‘elites’ did not view them in any way as a ‘threat’, and were very open and frank. However, in my case, the ‘insider’/‘outsider’ identities were not clear-cut (cf. Mohammad, 2001). As Chapter 4 explores, dominant constructions of the Argentine national identity often write non-white groups out of their history, and attempt to exclude certain nationals along class and racial lines. Therefore, for a number of the more ‘elite’ research participants, my whiteness, far from marking me as an ‘outsider’, enabled me to become an ‘insider’ of

judges, certain high-profile academics, prominent members among various civil society groups, as well as elements of the middle classes. While I have given all interviewees pseudonyms, pertinent characteristics of specific interviewees are highlighted throughout in order to demonstrate the nature of their ‘elite’ (or not) status, and all names and information can be seen in the appendix.

⁶⁵ *La Alameda*’s ability to gain such access has, however, grown significantly in the last few years, as they have increased in size, reputation, and political clout.

⁶⁶ A fuller description of the people I interviewed and spoke to can be found below.

their imagined Argentine community. I therefore often inhabited multiple and contested positions, being both 'insider' and 'outsider' at different times and places. Attempts to understand these processes, and the reactions I provoked therefore helped draw out the intersectional relationships between class, race, and national identity that are the focus of this thesis.

Given my political position, researching 'elites' in this way was a form of 'oppositional research' (see Gould, 2010; Jansson, 2010; Thiem and Robertson, 2010), but I ensured that I never encouraged discriminatory comments from participants. Newman (2011) has argued that the 'symbolic violence' caused by such practices may outweigh any radical potential. Nevertheless, I struggled in situations where research participants spoke and behaved in discriminatory and (to me) offensive ways, knowing that while this information was extremely interesting and useful, my failure to raise concerns was out of character, and could be read as tacit consent. However, It is also important not to homogenise 'the opposition', and much like Han (2010), I found I was consistently (pleasantly) surprised by responses from people I wrongly assumed would hold beliefs contrary to my own, much as I was (unpleasantly) surprised by the attitudes of people I viewed as 'comrades'.

3.1.2: Fieldwork structure

This section explores the shifts in research design, demonstrating how the fieldwork structure aided reflexivity. As said, fieldwork intentionally took place over eight months across two trips. The first trip helped me familiarise myself with the city and the nuances of *porteño* Spanish, and I complemented my literature review using sources inaccessible from Sheffield. I also attended an academic lecture series on contemporary Argentine immigration, as well as various lectures and seminars hosted by a range of academic, charitable, and government (both city and national) organisations. This enabled me to gain a better grasp of what migration practitioners saw as key debates, and enriched the theoretical and contextual background of the project. I also used these events to meet 'gatekeepers' and 'key informants' (Campbell et al., 2006; Mandel, 2003), something that became more important as the project increasingly focused on the opinions of 'elites'. It was during this time that I laid the groundwork with *Simbiosis Cultural* and *La Alameda*,

meeting members individually and attending group events that varied in their degrees of formality and sociability. Elsewhere I visited many events organised by the annual *Cine Migrante* film festival⁶⁷, attending film showings and participating in workshops and discussions. Again my attendance helped forge invaluable contacts, but also gave me a better understanding of the ways in which migrants and migration are portrayed and (re)presented in Argentina. Where possible I took extensive notes on the films during showings, and these I later typed up and analysed with the rest of my field diary, something discussed in detail below.

Given the scale of the changes made to the project's methodology, much of this first trip was spent reassessing the research focus. However, concerns associated with these significant changes were alleviated by the two-trip research design, and while the decision to shift approach was made relatively early during the first trip, I was able to postpone final decisions about research questions until my return home. The first three months therefore became more of a productive and extended pilot (Sampson, 2004). Nevertheless, the first trip retained focus. Beyond the processes of familiarisation, contact building, and improvement of background understanding, I also carried out ten preliminary 'key informant' interviews (see Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009; Longhurst, 2010) with migrant members of *Simbiosis* and *La Alameda*, a member of an MTD, migration lawyers and activists, academics, and a foreign economist working for the city government.⁶⁸ By this point it was clear that the difficulties associated with gaining access to 'neighbouring migrants' outside of the two organisations I was working with required a shift in my first research question. As I was uncomfortable speaking for, and thus risking silencing, migrants (see Kapoor, 2004; Spivak, 1988), instead of focusing the research entirely on their experiences, the research questions were adjusted to consider attitudes *towards* these groups – although this focus was still complemented by direct testimony from some 'neighbouring migrants'. This shift took place before the first interview, and they were

⁶⁷ *Cine Migrante* is an international film festival founded in 2010 in Buenos Aires. It aims to "construct spaces to promote [migrants'] human rights and cultural integration" through a range of seminars, workshops, lectures, discussions, and film showings.

⁶⁸ Referring to these as 'key informant' interviews is not to say that the ideas expressed within them were treated with any more importance than those in any other interview, simply that they were used as part of the pilot trip to help generate early themes.

therefore all carried out with this in mind, but still remained intentionally broad, allowing interviewees to touch on a wide range of issues.⁶⁹

While I transcribed some interviews during this first trip, the majority were typed up at home between December 2012 and January 2013. Once transcribed⁷⁰, the seven scripts⁷¹ were offered back to interviewees, and I undertook initial analysis which involved the repeated re-reading of transcripts and my field diary in order to highlight early themes (see Jackson, 2001). Given the emergence of these themes I established the third research question to consider the ideas of territorial identities and attachments. Armed with these initial analyses and thoughts, I contacted interviewees with my interpretations, attempting to stay true to *militancia de investigación*. I received only two responses, yet both indicated that my new focus mapped broadly on to their experiences. My first ‘pilot’ trip and this period of initial analysis and reflection therefore enabled me to react more critically and reflexively to the complexities of the research situation (see Hannerz, 2003). It meant that I began my second trip with more confidence, a better research focus, and a coherent and appropriate set of methodological approaches which will be explored in detail in the next section.

3.2: Ethnography: a mixed qualitative methods approach

The thesis adopted a number of qualitative methods that come under the umbrella of ethnography, and this section explores how they dovetailed, demonstrating that the combination of methods allowed for a deep understanding of issues and processes related to the research questions. It is also argued that this mixed methods approach is well suited to engaging with issues of intersectionality, and is therefore consistent with the thesis’s theoretical framework (Choo and Ferree, 2010; Spry, 2001; Thornton Dill and Kohlman, 2012). The section first describes the interviews I carried out, which is followed by a discussion of observation and participation as methods, and finally a section on how I attempted to ‘learn the city’ (McFarlane, 2010, 2011a, 2011b).

⁶⁹ A number of these ‘key informants’ were re-interviewed during the second trip using a more focused interview schedule.

⁷⁰ As discussed below, due to time constraints I was not able to transcribe all interviews myself. However, all transcripts were checked thoroughly against original interview recordings to minimise errors.

⁷¹ Three of these first ten interviews were not recorded due to requests from the participants.

3.2.1: Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are a staple of qualitative research as they can elicit rich data (e.g. Collins, 1998; Fielding and Thomas, 2008) from many sources (e.g. Arskey and Knight, 1999; Longhurst, 2010). But they can also (re)produce potentially problematic ‘researcher’/‘researched’ binaries, and consequently struggle to challenge dominant power structures (DeVault and Gross, 2012) – especially in cross-cultural research (Willis, 2006). Rather than providing an overview of the method itself, something repeatedly done elsewhere (see e.g. Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), this section describes the role interviews played in the thesis.

The ‘key informant’ interviews of my first trip have been mentioned. Far from being taken as gospel, the ideas expressed in these first, more open interviews were then interrogated throughout the research. Beyond these initial interviews I carried out 27 more during the second trip. Of these, three were repeat interviews with members of the social movements I interviewed in the first trip, and one was a group interview with three Bolivian immigrants. Where possible, interviews were purposively sampled (see Longhurst, 2010). I attempted to reflect a pertinent cross-section of, in particular, nationalities, genders, class positions, employment statuses, political beliefs/involvement, and locations of people’s homes and employment. However, given the problems discussed above, the 39 interviews inevitably over-represented ‘elite’ voices.⁷² Such interviews were often the least problematic to organise and carry out, which reinforces the ideas about the unintended power and privilege of my *perceived* positionality, as well as the complexity of negotiating and analysing power dynamics in ‘elite’ interview situations (see Herod, 1999; Smith, 2006; Rice, 2010). As stated, interviews with ‘neighbouring migrants’ were limited, and the focus of the thesis was adjusted in order to take this (and the prevalence of ‘elite’ testimony) into account. So while purposive, attempts at sampling were also reflexive, but ultimately partial. However, as will be demonstrated, backgrounds of interviewees were taken seriously throughout analysis in order to situate responses properly, while the other methods were used to fill gaps in interview sampling.

⁷² See the appendix for a list of all interviewees in the order that interviews took place. Basic information is provided about each interviewee in order to situate their responses.

I conducted a large number of what I call ‘intermediary’ interviews, with non-‘neighbouring migrants’ who may not categorise themselves as ‘elites’, but had significant expertise in elements relating to the research – for instance, academics and lawyers specialising in migration. In these intermediary interviews discussion mostly focused on their research and experiences of working with migrants, and thus shared similarities with ‘key informant’ interviews. These produced a different type of data that was not direct testimony of ‘neighbouring migrants’/activists or ‘elites’, but instead a series of ostensibly ‘expert’ opinions against which other testimonies could be read. Again, these interviews were not treated as more ‘accurate’ or ‘important’ than others: they simply provided another level of comparison which made for very interesting cross-reading. Further, because these interviewees (like all others) were not neutral and detached observers, their positionality (where possible both *perceived* and *performed*) was always taken into account during analysis, their role as potential ‘key informants’ interrogated, and what they said was problematised just as much as the content of other interviews. Typically, with related ‘types’ of interviewee, similar interview schedules were followed to aid comparison and analysis across these groups, but interviews were encouraged to take on a life of their own in order to elicit/produce as rich and deep a body of data as possible (Collins, 1998; Valentine, 1997), and the individual expertise and interests of interviewees was considered in interview design.

All but five interviews were in Spanish, the remainder being in English due to the interviewees’ English being superior to my Spanish. I carried out almost all interviews individually, although in four cases I was accompanied by people carrying out related research – something always first approved by the interviewee. While not completely fluent – especially at the start of the trip – I decided to carry out research in Spanish without a translator. I felt this not only aided the flow of the interviews, but it also made it easier to understand issues of power and positionality (Bujra, 2006; Cupples and Kindon, 2003). What is more, this also prevented information passing through a further ‘lens’ of a translator (Bassnett and Trivedi, 1999; Crane et al., 2009).⁷³

⁷³ Translation will also be discussed in the analysis section.

I was able to record 33 interviews. With the remaining six, interviewees requested not to be recorded, but were happy for me to take extensive notes. While this was frustrating, I was committed to gaining full informed consent before each interview, and this required respecting the interviewees' preferences – including their preferred interview time and location. During all interviews, notes were taken about factors such as body language in order to complement the transcripts (Longhurst, 2010), and after each interview I made further notes in order to aid critical reflection. In situations where immediate post-interview note-taking was not possible I recorded thoughts on my Dictaphone, which were later transcribed.

Throughout fieldwork I struggled with what I could class as an 'interview'. On numerous occasions ostensibly 'informal chats' lasted longer than some 'proper interviews' and elicited more interesting information – especially with 'neighbouring migrants', many of whom seemed warier and more closed when conversations became an 'interview' and were recorded in any format. Similarly, fascinating insights would emerge after the interview was finished and the recorder turned off. This left me with a dilemma as to the status of some information. Sometimes these comments were explicitly 'off the record' and therefore could not be included in the thesis (see King and Horrocks, 2010), but in other situations they were a continuation of discussions. At points this caused me concern, as I felt that many of my most important and interesting insights were not things I could properly use in my thesis, not having come explicitly from the interviews, and the related concern that I did not have 'enough' interviews (see Guest et al., 2006). However, given the mixed qualitative methods approach, data produced through more ethnographic approaches was, while very different, just as important and useful. This was especially true in situations where the perceived formality of the 'interview' was detrimental to the confidence and participation of individuals.⁷⁴ Further, a mixed methods approach allowed me to interrogate and problematise interview data (Meth and McClymont, 2006), reading across a range of interviews to consider who said what, why they may have said it, as well as what was absent.

⁷⁴ The role of these more 'informal' conversations will be expanded upon in the next section.

3.2.2: Participant observation, observant participation, and autoethnography

Complementing the interviews (and *vice versa*) was a variety of ethnographic methods. These ranged from the more traditional ‘participant observation’ (see Delamont, 2004; van Donge 2006; Laurier, 2010), where I made extensive notes based on observations at events, meetings, and more everyday activities, to a more involved ‘observant participation’ (see Moeran, 2009; Thrift, 2000: 556; Wacquant, 2010) at protests and workshops. This combination was a further attempt to challenge the dichotomy between ‘researcher’ and ‘researched’, a key part of activist/militant (Chatterton et al., 2007; Chatterton et al., 2010) and feminist (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009; England, 1994; Rose, 1993) research. Relatedly I recognised my necessarily situated and partial knowledge, and the role I played in data production, something which (auto)ethnographic methods emphasise (see Bhavani and Talcott, 2012; Butz and Besio, 2009; Crang and Cook, 2007; Fielding, 2008; Pillow and Mayo, 2012). What is more, they are also attuned to creating a deep understanding, something that a more isolated interview situation may miss (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Herbert, 2000; Rodgers, 2007) – especially when considering what people *do* instead of *say* (e.g. Thrift, 2004a). As such, they are especially appropriate methods for exploring migrants’ everyday experiences of discrimination and the attitudes that drive these (Duncan, 2002; Nayak, 2006; Trueba and McLaren, 2000), as well as the way forms of oppression and discrimination intersect and reinforce each other (Choo and Ferree, 2010; McCall, 2005; Trahan, 2011).

Before discussing *autoethnography*, I briefly outline the types of participant observation/observant participation that I carried out. Due to time constraints and the difficulties discussed above I was unable to carry out the extended and embedded ethnography (see for example Auyero, 1999, 2000, 2001) I had hoped to undertake. Instead, my time working with *Simbiosis* and *La Alameda* can be understood as examples of shorter, ‘multi-sited’ ethnographies (see Freidberg, 2001; Hannerz, 2003; Marcus, 1995), which allowed me to gain detailed – if not exhaustive – understandings of the groups and the issues they were involved with. Much reflection focused on group dynamics, behaviours of members in a variety of situations, and also reactions towards the groups from third parties. As mentioned, the similarities and differences between the two groups enabled me to make

pertinent comparisons, and the fact that they were based in similar areas of the city contributed to this.

Beyond the time spent with these two groups, I spent much of my fieldwork exploring and 'learning' the city. Exactly how this was done is explored below, but these constant observations helped to cultivate an inquisitive and ethnographic imagination (Willis, 2000) which sought both to make the strange seem familiar, and the familiar strange (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). There is much to be learned from 'being there' and observing the everyday practices, activities, and interactions of a range of groups (see Fernandez, 2009; Hannerz, 2003). This was achieved by repeated observations in key locations where there were regular interactions between groups of 'neighbouring migrants' and *porteños*, as well as a range of individual observations for comparison. I also spent a considerable amount of time observing (and where possible participating in) events focused on migrants and migration, particularly cultural celebrations and national days. These provided interesting breaks from the norm for migrants and non-migrants, and were a fascinating counterpoint to the everyday experiences other observations interrogated. Importantly, given the thesis's focus, I ensured I attended such events in a range of locations. Some were large-scale public events in central Buenos Aires, others much smaller private affairs in homes and immigrant neighbourhoods. Observations and participations were also carried out at protests pertinent to the focus of the thesis. Where appropriate, reflective notes were made in my field diary, and if this was impossible I would use my phone or Dictaphone to record my thoughts at the time. These notes/recordings were then typed up and re-read throughout the fieldwork to inform future observations and interviews, and retain an iterative research approach (Delamont, 2004). Photographs and videos were also produced to accompany these notes. Repeated observations were continued until, and typically beyond, the point of 'saturation' (see Crang and Cook, 2007), where certain events and behaviours would often become somewhat predictable.

These observations and participations were supported by 'informal' conversations with members of the groups/protests, research participants, and even strangers. While typically much shorter than the interviews described above, in certain cases they were extremely wide-ranging. Frequently the more relaxing, non-interview situation helped people open up and express themselves. One person told me this explicitly, saying that they

much preferred our chats and conversations to our interview, feeling they could be much more 'honest' and did not need to say what they thought I wanted to hear. Occasionally these differences were so marked that things said in the interviews and 'informal' conversations contradicted each other, something considered throughout the analysis. Recording these conversations was difficult; as soon as I brought out pad and pen to make notes this was typically deemed to cross the line and become an interview, bringing with it the formality I wanted to avoid. Instead notes and reflections took place as soon after the discussions as possible, making the possibility of verbatim quotation slim. Nevertheless, these conversations were invaluable and contributed to feelings of saturation (see Graeber, 2009a, 2009b; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). As mentioned, the use of such conversations inevitably raises ethical concerns, and even though I ensured that 'off the record' comments were never directly used, they have inevitably played a role in shaping my argument and analysis (see Taylor, 2014).

My shift towards radical research *from above*, as well as the way in which my *perceived* positionality (particularly my whiteness) meant that I stood out in many situations, led me towards an engagement with *autoethnography* (see Anderson, 2006; Ellis et al., 2011). By using myself – and in particular my whiteness – as a research object/subject, I was able to further problematise the researcher/researched binary through my occupation of a liminal research space (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). *Autoethnography* has been used to help unpack the powers and privileges associated with whiteness (see e.g. Boyd, 2008; Burke, 2007; Toyosaki et al., 2009; Warren, 2001), and my approach enabled me to reflect on this not only personally, but also politically with regard to my research questions (see Holman Jones, 2005). As this thesis argues, ideas of whiteness and Europeanness are important in Buenos Aires, and the supposed absence of these characteristics not only shapes the category of the 'neighbouring migrant', but is also the root of much discrimination. The very fact that I could carry out elements of radical research *from above* demonstrated the importance of whiteness. For instance, I discovered that (ab)use of my whiteness afforded me preferential treatment from security at private university and government events (which I frequently managed to attend uninvited), made it easy to gain access and talk to 'elites', and even led a representative from the national government to approach me offering an interview. Along with many others, these experiences demonstrated first-hand the power of

whiteness in Buenos Aires, and also the variety of other intersecting structures and privileges whiteness subsumes and reinforces – particularly class and national identity.

Through my own experiences as well as those of others I also explored ideas involving the status of migrant types. I was consistently told by many of my white, non-Argentine friends living in Buenos Aires that *porteños* never classed them as migrants, but instead ex-pats – a status typically viewed as necessarily superior. Similarly a number of these friends had overstayed their visas and were therefore technically ‘illegal’ immigrants, yet they told me that when they tried to explain their status to *porteños* it was dismissed outright. This idea therefore supports the complexities that surround documentation/legal status, desirability, and the ‘neighbouring migrant’, all ideas discussed in later chapters. I personally experienced similar attitudes regarding my migration status, and although these were not universal, they happened with such frequency that levels of *autoethnographic* saturation were met. As with instances of participant observation/observant participation, I noted not just my own feelings and responses, but also those of others towards me. I also made sure that I carried out such *autoethnography* in multiple times and places to aid contrast and comparison. Elements of this will be explored below, but the process entailed putting myself in a variety of situations ranging from the familiar to the strange (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) – or, to use ideas from the previous chapter, situations where I felt or was perceived to be in place/out of place – and reflecting on the reactions I received and on my own thoughts and feelings. As above, *autoethnographic* observations were either noted at length in my field diary or recorded and then transcribed.

3.2.3: ‘Learning the city’: mobile ethnographic methods

As territorial attachment emerged as an important theme I required methods appropriate to ‘urban ethnography’ (see Duneier et al., 2013; Ferrell, 1998, 2001; Katz, 2010). This meant a methodological approach that could unpack how people’s lives and interactions are affected and mediated by space, place, and territory, and allow me to ‘learn the city’ (McFarlane, 2010, 2011a, 2011b) and understand which people and behaviours were in place/out of place. I therefore employed a series of ‘mobile ethnographic methods’ (Blok, 2010; Büscher and Urry, 2009; Merriman, 2013) based on walking and the use of public transport.

Much work has used walking to engage critically with (urban) space (e.g. De Certeau, 1984; Edensor, 2010; Gros, 2014; Ingold and Vergnust, 2008; Pink et al., 2010). However, unlike a *flâneur* (Benjamin, 1999; see also Jenks and Neves, 2000) or psychogeographer (Bonnett, 2009; Coverley, 2012), I was not attempting to be an invisible idler, strolling around the city without purpose. Instead, I adopted/adapted ideas of ‘reflexive’ (Edensor, 2000), ‘mindful’ (Jung, 2014), and ‘conceptual’ (Wunderlich, 2008) walking. Beyond their grandiose names, these methods involve being critically and reflexively aware of/sensitised to your surroundings, in order to develop a method which is “used consciously as a way to get to know the city and uncover features not normally noticed in our everyday life” (Wunderlich, 2008: 132). Further, given *autoethnography’s* role in the research, while walking I was not simply observing and reflecting upon other people’s uses of space, but also on my own, as well the reactions to my presence. These purposeful walks took place in specific areas. In particular those with a large interaction between ‘neighbouring migrants’ and other groups (such as *Once*, *Flores*, and *Retiro*⁷⁵), as well as areas predominantly inhabited either by richer groups or by ‘neighbouring migrants’ – typically the north and south of the city respectively⁷⁶. I also explored areas which contained the city’s north/south divide as well as the division between the federal capital and the *conurbano*, the importance of which are discussed elsewhere in the thesis. Some areas of the city were inaccessible or too dangerous for me to walk around unaccompanied, and so where possible I carried out walks with ‘gatekeepers’ who were well-known in the area, and could ensure my safety.⁷⁷ While this inevitably affected my own observations and reactions towards me/us, it did allow me to engage in ‘go-along’ interviews/conversations, which helped me to understand

⁷⁵ These areas can be seen in Figure 5.4 – *Once* is found in the *Balvanera barrio*.

⁷⁶ The difference between the reactions I received in such affluent, ‘elite’ areas and those experienced by ‘neighbouring migrant’ friends of mine made for interesting comparison, and once more demonstrated the power and privilege of whiteness. In this sense I was again able to (ab)use my whiteness *autoethnographically* to explore heavily gentrified and securitised areas.

⁷⁷ This was particularly the case within the *villas*, areas which I was able to visit only a handful of times, and even then I was told to remain strictly with my companion and go only to certain areas. Nevertheless, despite the alarmist warnings given to me before these visits I had no problems at all. Similar things happened throughout the research. I would explain to certain more affluent *porteños* that I had been carrying out research/walking in an area such as *Flores*, for example. They would be both shocked and mystified, unable to understand why I would want to go to such an area, but also genuinely concerned for my safety, often linking the area’s ‘dangerous’ nature to the presence of ‘neighbouring migrants’. Upon arrival more often than not I would find a quiet and leafy neighbourhood where people were mostly indifferent to my presence, and I very rarely felt in any danger at all. These interactions were therefore often very telling.

other people's engagement with their environment (see Anderson, 2004; Evans and Jones, 2011; Jones et al., 2008; Kusenbach, 2003).

To aid analysis, particular walks were repeated and similarities and differences noted. This included repeating identical walks at the same time of day, as well as varying the times (to include weekends, work hours, after work etc.) to note significant variations. Inevitably certain walks were repeated more frequently, and many only happened once, but these approaches provided a deep understanding of the city and the roles that space, place, and territory play in mediating relationships between groups. The locational variation of the walks also meant that at times I was very much *in place* and at others firmly *out of place*. Again I was therefore able to use myself as a research object/subject by reflecting on my own responses as well as those of others. Particularly relevant to this thesis were the ways in which different people and groups presented themselves in different spaces and places, something a combination of observations and 'go-alongs' helped reveal. The methods are therefore appropriate for analysing links between intersectionality and space (see Lewis, 2009), a key theme of the thesis. Practically it was difficult to take extensive notes while walking, so I tended to use my phone as a voice recorder and/or stop regularly to write down thoughts. Again notes were complemented by photographs and videos.

Given Buenos Aires's size (particularly the *conurbano*) I was unable to explore properly all of it on foot.⁷⁸ To rectify this I carried out similarly extensive observations using public transport. Thrift (2004b) has argued that De Certeau's (1984) ideas about walking's ability to unpack everyday urban practices can and should be updated to consider automobility (cf. Böhm et al., 2006; Urry, 2004). Though I did not personally drive in Buenos Aires, I believe the point can be extended to include public transport. Not only did repeated riding of specific bus/train routes make new bits of the city familiar, but I could also carry out (auto)ethnographic observations *within* the mode of transport itself, a method that has been used to explore social interactions (see Bissell, 2010; Löfgren, 2008; Wilson, 2011). This was particularly pertinent given the city's striated nature, meaning that particular routes (as well as particular parts of routes, and at different times of the day) were used by very different groups, therefore enabling me to witness many everyday interactions. These

⁷⁸ This was also influenced by concerns about safety.

observations were perhaps most interesting when on local trains used predominantly by the less affluent – especially those living in the *conurbano* but working in the federal capital, often ‘neighbouring migrants’ and/or *cartoneros*⁷⁹. Accordingly, the train is stigmatised and I was frequently warned about its ‘danger’ by many wealthier *porteños*, but much as with my exploration of the city, I never had a single problem on the train. Relatedly, I was often very much ‘out of place’ on the train, and this again provided useful (auto)ethnographic observations. However, this public transport method was used predominantly to extend observation to areas I could not reach by walking. While the speed of travel did mean observations tended to be less exhaustive, I was able to appreciate Buenos Aires’ stark divisions and contrasts, particular with regard to the capital/*conurbano* divide. Notes were made on all journeys, which were then compared to those made on previous trips.

3.3: Analysis and writing

All information from the various forms of observation/participation and interviews was intentionally analysed in similar ways. This is not to say that all data were treated entirely ‘equally’ – context was taken very seriously – but instead this method was adopted to prevent the dominance of one ‘type’ of information over another (Cope, 2010), in keeping with the mixed qualitative method approach. To achieve this all field diary notes were typed up (helping re-familiarise myself with my research) and analysed alongside my interview transcripts (see Hennink et al., 2010; Silverman, 2013). As stated, owing to time constraints I did not transcribe all the interviews myself, instead paying two people to do the majority (23 transcripts). To minimise error I checked all completed transcripts against the recordings, correcting any mistakes and annotating speech with pertinent pauses and gaps. Throughout analysis interview transcripts were kept in their original language to minimise problems associated with the (mis)translation of concepts from one language/culture to another (see Crane et al., 2009; Sidaway, 2004; Twyman et al., 1999; Watson, 2004).⁸⁰ These transcripts were then combined with any notes taken during the interview as well as the recordings themselves in order to double-check speech patterns and meanings. All transcripts, diary

⁷⁹ Cardboard recyclers, the numbers of whom expanded greatly following the 2001 economic crisis.

⁸⁰ Translations were only made once direct quotations were inserted in to chapters, but certain words were kept in the original Spanish as their meaning and cultural connotations are such that translation would be inappropriate (see Muller, 2007). Where this has happened a footnote has accompanied the first usage in order to attempt to explain the word/concept to the best of my ability, and a list of definitions has been provided at the start of the thesis.

entries, and recordings were then uploaded to NVivo, an analysis and transcription programme, to aid cross-comparisons (see van Hoven, 2010; Lewins, 2008)

After this, analysis began in earnest, and involved reading and re-reading all information, which, while time-consuming, afforded me an excellent overview of the data I had collected. After the second reading I began coding, adopting a grounded approach (Crang, 1997; Hodkinson, 2008). Initially this involved a large number of basic 'descriptive' codes, many of which, upon re-reading and re-coding, were then combined (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Fielding, 2008). With these in mind, transcripts and diary extracts were re-read, original codes considered, and higher level, 'analytic' codes constructed (Bailey et al., 1999; Baxter and Eyles, 1997; Jackson, 2001). Where appropriate, analytic codes were again combined to ensure a workable analysis process, and these then led to the emergence of key themes related to the broader literature (May, 2001). Once themes and analytic codes had been produced they were then read back across the various transcripts and diary entries, with careful consideration given to the context/positionality of the source's production. Reflexivity and analysis of positionality is only ever partial and inchoate (see Haraway, 1988; Rose, 1993), but this process sought to analyse not simply what was said/done, but who said/did it, and if possible why (Crang, 2005).

Furthermore, influenced by work from subaltern studies (e.g. Chaturvedi, 2000; Guha, 1997; see also Rodríguez, 2001), throughout this process I tried to pay attention to absences and what was not said/done. While difficult, this proved especially fruitful with comparisons between interview and observation data, as important absences and contradictions could not only be found *within* individual sources (see Jackson, 2001) but also *between* them. For instance, it was telling that while most 'elite' interviews contained little explicit discussion of racism (class discrimination typically being seen as more important), in almost all interviews (and 'informal' discussions) with 'neighbouring migrants' the opposite was true, and these absences can be seen to reflect white 'privilege' and the ability not to see race (see Nayak, 2006). Such detailed cross-readings were always framed within a reflexive analysis of positionality to put what was or was not said into a more complete context.

However, all analysis was inevitably mediated by my positionality, and self-reflexivity was and is therefore necessary throughout the whole research process, and not just in terms of the fieldwork (Cloke et al., 2000; Moser, 2008). Through the multiple and repeated stages of analysis, I attempted to prevent myself merely jumping to the conclusions I wanted to find (Bailey et al., 1999; Baxter and Eyles, 1997), but nevertheless this thesis is still inevitably my own interpretation of the events and process I witnessed and experienced. Relatedly, I ensured that my own thoughts, observations, and diary entries received just as much scrutiny as interview transcripts. Each entry was dated so I could examine how my observations and thoughts changed across the course of the fieldwork, and again I read for absences to further interrogate my own positionality and its influence on the research process. For example, in hindsight, in my field notes from the start of the fieldwork I was noticeably less aware of the benefits my whiteness afforded me, but as documented I later began to confront this issue. The move from absence to presence in my field diary not only documented this shift in my thinking, but itself revealed aspects of white privilege. As mentioned, in keeping with *militancia de investigación* both transcripts and analyses were offered back to research participants, but ultimately only the same two people who made comments after the first trip responded. As before they were broadly sympathetic to my early themes, but nevertheless their comments were seriously considered throughout. Analysis is an ongoing process, and throughout the whole processes of writing and (re)drafting, has made use of an iterative approach to ensure conclusions were not reached prematurely (Jackson, 2001).

A further component that shaped the writing process was a regular cross-checking of ideas and themes against relevant literature, which problematised both my own findings and the literature itself. The frameworks of the more empirically-influenced 'results' chapters (6, 7, and 8) have been constructed through multiple, repeated reflections on the data, in combination with academic literature and other secondary sources (Bradford, 2010). In many ways the large amount of observational/participatory data has fallen into the background somewhat; verbatim quotations and vignettes typically provide direct support for key points and conclusions. But once again, no particular source of information is more important than another: they have just served different purposes. The more ethnographic data provided me with an invaluable deep understanding that is difficult to convey fully

without teasing out individual examples. Similarly, quotations from certain interviewees have been used more frequently than others, but this is not to suggest that these people's opinions were necessarily more important.

3.4: Ethics, consent, and limitations

Gaining full, informed consent when carrying out large-scale observations is impossible (see Crang and Cook, 2007). When observing and participating with *Simbiosis* and *La Alameda* my research focus was explained to all members, as were my proposed methods. In both cases before I could begin working with them my presence was sanctioned by members of the organisations, and ethical concerns were thereby minimised. However, as stated, within *La Alameda* there was a real mix of attitudes towards my presence. Towards the end of the research this was causing friction within the group, and accordingly I withdrew myself from direct involvement as I did not want to cause them major problems. I did remain in close contact with several members, with whom I discussed the situation after my departure, and I was assured that my presence had not caused any lasting damage. In other broad observations I was unable to get informed consent from every person I witnessed/engaged with, but in these situations the conclusions reached were more general, thus somewhat minimising ethical concerns (Hay, 2003). It is also important to note that the strength of my *perceived* positionality was such that in situations with few people my presence as a researcher was almost always immediately obvious, which frequently led to discussions about my role and at least tacit consent for my research from those present (see Cloke et al., 2000; Sultana, 2007).

Earlier sections have engaged with some ethical concerns that surround Western researchers carrying out fieldwork in areas that could be described as the 'global south', and demonstrated that serious, critical engagement with these issues was central to the methodology's reformulation. Nevertheless, radical research *from above* did engage with some of the ethical concerns that come with 'oppositional research' (see Thiem and Robertson, 2010). While, in contrast to Routledge (2002), I did not intentionally play a different character to mislead people or encourage discriminatory behaviour or language, there is a fine line between encouraging and not-preventing (cf. Newman, 2011). However, I made sure I avoided leading questions where possible, and always gave interviewees the

opportunity to ask me questions about my research, my background, and my opinions on the topics at hand. I have already mentioned how I dealt with explicitly 'off the record' comments, and with interviews full, informed consent was gained before they began, and participants were able to withdraw at any time (Willis, 2006), while transcripts and analyses were also offered back (see Ince, 2010). At their behest, all research participants were anonymised and given pseudonyms, and discussions about anonymity always took place before interviews were carried out (Brydon, 2006). However, in certain situations full anonymity is difficult to achieve, as pertinent information about research participants may make them recognisable to certain individuals; I have done everything I can to avoid this by making personal descriptions suitably broad.

Inevitably the methodology had a number of limitations. I have discussed at length the problems faced during fieldwork (as well as the responses to these) so these will not be repeated here, where I focus on other issues. First, there is an inevitable problem with carrying out radical/activist research into socially-constructed categories such as race, because a tension arises between attempts to avoid reification (Nayak, 2006) without denying the very material basis of discrimination (Saldanha, 2006, 2012). Similarly, a desire to challenge 'methodological nationalism' (see Chernilo, 2008) and 'border thinking' (see Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013; Walia, 2013) – which perpetuate the nation-state and forms of capitalism grounded in the division and oppression of marginalised groups – is difficult when researching migration and ideas of national identity. Acknowledging the role of the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) may be a step forward, but can again face problems of reification. Throughout the thesis, therefore, concepts such as race and national identity are used, but problematised. That is, the very real forms of oppression caused in their name are recognised, but their constructed (and therefore deconstructable) nature is foregrounded. There is also a further, related issue that comes with researching and writing about intersectionality (see Choo and Ferree, 2010; McCall, 2005; Trahan 2011; Valentine, 2007). Prosaically it is difficult to comprehend and express ideas that are necessarily so vast and interlinked. There always needs to be a starting point, and things will inevitably fall outside of the remit of the project.⁸¹ Further, there is also the related issue of

⁸¹ One obvious absence is an explicit discussion of gender - something particularly noticeable given the use of intersectionality, as well as feminist and queer theory. However, while I interviewed and engaged with people

carrying out explicitly intersectional research given my *performed* positionality. As a white, cis-male, the use of theories that came from the black feminist tradition can be seen as part of their ongoing appropriation by a predominantly white academy (see Alexander-Floyd, 2012). I therefore have tried to acknowledge these issues throughout the research and writing process, and while I have attempted to use the ideas as sensitively as possible, concerns will inevitably remain.

3.5: Conclusions

This chapter has elaborated the thesis's mixed qualitative methodology. It has provided a frank and critical appraisal of the methods and analyses used, but demonstrated how these are both appropriate and theoretically consistent with the project. Much like the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis, the methodology is explicitly and radically political in its intent, combining elements of oppositional research and *militancia de investigación* to practise a form of radical research *from above*. While I dealt with a number of serious issues during fieldwork, I have shown how these were responded to, and at times embraced. The multiple and complementary methods combine in an appropriate way to approach issues surrounding the relationships between intersectionality and territory. What is more, through (ab)use of my own whiteness the project has an *autoethnographic* component which can help approach the way in which whiteness and its related identities are important structuring principles in determining attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants' in Buenos Aires.

from a range of genders throughout the process, and my own gender inevitably played a role in the way I was treated and responded to, during my analysis the relationships between class, race, and national identity came through more consistently and strongly – although this is not to say that gendered experiences were absent.

CHAPTER 4

Building a nation and a city: Class, race, and immigration

Immigration has played an extremely important role in Argentine history. Not only have numbers of immigrants consistently been high – in 1914 30% of the population was foreign (Nicolao, 2010), while today Argentina hosts over half of all South America’s migrant population (IOM, 2011) – but, as will be explored below, immigration has had a profound influence on Argentine society and culture. By tracing historical shifts in migration patterns and policies, this chapter will argue that the period of European immigration associated with the 19th century nation-building project has left an indelible mark on Argentina’s national identity. However, rather than simply associated with being ‘European’, national identity has been constructed by a complex, and at times shifting, relationship between class and race (particularly ideas of whiteness) that became only fully apparent during the 20th century, with a series of military dictatorships and the rise and fall of Peronism. As a consequence, in dominant discourses only certain migrant ‘types’ are deemed to have shaped the nation, while others have repeatedly been marginalised and ignored (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). This chapter will explore the ways in which class has been constructed as an intersectional historical formation (Camfield, 2004), and provide an archaeological reading of race’s construction (Wade, 2010). It thus begins to unpack the roles class, race, and national identity play in mediating attitudes towards migrants in contemporary Buenos Aires.

The nature of immigration into Argentina has changed significantly over time, and can, broadly speaking, be broken down into three main stages (Bastia, 2010; Gómez and Galassi, 2009):

1. Immigration from Europe during the late 19th, and early 20th centuries
2. Internal rural-urban migration during the mid-20th century

3. Regional migration – especially from bordering countries – during the mid to late 20th and 21st centuries.⁸²

An overview of each stage will be given, before a final section which will consider the contemporary picture, paying specific attention to immigration from Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay in order to tease out key issues.

4.1: European immigration

It was during the second half of the 19th century that Argentina, which declared independence from Spain in 1816, began its nation-building process in earnest, when it was felt among the elite that the country suffered from severe underpopulation (Rock, 1987: Chapter 3). The government argued that European immigration was required to cultivate properly the country's vast agricultural resources, and would be a way to bring 'civilisation' and 'culture' to the country, while 'whitening' the 'dangerous indigenous lower classes' (e.g. Brown, 2010; Lewis, 2003; Rock, 1987). The state took a very active role in courting immigrants during this period. In order to achieve the desired aims it created a series of overseas 'recruitment agencies', and went as far as offering subsidised passage from Europe (Balderas and Greenwood, 2010; Cook-Martín, 2008; Munck et al., 1987).⁸³ State involvement, however, was not solely limited to such practical measures. With the creation of the National Constitution in 1853, the federal government was mandated to 'foster European immigration' in order to 'till...the soil' and 'improve industry', and European immigrants received many of the same rights as citizens.⁸⁴ This explicit emphasis on the importance and desirability of European migrants in such a formative and symbolic document of Argentina's nation-building project begins to illustrate how a hierarchy of immigrant types has been inscribed into the national identity from its inception (Cook-Martín, 2008; Vior, 2006).

⁸² It must be noted that these three stages overlap extensively and should not be viewed as discrete, but instead co-constitutive.

⁸³ These subsidies, however, were not extended to migrants from Asia or countries within Latin America (Devoto, 2003).

⁸⁴ The explicit mention of 'European migration' still remains in the Argentine constitution to this day. The constitution can be read in full, and sections 20 and 25 make reference to European migration and citizenship: <http://www.biblioteca.jus.gov.ar/Argentina-Constitution.pdf>

Immigration not only helped to populate Argentina throughout this period, but it was fundamental to the country's impressive economic growth, and the emergence of a large artisanal class (Munck et al., 1987), who were predominantly European migrants contracted by the 'recruitment agencies' in Italy and Spain (Cook-Martín, 2008: 92). Because these artisans tended to hire only compatriots, European immigrants came to take control of much of Argentina's industry (in 1910 80% of all manufacturing shops were foreign-owned), and the *criollo*⁸⁵ workforce became increasingly excluded from the socio-economic advances of the time (Brown, 2010: 164). This period is therefore fundamental in the construction of Argentine national identity, creating a demarcated and divergent hierarchy based on class, race, and national identity, in which Europeans were favoured over *criollo* and indigenous groups. This mapped on to the belief that the key to success was Europeanisation; the exclusion of non-Europeans enabled elites to portray Argentina as a 'homogeneous nation' (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). In certain ways this state project was a great success. During the period 1870 to 1930 Argentina received over 7 million immigrants (Jachimowicz, 2006), and, as mentioned above, in 1914 30% of the total Argentine population was immigrants (Nicolao, 2010): the most common destination for European migrants was Buenos Aires, and by 1896 49.3% of the capital's population was foreign-born (Bastia, 2010: 9).

However, not all of this European immigration was quite as the Argentine state had hoped. The initial desire had been for 'white' immigrants from northern Europe, as these were seen as better workers (Devoto, 2003: 239) and more suited to eliminating the negative characteristics of the 'lower races' (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). However, such salutary migration failed to materialise, and instead the majority of European immigrants were working class Italians and Spaniards (Cook-Martín, 2008).⁸⁶ Interestingly, these migrants though typically classed as 'white' in Argentina, were often victims of discrimination in their home countries due to their perceived 'swarthy' (Helg, 1990; Moya, 1998). In fact 'whiter' immigrants *did* tend to be better received (Sanhueza, 2003), which emphasises the contested and relational nature of whiteness as discussed in Chapter

⁸⁵ By the end of the 19th century the term *criollo* had come to refer to the "Argentine-born working class of mixed racial background" (Brown, 2010: 163).

⁸⁶ There were also flows of migration from Russia, the Middle East, and central and eastern Europe (Rock, 1987).

2. To make matters worse for the state, many immigrants were socialists and anarchists (Mason, 2007: 125-130; Munck et al., 1987), which led to a diffusion of radical ideas, giving birth to large anarchist (Bayer, 1985; Marshall, 1993; Suriano, 2009; Woodcock, 1986), syndicalist (de Laforcade, 2010; Featherstone, 2012; Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009), and even anarcha-feminist (Molyneux, 1986) groups, as well as a more traditionally socialist labour movement (Munck et al., 1987).⁸⁷ This led to worries about the ‘quality’ of European immigration (Sánchez-Alonso, 2013), and in 1902 a ‘Law of Residence’ was introduced which barred ‘suspicious’ immigrants from entry. In 1910 the even stricter ‘Law of Social Defence’ imposed large fines and jail time on agents who were found to be transporting ‘anarchists and other political undesirables’, and the threat of deportation for ‘subversive’ immigrants. These edicts paved the way for even more stringent laws, which required submission of photographs, clean criminal records, proof of financial solvency, and even certification of mental health from prospective immigrants (Cook-Martín, 2008: 95-96). The measures implemented during this period clearly highlight that it was not simply *any* European immigration that was deemed necessary for nation-building, but specific *types* – even if they did not always obtain.

European immigration throughout this time was extremely important in Argentina. It shaped the working class, the labour movement, the bourgeoisie, and, as the next chapter will demonstrate, the urban fabric of Buenos Aires. Elites saw European migration as *the* vital component in nation-building as it would whiten and therefore civilise the country. But even though the reality was not always as hoped, the Argentine state began successfully to redefine the country as a ‘white nation’ without indigenous groups (Joseph, 2000; Vior, 2006).⁸⁸ While this period begins to highlight the importance of class, race, and national identity in mediating attitudes towards migrants, their intersections are better understood when compared with the period of migration that followed.

4.2: Internal migration

At the start of the 20th century the Argentine economy grew rapidly – between 1903 and 1913 the country’s GDP increased by an average annual rate of 7.7% (Rocchi, 2006: 87). The

⁸⁷ In order to discredit radical ideas, many magazines and newspapers stereotyped anarchists and socialists as “fat, swarthy, and ugly” (Solberg, 1969: 227), which emphasises the power of racialisation.

⁸⁸ This so-called ‘Argentine myth’ is explored in more detail in the next section.

economy then greatly benefited from neutrality during the First World War, which opened up markets for Argentina's agricultural export industry (Conde, 2000). Throughout this period there was still both a supply of, and a demand for, European labour (Sánchez-Alonso, 2013). However, come the Great Depression of the 1930s, things were very different (de Paiva Abreu, 2000; O'Connell, 2000). A combination of two main factors significantly changed patterns of migration during this period. On the one hand, the economy's stagnation contributed to the return home of almost half of all European immigrants (Jachimowicz, 2006). But at the same time, in response to initial moves towards import substitution industrialisation (Katz and Kosavoff, 2000; Teubal, 2001), there was a large increase in internal, rural-urban migration of the poor from Argentina's interior, particularly from the north-western provinces near Bolivia (Grimson, 2006; O'Donnell, 1973: 125-126; Sassone and Mera, 2006). These simultaneous processes began to change the complexion of Argentine cities, especially Buenos Aires. This post-Great Depression period, saw a series of conservative governments retain power through rigged elections (Rock, 1987: Chapter 6; Romero, 2002: Chapter 3), and the ideological conflation of the ideas of progress with 'being European' persisted throughout (Novick, 2012: 211). In fact during the 1930s, the government even introduced eugenics programmes in response to 'demographic fears' caused by a declining birth-rate among the 'white' population and the decrease in European immigration (Eraso, 2007; Reggiani, 2010; Rodríguez, 2006; Stepan, 1992).

4.2.1: Peronism and internal migration

The first Peronist era (1946-55) was seen as the 'golden age' of import substitution industrialisation (di Tella and Dornbusch, 1989; Gerchunoff, 1989; Katz and Kosavoff, 2000; O'Donnell, 1973: 125-137; Randall, 1978; Teubal, 2001). Numbers of European migrants continued to diminish, and migration from neighbouring countries began to be recognised as potentially beneficial to the economy (Novick, 2012: 211-212). But most significant during this period was the rise in internal migrants, and their changing position within Argentine society (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). In stark contrast to the ideologies of previous governments, Peronism was a nationalist cross-class project, portraying external oligarchies as the enemy, and seeking to combine not only the working class, but also sectors of the army and small industrialists (Fodor, 1989; Mackinnon, 2002; Munck et al., 1987; Szusterman, 1989). Under Peronism, "workers for the first time became identified with the

nation” (McGuire, 1997: 76), whereas throughout the late-19th and early-20th centuries the working class had been characterised by elites as ‘un-Argentine’, due to their undesirable racial characteristics and/or radical political sensibilities (Bergquist, 1986: 135-136; McGuire, 1997: 35-36). Internal migrants therefore became part of the national community, but while “the symbolic boundaries of the nation” were shifted, the idea of a white Argentina was not entirely abandoned: “the Peronist period represented a substantial revision but not a complete transformation of the construction of Argentina as a white nation of European descendants” (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 8-9). Perón still maintained a specific desire for European immigration (Novick, 2012: 212), and emphasised the Spanish, not indigenous or black, heritage of those involved in the so-called ‘melting pot’⁸⁹ of 19th century Argentina (Joseph, 2000), further contributing to the invisibilisation of such groups, which was discussed in Section 2.3.1.

A large majority of this internal migration was to Buenos Aires, or more broadly the Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (BAMA: Gómez and Galassi, 2009). Here many internal migrants settled in ‘informal’ urban settlements known as the *villas miserias*, and usually found ‘informal’ employment in the construction, service, and domestic sectors (Munck et al., 1987; Rock, 1987: Chapters 6 and 7). Given the propensity of the rich and ‘white’ to settle in BAMA this influx of the indigenous, rural ‘poor’ was seen as problematic (Alexander, 1979; McGuire, 1997). As mentioned, these migrants often hailed from the north-western provinces. They were seen by elites and anti-Peronists as second-class citizens, stigmatised because of their darker skin (they were often called ‘*cabecitas negras*’, little black heads), lower class position (Brown, 2010: 200; Grimson, 2006), and supposed association with undesirable characteristics and crime (James, 1993; Milanesio et al., 2010). The *cabecitas negras* embodied everything elites thought was wrong with Argentina: they were ‘black’ not white; poor not rich; and indigenous not European (Berquist, 1986: 135-136; Romero, 2002: 114-115). During this period internal migrants therefore moved rapidly from a position of ‘invisibility’ to one of ‘hyper-visibility’ (Magliano, 2009), to the extent that Perón’s opponents described the migrants as part of a ‘zoological flood’ that had inundated – and tainted – Buenos Aires (Lewis, 2003: 101; Rock, 1987: 264).

⁸⁹ In reality Argentina was far from a melting pot of cultures (Wilson, 2000); its stark racial divides and the animosity they bred were “exploited by politicians in order to maintain social control” (Brown, 2010: 163-164).

It was the presence of these internal migrants in Buenos Aires that seemed particularly transgressive. As Romero puts it, this period saw “the sudden incorporation of the popular sectors into public spaces that had previously been prohibited [to them]” (2002: 115). In this sense elites saw them as ‘out of place’ (see Cresswell, 1996) and inappropriate for Buenos Aires.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, the state promoted this internal migration as it was deemed fundamental to the economy – especially given dwindling European migration – and even went as far as embracing the *cabecitas negras*, albeit somewhat cynically, to gain their political support (Lewis, 2002: Chapter 6; Rock, 1987: Chapter 7; Romero, 2002: Chapter 4). Some of the *villas* were built by the state to house migrants, but at all times were kept to the periphery of BAMA (Bastia, 2010).⁹¹ As during the European migration before it, this period of internal migration significantly changed Buenos Aires, but in very different ways: migration into Buenos Aires was therefore central to the processes both of Europeanisation *and* of de-Europeanisation (Wilson, 2000). But, despite these shifts, the ideal of a white, European city and country did not disappear entirely. In fact it re-emerged over the next three decades.

4.2.2: 1955-1983: Peronism, anti-Peronism, and military dictatorships

A military coup in 1955 removed Perón from power. Over the next two decades Argentina suffered from conflict between Peronist and anti-Peronist groups, and a series of military dictatorships (Hodges, 1976). Throughout this period of crisis and growing social unrest, military governments sought to maintain order through processes of racially charged ‘de-Peronisation’ (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 9; Brown, 2010: Chapter 9), and perceived the growing number of regional, Latin American immigrants as “dangerous actors for society” (Novick, 2012: 212).⁹² Yet a tension emerged. The government’s repressive immigration policy meant that internal rural-urban migration far outstripped levels of immigration (Bastia, 2010), but the majority of these internal migrants were precisely the traditional Peronist base (Alexander, 1979). So far from achieving the desired effect of ‘whitening Argentina’, state policy unintentionally created a demand for the *cabecitas negras* they so feared, while European migration continued to fall (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 9). The dual

⁹⁰ The next chapter focuses particularly on ideas related to this.

⁹¹ This has now changed, and will be explored in Chapter 5 – as will the role of the military dictatorship and its programme of ‘slum clearance’

⁹² White, European-born Peronists and ‘leftists’ were also seen as threats (Romero, 2002: Chapters 5 and 6), demonstrating that attitudes towards migrants cannot be boiled down solely to race.

process of increasing internal/regional migration and decreasing European migration continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, further reshaping the country. Latin American migrants were anathema to the various military governments, and controlling them was seen as vital.⁹³ While they provided the population growth deemed necessary for Argentina's economic growth, again, they were the wrong *type* of people. Once more there was a gap between the desires of the government and the reality of migration (Albarracin, 2004).

These attempts at control were most pronounced during the military dictatorship known as the National Reorganisation Process (1976-83). In 1981 the 'General Law of Migration and the Promotion of Immigration' was passed. Described as the most discriminatory policy in Argentina's history (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 9), the so-called *Ley Videla*⁹⁴ again emphasised the importance of European migration, distinguishing between it and 'damaging' regional migration. The *Ley Videla* built on an earlier decree which saw only European migration as 'healthy and compatible' with the Argentine population, reintroduced subsidised passage for 'desirable' migrants, and included harsh sanctions against undocumented migrants, all of which built upon earlier racial tropes to reify the idea of the appropriate migrant type for a white Argentina (Albarracin, 2004: 72-73; Garguín, 2007). Yet despite these draconian laws, the pace of regional migration slowed only slightly, while attempts to court European immigration failed, as Argentina's economy continued to flounder and the dictatorship persisted (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 9; Bologna, 2010).

4.2.3: Class, race, and national identity: explaining historical attitudes towards migration

By comparing these various periods it is possible to explore the complex Argentine attitudes towards migration. First, and perhaps most obviously, it cannot be reduced to mere nationalism. While (certain) European migration and migrants were encouraged and welcomed, certain fellow Argentines were not. As Joseph puts it:

⁹³ Exceptions to this rule were the two short-lived amnesties in 1964 and 1975 (the latter under a Peronist government), where undocumented migrants were able to gain citizenship. However, far from a radical shift in attitudes, these merely reflected the realities faced by the governments that were faced with large numbers of undocumented migrants (Albarracin, 2004).

⁹⁴ Named after Jorge Rafael Videla, the senior commander of the military junta.

Racial and national categories are not valued equally. Whiteness, read across national boundaries, appears more flexible and enduring — apparently more valuable and non-negotiable — than Argentine-ness (2000: 335).

Animosity towards migrants therefore seems much more driven by class and, especially, race. However, the two are closely intertwined, as throughout the periods explored above class was ‘racially coded’ (Sutton, 2008) and tied up with the perceived superiority of whiteness. In fact Garguín (2007) argues that during this period, middle-class identities (associated with being ‘white’ and ‘European’) eventually became crystallised only through the heavily racialised othering of the ‘Peronist working class’. As will be further developed in the next chapter, identity construction in Buenos Aires was grounded in ‘inverted alterity’, a dialectical relationship where the ‘other’ is defined as the negation of the desired hegemonic identity, in such a way that both sides require – yet remake – the other (Laborde, 2011).

An attachment to the period of European migration is part of the ‘Argentine myth’ (Vior, 2006: 432), which holds that Argentina is “*un país sin ‘negros’ y sin ‘indios’*” (a country without black and indigenous people: Grimson, 2006: 1) – this was touched upon in Section 2.3.1. Given Argentina’s large number of indigenous peoples, this mythical construction can therefore be seen as a paradigm of the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1983). Such an imagined community/national identity is based on celebrating only specific types of immigration (Gavazzo, 2006b), serving to exclude from the nation anyone who fails to match this (Vior, 2006).⁹⁵ As Joseph puts it: “[the] imagined community of Argentina crosses national borders, and draws boundaries of exclusion within [its own] nation” (2000: 361). While the myth was initially propagated in the 19th century, it remained dominant, as we have seen, throughout the 20th century, and influenced not only migration policy, but also Argentine society more broadly (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). The Argentine national identity that emerged throughout this period (and which was shaped by processes of migration) therefore created a distinct hierarchy based on class and race, which, this thesis will argue, influences attitudes towards migrants (both internal and external) in BAMA (see Pizarro,

⁹⁵ In 2009 well-known journalist and radio presenter Rolando Hanglin said that indigenous people belong on the other side of the Andes, which emphasise how the desire to distance indigenous groups remains in certain sectors (Ko, 2013).

2012a). Broadly speaking this national identity and hierarchy persisted into the post-dictatorship period, and it is to this that we now turn.

4.3: Regional and neighbouring migration

Between democratisation in 1983 and the 2001 financial crisis, Argentine migration policy was dominated by a series of oscillating, and at times seemingly contradictory, policies (Novick, 2012: 214-217). While, in the long term, the defeat of the junta did not lead to a significant change in official attitudes towards migrants (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 10), in 1984 the Raúl Alfonsín administration did offer a blanket amnesty to all foreigners living illegally in Argentina, allowing them to gain official documents free of charge, and with impunity. 95% of the 142,000 migrants who gained documentation during this amnesty were from neighbouring countries – precisely those people unwanted by the military government (Albarracin, 2004: Chapter 4). While this may seem like a large ideological shift, it was more likely viewed as the only possible response to the problem of an estimated 800,000 undocumented migrants living in Argentina (Sassone, 1987). However, faced with a worsening economy, Alfonsín brought in a series of increasingly restrictive immigration policies. Similar to earlier governments' policies, these expressed strong preferences for certain types/categories of immigrants (Europeans), and indirectly discriminated against migrants from neighbouring countries and Peru, by requiring specific technical qualifications (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 10; Novick, 2012: 214-215). In 1988 these desires were made yet more explicit, as migrants from Europe could gain residency in Argentina simply by virtue of their national origin (Albarracin, 2004: 121-122).⁹⁶ Similarly, the governments of Carlos Menem (1989-99) maintained apparently contradictory policies: restrictive in an attempt to maintain whiteness (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 10; Novick, 2012: 215), yet (pragmatically) punctuated by sporadic amnesties (Jachimowicz, 2006; Nicolao, 2010; Sana, 1999).

⁹⁶ The government claimed that by explicitly encouraging European migration, it was merely following its 'constitutional mandate', thus reiterating the importance of the nation building period explored above.

Table 4.1: Foreign-born population, Argentina, 1869-2010

Year	Foreign-born as % of total population	Born in neighbouring countries as % of total population	Born in neighbouring countries as % of total foreign population
1869	12.1	2.4	19.7
1895	25.4	2.9	11.5
1914	29.9	2.6	8.6
1947	15.3	2	12.9
1960	13	2.3	17.9
1970	9.5	2.3	24.1
1980	6.8	2.7	39.6
1991	5	2.6	52.1
2001	4.2	2.6	61.9
2010	4.5	3.1	68.9

Source: Adapted from Bastia and vom Hau (2013); census data 1869-2010, available from INDEC

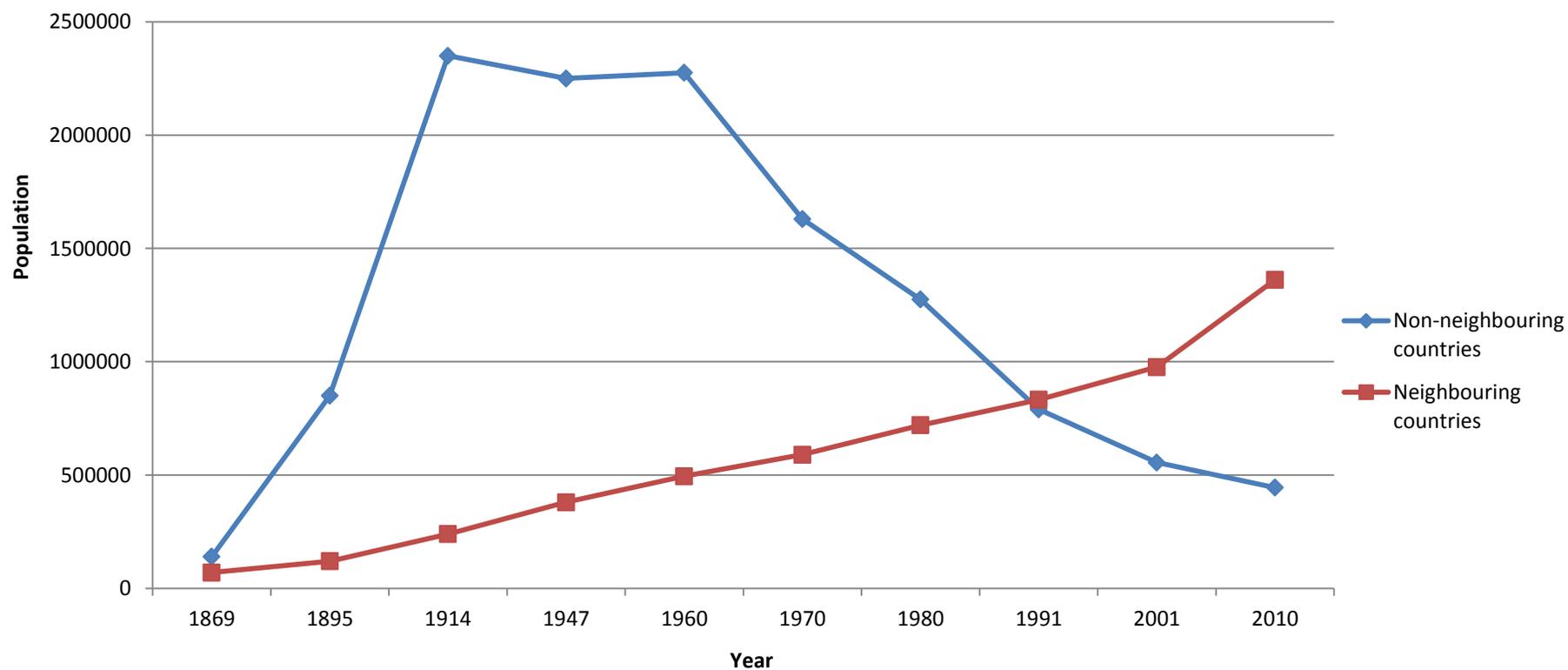
It was during this post-dictatorship period that migrants from neighbouring countries finally outstripped Europeans (see Figure 4.1): in 1991 migrants from neighbouring countries made up 52.1% of the total migrant population (see Table 4.1). While attitudes toward migrants from neighbouring countries had long been negative, throughout the 1980s and 1990s discourses of ‘invasion’ were increasingly openly voiced by political elites (Magliano, 2009; Cook-Martín, 2008; Nicolao, 2010). For example, in 1995 a councillor, in reference to migrants from neighbouring countries, said that people from Buenos Aires “want to be near the rich and the beautiful...we don’t want to be near the horrible people”, even going on to make the unsupported claim that by 2020, 20% of Argentina would be Bolivian and Paraguayan (Grimson, 2006: 8).

In the face of rising unemployment and crime, these xenophobic attitudes could also be found among the general population and the labour movement in particular. The largest construction union organised a series of strikes against migrant workers (Maciuceanu, 2004; Sana, 1999), adopting an explicitly xenophobic official position, specifically and solely blaming the problems facing its members on ‘*bolitas*’ and ‘*paraguas*’⁹⁷ (Grimson, 2006: 9). Although migrants from neighbouring countries (especially those from Bolivia and Paraguay) became scapegoats for Argentina’s socio-economic problems (Benencia and Gazzotti, 1995), as Bastia and vom Hau put it: “public discourses about Latin American migration to

⁹⁷ Derogatory words for Bolivians and Paraguayans, respectively.

Argentina rarely square with empirical realities” (2013: 10). Migrants from neighbouring countries were (and still are) complementary to the Argentine workforce: they do not compete for jobs and are not a significant cause of unemployment (Sana, 1999; Grimson, 2006). And, far from becoming a larger proportion of the national population over time, the percentage of people in Argentina who are migrants from neighbouring countries has stayed remarkably steady since the 19th century, remaining around 2-3% of the overall population (see Table 4.1).

Figure 4.1: Population born in non-neighbouring and neighbouring countries between 1869 and 2010.



Source: Adapted from Bologna (2010); census data 1869-2010, available from INDEC – www.indec.gov.ar.

These facts debunk two common myths, first, that migration from neighbouring countries was a recent phenomenon, and, second, that it was increasing at an alarming rate. In fact migration as a whole was decreasing during this period, as can be seen clearly in Figure 4.1. Instead, as mentioned, migrants from neighbouring countries had simply become more visible: not only were they increasingly settling in BAMA (this was a longer-standing trend: Sassone, 1989), but numbers of European migrants were continuing to decrease, despite the best efforts of the governments. In this regard there are remarkable similarities between attitudes towards migrants from neighbouring countries, and the attitudes towards the internal *cabecitas negras*.⁹⁸ Racism and xenophobia remained commonplace in the build up to the 2001 financial crisis⁹⁹, and these attitudes were found across a wide range of groups and social classes. Attacks on immigrants living in the *villas* increased (Pizarro, 2009b), reactionary elements of the labour movement became more anti-immigrant (Grimson, 2006), mainstream media frequently ran stories demonising immigrants from neighbouring countries (Silva, 2008), the government's anti-immigration stance perpetuated alarmist attitudes (Oteiza and Novick, 2000), while in 1999 the chief of the Buenos Aires police issued a statement (erroneously¹⁰⁰) linking the 'rise' in neighbouring migration to increased crime (Oteiza et al., 2000). The strength of these attitudes is reflected by a series of racially motivated murders of Bolivians living in BAMA at the end of the millennium (Bastia, 2010: 14).

4.3.1: The 'neighbouring migrant'

During this period the idea of the 'neighbouring migrant' became a specific category (Domenech and Magliano, 2008; Magliano, 2009). Much like the term *cabecita negra*, the 'neighbouring migrant' was seen as inferior and was portrayed as a 'threat' to the 'true' (albeit highly constructed) Argentine national identity (Grimson, 2006; Joseph, 2000). However, the category's construction is complex and driven by class and race. First, Uruguayan immigrants were not placed in this category despite being neighbouring (Pizarro,

⁹⁸ This is looked at in more detail in the next section (4.3.1) and Chapter 6.

⁹⁹ The 2001 crisis and its causes are explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁰⁰ Research both at the time and since has consistently shown that migrants from neighbouring countries are proportionally underrepresented in crime statistics, and instead they are actually much more likely to be *victims* of crime (Bastia, 2010: 15; Tommarchi, 2011).

2009b).¹⁰¹ They were seen as richer, whiter, and more ‘European’ than other regional groups, and so although often competing directly for jobs with Argentines, Uruguayan immigrants were often welcomed (Pellegrino, 2002). Second, Bolivian immigrants were seen as the epitome of the ‘neighbouring migrant’ (Pizarro, 2009b, 2012a). Despite the fact that the number of Paraguayans in Argentina consistently outweighed Bolivians (see Table 4.2, below), Bolivian migrants were seen as a bigger social, economic, cultural, and political problem for the country (Grimson, 2005; Gavazzo, 2012). Typically poorer and more indigenous than other migrant groups, Bolivians are therefore not only further removed from the idea of the *país sin negros*, but also more visible and therefore transgressive (Grimson, 2006). What is more, they are associated with the Andean nations (Canelo, 2006, 2008), often portrayed by elites as ‘culturally inferior’ (Garguín, 2007; Joseph, 2000), and therefore Bolivian migrants’ indigeneity contributes directly to their subalternity (Pizarro, 2009b). Thirdly, due to their ‘Andean’ heritage Peruvian migrants are included in this category, although Peru, having no border with Argentina, is not ‘neighbouring’ (Canelo, 2006, 2008; Domenech and Magliano, 2008; Magliano, 2009). And finally, it is important to note that poor, rural internal migrants are also often classed as ‘neighbouring’ despite their shared Argentine nationality (Chamosa, 2008; Gavazzo, 2012), which demonstrates that in Argentina lines of national exclusion are drawn both internally *and* externally, and are influenced by race and class (Garguín, 2007; Grimson, 2006; Joseph, 2000). Given that the term ‘neighbouring migrants’ is used in reference to a range of nationalities and ethnicities, it can be seen to “racialis[e] class difference, and reinforce [a] racial hierarchy that invokes superior whiteness” (Grimson, 2008: 506), and thus through this elision, race and class become co-constitutive (Joseph, 2000). What is more, commonplace phrases such as *Boliguayo* – a discriminatory portmanteau of *Boliviano* and *Paraguayo* – intentionally elide national differences to emphasise that ‘neighbouring migrants’ are interchangeably non-white (Ko, 2013). Again, this demonstrates the vacillation between specific and vague discrimination that was discussed in Section 2.3.1.

¹⁰¹ Chilean and Brazilian migrants are not included for similar reasons. However, migrants from Brazil and Chile are not the focus of this thesis. Numbers of Brazilians are low, and while numbers of Chilean immigrants in Argentina are high, these immigrants are far less common in BAMA, instead tending to cluster along the border between the two countries (OIM, 2012c: 159-161).

'Neighbouring migrants' are othered and subjugated through various discourses of inferiority, criminality, and race. Research has explored how these discourses have been perpetuated through, for example: schools, (especially primary schools: Domenech and Magliano, 2008) where state-sponsored textbooks promote a very narrow, European vision of nationhood, writing indigenous groups out of history (vom Hau, 2009); the press, where sensationalist stories in the traditionally elite-owned media consistently demonise and dehumanise 'neighbouring migrants'¹⁰² (Grimson, 2006); and elements of the Catholic church, which furthered stereotypes portraying 'neighbouring migrants' (in particular Bolivians) as criminals with a variety of immoral and undesirable characteristics, all inextricably linked to their ethnic backgrounds and supposed low levels of culture (Pizarro, 2009b). According to Domenech and Magliano (2008), the discourses that surround immigration tend to coalesce around 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' from the national identity. 'Neighbouring migrants' are seen as inferior and so excluded, whereas the desire for rich and white immigrants is so strong that they become included in the constructed national identity, even if this fails to map on to reality (Cook-Martín and FitzGerald, 2010). This construction again emphasises the role of the 'Argentine myth', and how, not for the first time, "during times of deep economic transformation, [Argentina] redrew the boundaries of the imagined community" (Albarracin, 2004: 169).

4.3.2: Post-crisis changes

Following the election of Néstor Kirchner in 2003, Argentina adopted the first major change to its migration policy in over twenty years. Many aspects of the 1981 *Ley Videla* had remained in place during the preceding decades, becoming firmly entrenched and hard to repeal (Novick, 2012: 217), and thus the 2003 *Ley de Migraciones 25.871* flew in the face of Argentina's previous migration policies (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 12). It guaranteed migrants (irrespective of their legal status) access to social services including health, and education and facilitated regional and neighbouring migration. This marked shift may seem counterintuitive after such a period of economic crisis (especially one so consistently blamed on uncontrolled immigration). However, the policy was adopted by the Kirchner administration for a variety of reasons. A major motivation behind it was the recognition of

¹⁰² For example, after a fatal fire in the *Flores* neighbourhood of Buenos Aires in 2006, the television news station *Crónica* had a headline saying that "two people and one Bolivian" had died, showing the subhuman way in which 'neighbouring migrants' have been portrayed.

the economic benefits of regional integration¹⁰³, for which regional migration was seen as a prerequisite (Jachimowicz, 2006; Nicolao, 2010). While this integration can be understood politically as part of Latin America's left turn during the early 21st century (e.g. Castañeda, 2006), it is also important to frame it in terms of Kirchner's desire to distance himself from the military dictatorship and its policies, which was partly a response to strong pressure from a range of civil-society groups (see Petras, 2004; Levitsky and Murillo, 2008).

Despite the progressive policies of 2003, many migrants from neighbouring countries were still undocumented and suffered from discrimination and terrible living conditions (Nicolao, 2010; Trigona, 2007).¹⁰⁴ As a response, the government introduced the *Patria Grande* policy in 2006 which allowed any immigrant from MERCOSUR (to which they added immigrants from Bolivia and Chile) to work in Argentina freely, as long as they had no criminal record in the last five years and could provide two passport photos and a passport (ILO, 2010; IOM, 2011). Within the first three years of the *Patria Grande* 423,712 immigrants gained access to legal residence status: Paraguayans (248,086), Bolivians (105,017), and Peruvians (47,464) constituted the three largest groups of immigrants (Novick, 2012: 220-221). It should be noted, therefore, that these policies are among the first to provide preferential treatment to migrants from neighbouring countries, and not to Europeans (OIM, 2012b). However, even with these progressive policies, attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants' did not improve enormously. Xenophobia and racism remained commonplace in media representations of immigrants and immigration (Bastia, 2010; Dukuen, 2009, 2010), within the labour movement (ILO, 2008), and among elites (Chamosa, 2008). While many migrants did gain documentation thanks to the *Patria Grande*, migrants' working and living conditions remained poor and they still consistently lacked documentation (Bastia, 2007; Pizarro, 2012b; Punch, 2007, 2010). What is more, the simultaneous desire for European migration and animosity towards neighbouring migration was often still present in official circles (Albarracin, 2004: 252-262), and in 2003 even the then Director of the Ministry of Migration said:

¹⁰³ Especially within MERCOSUR, a political and economic agreement between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Venezuela, and since 2012 Bolivia.

¹⁰⁴ Perhaps best exemplified by the fire in a garment workshop in Buenos Aires on the 30th of March 2006 which killed six Bolivians, including four children under the age of ten. The fire led to a large investigation into the network of sweatshops in Buenos Aires, and revealed the almost slave-labour conditions that many (predominantly immigrant) workers endured. For more on Buenos Aires' sweatshop economy see Montero (2011).

These [migrants from Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru] are people who do not pay taxes; they participate in the economic and labour market without any benefit to the Argentine state; their activity is underground and is not registered, while these people use public goods [such as health and education services] (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014: 12-13).

This again illustrates quite how pervasive the attitudes towards different migrant types formed in the 19th and 20th centuries have been, and how they map on to arguments made during the 1980s and 1990s (Caggiano, 2005) and discourses surrounding the *cabecitas negras*. Ko (2013) has demonstrated that while official discourses have started to move away from direct association with whiteness to promote ideas of diversity and multiculturalism, strong attachments to the white, European nation remain, something already discussed in Section 2.3.1, and expanded upon later. However, thanks to the combination of these more progressive policies, economic recovery, and the work of a range of civil society groups, attitudes towards ‘neighbouring migrants’ did begin to change and improve, albeit slowly (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014; Gavazzo, 2004; OIM, 2013; Pizarro, 2009b). With immigration into Argentina framed in historical perspective, it is now possible to provide a thorough picture of the contemporary situation.

Table 4.2: Total number of migrants in Argentina by country of origin

Country	1990	2001	2010
Paraguay	254,115	325,046	550,713
Bolivia	145,670	233,464	345,272
Chile	247,987	212,429	191,147
Peru	15,939	88,260	157,514
Italy	356,923	216,718	147,499
Uruguay	135,406	117,564	116,592
Other	472,170	338,459	297,220
Total migrants¹⁰⁵	1,628,210	1,531,940	1,805,957

Source: INDEC, 2010

¹⁰⁵ Total population of Argentina at the same dates (in millions): 1990 – 32.62; 2001 – 37.27; 2010 – 40.37.

4.4 Contemporary immigration

Cristina Fernández de Kirchner replaced her husband Néstor as president in 2007, and was re-elected in 2011. With considerable continuity between their two administrations (Levitsky and Murillo, 2008), migration policy has changed little: the *Patria Grande* has been extended, and amendments have been made to the 2003 *Ley de Migraciones*, further enhancing migrants' rights (Cortés, 2013). The government now estimates that around 78% of the current immigrant population in Argentina is from neighbouring countries and Peru (see Table 4.2¹⁰⁶). Across the last decade, migrants from neighbouring countries have tended to cluster in the agriculture, construction, service, and domestic sectors, and have been frequently employed 'informally' (Cacopardo and Maguid, 2001; OIT, 2011). Migrants from neighbouring countries are proportionately underrepresented in the traditionally more 'skilled' sectors of the labour market¹⁰⁷ (see Table 4.3), which supports the idea that they

Table 4.3: Nature of employment according to migration status, Argentina 2009

Type of activity	Regional migrants	Argentines	Other migrants	Total population
Textile industry	6.2%	2.0%	4.7%	2.2%
Construction	18.7%	8.8%	7.5%	9.2%
Commerce	19.2%	19.7%	28.6%	19.7%
Hotels and restaurants	4.4%	3.5%	2.6%	3.5%
Transport and communications	4.2%	6.7%	5.5%	6.6%
Financial services and property	5.0%	10.1%	10.6%	9.9%
Public administration and teaching	4.0%	17.6%	8.5%	17.0%
Social services and health	4.9%	6.0%	5.0%	5.9%
Domestic services	18.6%	7.3%	2.1%	7.7%
Other (industrial)	8.0%	10.3%	12.7%	10.2%
Other (non-industrial)	6.8%	8.0%	12.1%	8.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: OIT, 2011

¹⁰⁶ These data are problematic, as they account only for documented migrants. It is estimated that the total number of migrants is at least 50% more (Nicolao, 2010), for instance, research estimated that there were 950,000 Bolivian immigrants in 2003 (Sassone and Mera, 2006). Further, some immigrants are unwilling to self-identify during the census for fear of recrimination (Bastia, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ The employment patterns of specific groups of migrants from neighbouring countries are discussed below.

occupy specific niches, and tend not to compete directly with Argentines for employment (Cortés, 2013).¹⁰⁸ Non-‘neighbouring migrant’ groups are most prevalent in other sectors such as commerce. This may be explained by the number of Chinese-, Korean-, and Taiwanese- run supermarkets across Argentina, and especially in BAMA (OIM, 2012c: 124).

The vast majority (71.3%) of migrants are of working age (15–64), and the proportion is even higher among those from neighbouring countries (79.4%: OIM, 2012c: 179).¹⁰⁹ Such a high proportion of working-age migrants emphasises that these are predominantly flows of labour migration (OIT, 2011), and in fact among regional migrants there is often a desire to return home after some years of work (Bastia, 2007; Punch, 2007). Despite these intentions, however, return migration is becoming less common (Jones, 2011; Jones and De La Torre, 2011), and the age profile is slowly changing as regional migrant families begin to settle in Argentina, leading to an increase in both older and younger groups (Bologna, 2010). There is also a slight gender imbalance to the migration patterns, in that women now make up 53.9% of all immigrants (INDEC, 2011). One explanation for this is the rise in demand for domestic labour caused by the increase in Argentine women who are employed over the last two decades (Bastia, 2007; Cerrutti and Gaudio, 2010; Punch, 2007), and typically this domestic labour is fulfilled by young, female, migrant labour (normally Paraguayan: Courtis and Pacecca, 2010; Magliano, 2009; Maguid and Bruno, 2009; Nicola, 2008; Nicolao, 2010; Sassone and Mera, 2006).

Table 4.4: Spatial distribution of migrants in Argentina by country of origin, 1991/2001 – 2010

	Paraguay		Bolivia		Peru		Uruguay		Total Population	
	1991	2010	1991	2010	2001 ¹¹⁰	2010	1991	2010	1991	2010
CABA	11.6	14.6	12.5	22.2	44.4	38.4	36.1	26.4	9.0	7.2
BAMA	53.9	60.8	26.5	33.0	26.7	33.5	44.8	47.8	29.6	24.7
Other	34.5	24.6	61.0	44.8	28.9	28.1	19.1	25.8	61.4	68.1

Source: INDEC, 2010 – Figures represent percentage of each population

¹⁰⁸ In fact only one percent of unemployment can be attributed to migrant labour (Bastia, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ European migrants are an anomaly, as 64.9% are over 65 years old (OIM, 2012b: 179).

¹¹⁰ Because of the recent nature of Peruvian migration data from 1991 is not available.

As explored above, since the mid-20th century the majority of migration (internal and external) has been either to the Autonomous Capital of Buenos Aires (CABA), or more broadly to BAMA, and this trend has continued (see Table 4.4). In 2010 over half of Argentina's Paraguayan, Peruvian, Bolivian, and Uruguayan populations lived in either CABA or BAMA – much higher than the national average. The proportion of Bolivians is lower, as significant numbers of them live and work in provinces such as Salta (6.5% of all Bolivians in Argentina) and Jujuy (8%) near the Bolivian border, as well as Mendoza (7.9%) and Córdoba (3.3%). This can be explained by the fact that Bolivians commonly find employment in the agricultural sector (Magliano, 2009; Maguid and Bruno, 2009); yet the increase in population in BAMA between 1991 and 2010 supports claims that more Bolivian migrants are now finding work in urban environments (Sassone and Mera, 2006). It is also apparent that Paraguayans are the group most likely to live in BAMA and Peruvians are the only group more likely to live in CABA itself. While the number of 'neighbouring migrants' living in CABA has increased between 1991 and 2010, the total population of the city has decreased from 2,965,403 to 2,890,151 (INDEC, 2010), and this shift in proportion may go some way to explaining the discourses of 'invasion' and 'hyper-visibility' that were heard throughout the 1990s (Magliano, 2009; Cook-Martín, 2008; Nicolao, 2010).

The following sections will now pay specific attention to immigration from Bolivia, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay, further exploring the relationships between national identity, race, and class. What is more, particular focus will be placed on the technical compositions of different migrant groups.

4.4.1: Bolivian immigration

Bolivian migration into Argentina can be broken down roughly into three phases (Sassone and Mera, 2006):

1. **1869-1950** – migration was focused near the border area, and came about as a response to the need for labour in agricultural zones in north-western Argentina.
2. **1950-1970** – Bolivian migrants started to settle more in urban areas, including BAMA's *villas*. Initial flows were of men working in construction, but after 1960 women began to follow, and tended to find domestic work or employment in textile workshops.
3. **1970-Present Day** – migration became increasingly urban, and the majority of all migration was to BAMA. As families started to settle migration networks grew, and Bolivian migrants became more enclavic; this led to the growth of immigrant

neighbourhoods in many cities. Cultural identity became increasingly important and there was a noticeable increase in Bolivian migrant organisations. The majority of employment remained very precarious and 'informal'.

As mentioned above, Bolivian immigrants currently tend to cluster either around the border region between the two countries, or increasingly, in cities (and their surrounding areas) such as BAMA, Córdoba, and Mendoza (Magliano, 2009; Pizarro, 2009a). Those near the border tend to work in the agricultural sector if male, and in the domestic, commercial, and agricultural sectors if female (Bologna, 2010; Magliano, 2009). Unlike these seasonal/temporary rural migrants (Maguid and Bruno, 2009; Punch, 2007), Bolivian migrants in BAMA tend to stay permanently. For men, 29.5% work in textile factories, 25% in construction, and 21.2% in the commercial sector. Only 8% are unemployed (compared to 29.7% of Bolivian women). 21.3% of Bolivian women work in the textile industry, while 37.9% work in domestic services, 27.3% in the commercial sector, and the rest in similar primary sector jobs (Maguid and Bruno, 2009). It is interesting to note that while domestic work is the largest sector for Bolivian women, the proportion – 37.9% – is much lower than the 80% of Paraguayan women in BAMA who work in the domestic sector, which has been accounted for by pre-existing networks of Paraguayan immigration (Courtis and Pacecca, 2010) and racial prejudice (Maguid and Bruno, 2009). Bolivian migrants are disproportionately focused in the textile industry. Given the almost 'slave labour' conditions of much of the textile industry in Buenos Aires (Montero, 2011), the large number of Bolivian migrants in this sector contributes to their relative exclusion and lowly social class position (Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011). Further, given the particular spatial distribution of the textile industry (see Montero, 2011) it also dictates where many Bolivian immigrants live in BAMA.

Social networks and niches also play an extremely important role, as most new immigrants will usually follow friends or family members, and while this can help them find jobs and settle in, it can further ghettoise the Bolivian population in Argentina (Bastia, 2007; Punch, 2007). The increase in immigration to BAMA from the 1970s onwards can be explained by the fact that a consolidated migratory network emerged, encouraging future migration (Price and Yarnall, 2010). However, it is important not to conceptualise these networks as separate from the social, economic, and political factors that shape migration (cf. de Haas, 2010), as the migratory flow between Bolivia and Argentina is extremely

dynamic, and linked to the fortunes of the two countries (Bastia, 2007). What is more, these networks are not simply based on the social capital of family and friends. There are many examples of the 'professional migration business' (see Sassen, 2002), where subcontractors organise labour in Bolivia and traffic it into Argentina. This is especially common in the textile workshops where Bolivians already in BAMA recommend workers in Bolivia to employers and subcontractors (Montero, 2011).

Despite fewer Bolivian than Paraguayan immigrants living in Argentina, Bolivians are traditionally seen as the more prevalent, and suffer more discrimination (Pizarro, 2012b). This is in part due to their darker skin making them more identifiable (Bastia, 2010), but they are also typically stereotyped as dirty, smelly, and stupid, with low levels of culture (Pizarro, 2009b). Bolivians are also perceived as criminalised (Grimson, 2006), despite the fact that they are consistently underrepresented in official crime statistics (Bastia, 2010). Employers may seek Bolivian migrant labour as it is viewed as 'docile' and 'submissive'¹¹¹ (Magliano, 2009: 358), to the extent that in 2008 an Argentinean judge ruled that Bolivian sweatshops were simply the result of 'cultural features': that it is in a Bolivian's nature to work in slave-like conditions (Montero, 2011). Much is made of the cultural traits of Bolivians. It is important to note, however, not only that these 'cultural traits' are unjustified stereotypes, but also that they refer to Bolivians *in* Argentina. Being 'Bolivian in Argentina' is its own category, replete with damaging stereotypes such as those mentioned above, and has been described as a "social order and a system of relations that discriminates in all senses" (Magliano, 2009: 355). This applies equally to second and third generation migrants born in Argentina who may well be "legally Argentinean, but [are seen as] socially Bolivian" (Grimson, 2006: 6), a process driven by the imbrication of class and race (Gavazzo, 2012). Indigeneity forms a big part of this identity, and is sometimes used as a form of strategic essentialism in order to unite elements of the Bolivian population in Argentina (Gavazzo, 2004; Gavazzo, 2006a). However, this can further exclude Bolivian migrants from the constructed idea of Argentine nationhood (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). These problems are especially bad for Bolivian women, who are even more oppressed through the sexual division of labour and the prevalence of patriarchy, and occupy an extremely lowly position

¹¹¹ This is untrue, and in fact Bolivia has a number of extremely militant social and labour movements (see for example Bosteels, 2011; Zibechi, 2010).

in Argentine society (Magliano, 2009), which emphasises the importance of an intersectional analysis.

4.4.2: Paraguayan immigration

Paraguayan immigration outstrips Bolivian immigration into Argentina, but it tends to receive much less attention – academic or otherwise (Parrado and Cerrutti, 2003; Gómez and Galassi, 2009) – although some recent work is beginning to combat this (e.g. Cortés, 2013; OIM, 2013). Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries Paraguayan migrants tended to work in agriculture, and were focused in the north-eastern provinces of Argentina. During this period the Paraguayan population increased in step with the Argentine, and remained at 0.36% of the total population. But after the Paraguayan civil war of 1947, numbers of immigrants into Argentina grew threefold. Another period of steady migration followed until the 1990s, when Paraguayans made up around 1% of the total population, and a third of all migrants from neighbouring countries (OIM, 2013). During the 1990s, problems facing the Argentine economy led to a slowing of Paraguayan immigration (OIM, 2012c: 153), although migrants did continue to find work in more ‘informal’, and lower paid sectors (Cortés, 2013). As can be seen in Table 4.2, numbers rose rapidly during the recovery from the 2001 economic crisis, as the success of Argentina and Paraguay’s economies began to diverge. Paraguayans now make up 1.37% of the population, and 44.2% of all migrants from neighbouring countries in Argentina (OIM, 2013: 20).

Because of Paraguay’s proximity to Argentina and volatile economy, the levels of Paraguayan immigration in Argentina have ebbed and flowed (Parrado and Cerrutti, 2003). This, combined with the strength of the social networks in Argentina, has meant that migration can be extremely sensitive to the economic fluctuations of both countries, and the decision to emigrate is typically more spontaneous for Paraguayans than for other migrant groups (Gómez and Galassi, 2009). Fewer and fewer Paraguayans are engaging in agricultural work near the border, and instead they are emigrating to find work in urban areas. As can be seen in Table 4.4 the majority of Paraguayans live in BAMA, a large increase from only 20% in 1960 (OIM, 2013: 24). Employment is higher among Paraguayan migrants than Bolivians: only 6.5% of men, and 14.8% of women, out of work (compared to 8% and 29.7%). As mentioned above, the majority of Paraguayan women work in the domestic

sector, which goes some way to accounting for this statistic. Paraguayan migrants are much less likely to work in the textile industry than Bolivian migrants – such work only accounts for 14.7% of Paraguayan men and 1.2% of Paraguayan women – while construction is the biggest sector for Paraguayan men, accounting for 32.9% of those employed, much higher than the average for migrants from neighbouring countries shown in Table 4.3 (Bologna, 2010; Maguid and Bruno, 2009). Again there is a gender imbalance in migration, with 55.6% of Paraguayan migrants being women (OIM, 2012c: 151).

Paraguayan immigrants tend to be much more integrated into Argentine society than other neighbouring groups such as Peruvians and Bolivians, and this is reflected in an extremely diverse and active range of civil society groups (OIM, 2013). While Peruvian and Bolivian migrants tend to be seen as more ‘Andean’ (which, as mentioned, leads to exclusion and discrimination: Canelo, 2006, 2008), Paraguayan immigrants are not indigenised in the same way¹¹², facilitating their integration and emphasising the importance of phenotypical racism in relationships between migrants and Argentines (Grimson, 2006). Discrimination against Paraguayans tends to be based on their insertion into the labour market. Given that Paraguayan men are predominantly concentrated in construction and manufacturing they are seen as more likely to compete for Argentine jobs than, for example, Bolivian or Peruvian migrants are. This has led to animosity towards Paraguayan migrants from the labour movement (Maciuceanu, 2004), which emphasises the importance of class (as well as race) in understanding migrant/Argentine relationships.

4.4.3: Peruvian immigration

Peruvian immigration is a comparatively new phenomenon. Historically numbers have been extremely low (OIM, 2012c: 161-163), and it was as late as 1990 that a significant number of Peruvians was registered by the Argentine census. Since then, however, there has been a marked rise, and the population has grown tenfold in twenty years (see Table 4.2), which goes some way to explaining the recent animosity towards Peruvian migrants from Argentines (Perfil, 2013).

¹¹² This is not to say that Paraguayan immigrants are never victims of racial stereotyping and abuse (see Gavazzo, 2012).

As with other migratory flows, this growth has been heavily influenced by the difference in economic success between the two countries (Cerruti, 2005; Paerregaard, 2007); but owing to the nascent nature of Peruvian migration, the recent consolidation of migration networks has played an extremely important role in driving this flow (del Carmen and Bologna, 2013). BAMA is again the predominant destination for Peruvian migration (Cerruti, 2005), although populations are beginning to grow in Córdoba and other major cities (del Carmen and Bologna, 2013). Aside from its rapid growth, Peruvian immigration is different from other neighbouring migrations in its age profile. It involves fewer adolescents, more people between the ages of 29 and 49 (OIM, 2012a), and a higher proportion of women (59.4%) and of secondary school graduates (Cerruti, 2005) than is the case for other migrant communities. Unfortunately there is a lack of published research on Peruvian immigration, and Peruvians tend to be combined with Paraguayan and Bolivian migrants in official employment data. This can contribute to the pervasive idea of the 'neighbouring migrant' (Grimson, 2006; Domenech and Magliano, 2008; Magliano, 2009; Pizarro, 2009b), despite the heterogeneity of the groups the term refers to, and the fact that Peru and Argentina do not share a border. Once again, the idea of 'Andean' phenotype also reinforces this (Canelo, 2006, 2008).

4.4.4: Uruguayan immigration

Immigration from Uruguay provides an interesting comparison with the types of migration discussed above. Like Argentina, Uruguay has also had a history of European migration, which was similarly important in its nation building (Arocena, 2009; Goebel, 2010), and there has been a long history of migration between the two countries, related to their similar cultures and economy, as well as to proximity (Durand and Massey, 2010; Pellegrino and Vigorito, 2005, 2009). Numbers of Uruguayan immigrants are significant, but have gradually declined in the last twenty years (see Table 4.2), while the majority of Uruguayan immigrants live and work in BAMA (OIT, 2011: see Table 4.4). Unemployment figures are low (OIM, 2012c: 156-157), and traditionally Uruguayans are the most likely of all immigrant groups to compete directly with Argentines for work (Pellegrino, 2002). Despite this Uruguayans do not attract the same stigma as other migrant groups (OIM, 2012c: 156-157). One explanation for this is their higher social status and wealth, and the fact that they are

whiter: they are perceived as more 'European', and as mentioned above, despite sharing a border, Uruguayan immigrants are therefore not classed as 'neighbouring migrants'.

4.5: Conclusions

Race and class therefore remain important in understanding attitudes towards contemporary patterns of migration; the position of various migrant groups in the labour market can also be seen to affect attitudes towards them. At an official level there has been a marked shift away from the explicit linking of European migration and modernisation/civilisation, but this is not yet fully reflected in society as whole (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014; Ko, 2013). Thus, in Argentina, race "like class in the US, is taboo: the proverbial elephant in the room" (Sutton, 2008: 106), and processes of supposed de-racialisation have in some instances actually perpetuated racism (Joseph, 2000; Tilley, 2005). This can be seen in the prejudice against 'neighbouring migrants' which maps closely on to the stigma attached to the *cabecitas negras*. Similarly the presence and impact of these 'neighbouring migrants' is typically overplayed, reinforcing an uneasy attitude towards certain types of migrants which are seen as a threat to the national identity, reiterating the links between class, race, national identity as well as territory. As Briones and Guber put it, there is a "hegemonic racialisation of class and region and the 'enclavement' of racial and territorial segments of society" (2009: 12).

This chapter has shown that patterns of migration continue to reshape and reveal a national identity that is inextricably linked to migration. It has been shown that the European-influenced nation-building project alone does not account for contemporary attitudes towards immigrants, which instead must be understood in tandem with Argentina's 20th century social, cultural, political, and economic processes. Class and race have been seen to occupy a co-constitutive role that serves first to inscribe and then reify hierarchies between different 'types' of migrant groups. However, this relationship is far from simple, and it will therefore be explored in detail in Chapter 6.

It has also been shown how migration was a key factor in shaping a large, radical labour movement at the turn of the twentieth century, the heritage of which is seen to have played an important, formative role in contemporary labour and social movements (Chatterton, 2005; Sitrin, 2012). Similarly, migration and the discourses of class and race

that are embodied in the *cabecitas negras* and 'neighbouring migrants' have been central to the pervasive Peronist/anti-Peronist dichotomy that so dominates politics to this day. Nevertheless the national identity which both shapes, and has been shaped by, attitudes toward migration is rooted in a myth of a white Argentina, which has written indigenous groups out of history (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014). This myth also often overlooks the nation-building role of the great number of working class, European migrants who were not classed as 'white' in their home countries, once more illustrating the ways in which class and race intersect with regard to the relational and mutable concept of whiteness. Tracing the intersections between these various structures has helped reveal the particularities of class (understood as a historical formation) in Argentina, as well as providing an 'archaeological' reading of race.

However, class, race, and national identity only tell part of the story. As mentioned above, historically attitudes towards migrants have also depended on where those migrants are; whether they are *in* or *out* of place (see Cresswell, 1996). Ideas of territory therefore also play an important role in mediating relationships between migrants and Argentines, and so the next chapter will provide background to Buenos Aires itself.

CHAPTER 5

The changing faces of Buenos Aires

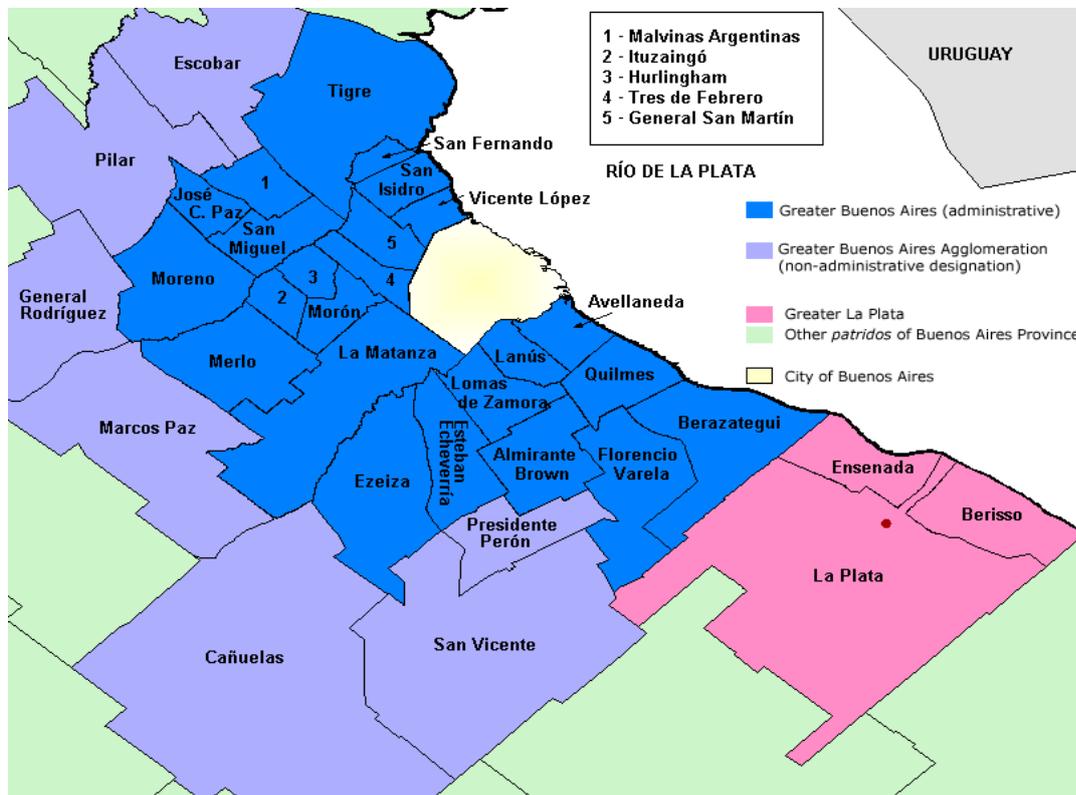
Buenos Aires is a vibrant, dynamic, and extremely divided city. In terms of population (13,641,973) and GDP (\$348.4 billion) it is the third largest city in Latin America, behind only São Paulo and Mexico City (UN, 2011). However, like the majority of large Latin America cities, it has an extremely unequal income distribution, with a Gini coefficient of 0.52, well above the ‘international alert line of 0.4’¹¹³ (UN Habitat, 2010), and has been described as a ‘global city with global slums’ (Sassen, 2011). There is also a marked difference between the federal capital itself (CABA), and the *conurbano* that makes up the part of Buenos Aires Metropolitan Area (BAMA) beyond the boundaries of CABA – the *conurbano* is represented by the blue and purple areas on Figure 5.1. Between 1970 and 2010 the population of CABA decreased very slightly from 2,972,453 to 2,890,151, but the population of the *conurbano* grew by 80.4% (from 5,959,879 to 10,751,822: INDEC, 2010). Only 11.9% of BAMA’s population growth can be put down to boundary changes, with the majority coming from the rise in migration (both internal and external) discussed in the previous chapter (Pírez, 2002; Stratta and Barrera, 2009).

This chapter will explore in detail how Buenos Aires has changed since its ‘Europeanisation’ in the 19th century. It will demonstrate how the city has been heavily influenced by various waves of migration, and that these changes have played an important role in shaping attitudes towards migrants. Throughout the 20th century Buenos Aires moved away from a ‘European’ design (Lederman, 2013), and the consequences of Peronism, military dictatorships, and neoliberal restructuring have created a distinct territorial hierarchy – especially apparent in the marked differences between the ‘privileged territory’ of CABA and the *conurbano* (see Stratta and Barrera, 2009). However, this process is far from complete, and the chapter will consider some of the consequences of the recent fragmentation of class and territory. It will argue that that the processes of class and territorial de- and recomposition are intimately related, and that recent ‘ruptures’ have given birth to new political subjectivities, opened up opportunities for resistance, and

¹¹³ It is also higher than the Gini coefficient for the whole of Argentina, which in 2010 was 0.44 (Index Mundi, 2010)

created alternative spaces for migrants (Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Sitrin, 2012). As in the previous chapter, the current situation will be placed in historical perspective in order to understand better contemporary attitudes towards migrants.

Figure 5.1: Greater Buenos Aires (BAMA)



Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Great_buenos_aires.png

5.1: Buenos Aires in the 19th and 20th centuries

5.1.1: The 'Paris of Latin America'

In the early 1800s Buenos Aires was a classic grid city revealing its colonial Spanish roots. However, by the end of the century, *porteño* elites classed the city's structure and buildings as 'shameful' and 'backward' (Needell, 1995: 521-522). To combat this, a period of Haussmannist urban reform was undertaken, involving the destruction of old buildings and the creation of large plazas, parks, and boulevards (Gorelik, 2004; Lederman, 2013; Needell, 1995). The desire for Buenos Aires to become the 'Paris of Latin America' was influenced not only by rich European migrants, but also by elites who had studied in Europe (Scobie, 1974). The links with migration are therefore clear, as such a 'modern' and 'civilised' city required not only European architecture and planning (Needell, 1995), but also the right type of

population: rich, white Europeans (Wilson, 2000). However, as mentioned in the previous chapter, not all the immigrants who arrived in Buenos Aires were as rich or white as the elites had hoped and imagined. The large number of poor, working class European immigrants tended to find accommodation in ramshackle and overcrowded *conventillos* (tenements) in the south of the city, something that did not fit with the elite's Parisian ambitions (Suriano, 1983).¹¹⁴ Much like the situation in Barcelona throughout the early 20th century (see Ealham, 2010), the terrible conditions and overcrowding found in this accommodation has been seen as a major contributing factor to class consciousness and militancy in the labour movement (Mason, 2007: 129-130). European ideas and immigration therefore had a huge effect on the city during this period, shaping both poorer and more affluent areas (Wilson, 2000). While Buenos Aires continued to grow throughout the early 20th century, it was in the 1930s with the birth of the *villas miserias*, that the city underwent its next major change (Scobie, 1974).

5.1.2: The birth of the villas miserias

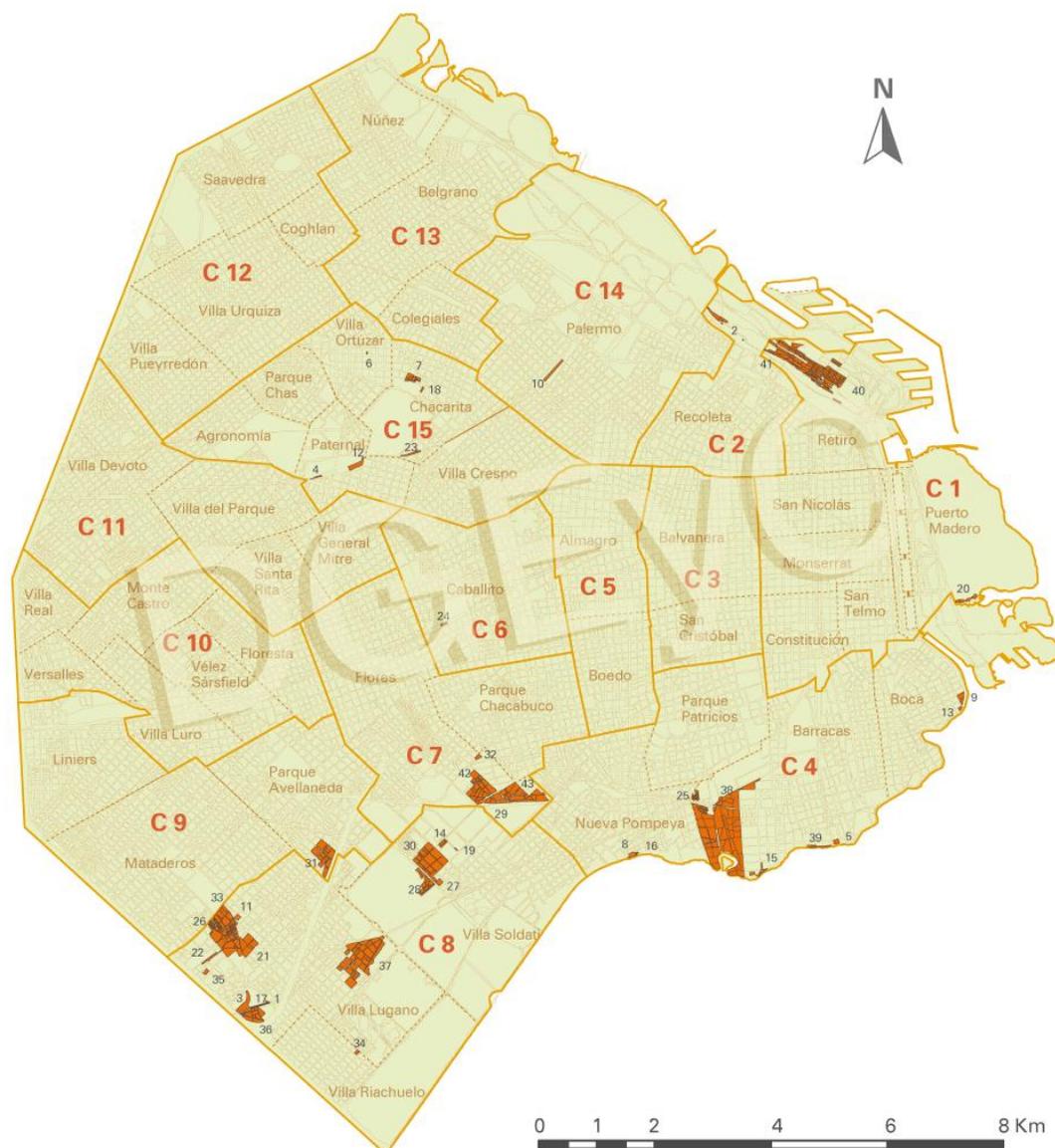
While there is no absolute agreement (see García, 2008c), *Villa 31* (located next in *Retiro*: Figure 5.2) is typically seen as the first *villa* to be built, in 1931¹¹⁵ (Dirección de Estadística y Censos, 1991; Bastia, 2003; Crovara, 2004; Gobierno de Buenos Aires, 2010; Zibechi, 2013). As mentioned, before this point, immigrants (and the working class poor more generally) tended to live in the cheap tenements in the south of the city (García, 2008c; Wilson, 2000), but *Villa 31* was built by the state to house Italian migrants¹¹⁶ working in the railway industry, and came to be known

¹¹⁴ Although, as Harvey (2006, 2012) notes, the Paris that was being emulated had its own overcrowded, poor neighbourhoods.

¹¹⁵ The name *Villa 31* is an anachronism, the numeric titles were ascribed to the *villas* much later by the military dictatorship. Despite the fall of the dictatorship the numbers remain today.

¹¹⁶ Although Zibechi (2013) notes that a number of Polish migrants were also involved with the growth of the railways.

Figure 5.2: Informal settlements within CABA, 2011



ASENTAMIENTOS

- 1 Barrio Obrero
- 2 Barrio Saldías
- 3 Bermejo
- 4 Biarritz y Espinosa
- 5 Bosh
- 6 Charlone
- 7 Fraga
- 8 El Pueblito
- 9 El Triángulo

10 Ent. Paraguay

- 11 Hubac
- 12 La Carbonilla
- 13 Lamadrid
- 14 Los Pinos
- 15 Magaldi
- 16 Mar Dulce
- 17 María Auxiliadora
- 18 Pdon. Lacroze
- 19 Portela

20 R. Bueno

- 21 San Pablo
- 22 Scapino
- 23 Warnes
- 24 Yermal

NHT

- 25 Zavaleta
- 26 Del Trabajo

VILLAS

- 27 Villa Calacita
- 28 Villa Piletones
- 29 Villa 1 11 14
- 30 Villa 3
- 31 Villa 6
- 32 Villa 13 bis
- 33 Villa 15
- 34 Villa 16
- 35 Villa 17
- 36 Villa 19

37 Villa 20

- 38 Villa 21 24
- 39 Villa 26
- 40 Villa 31
- 41 Villa 31 bis

VILLAS URBANIZADAS

- 42 Sector Bonorino (ex Villa 1-11-14)
- 43 Sector Polideportivo (ex Villa 1-11-14)

Source:

http://estatico.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/hacienda/sis_estadistico/mapas/villas_asentamientos_comunas_2011.jpg

as the '*barrio de inmigrantes*' (immigrants' neighbourhood: Blaustein, 2001).¹¹⁷ Apart from this particular instance of state intervention, however, there are almost no other examples of state-built *villas* (Bastia, 2010: 16), and instead they tended to grow 'informally' as internal, rural-urban migrants were unable to find affordable housing, and instead occupied areas of unused land (Auyero, 1999, 2000; Gutierrez, 1999).

Fuelled by government-led policies of import substitution industrialisation and dwindling agricultural production, migration to Buenos Aires caused huge growth – in 1935 its population was 3.4 million, and by 1960 it was over 7 million (Auyero, 1999: 53).¹¹⁸ In contrast to the conservative governments of the 1930s (the building of *Villa 31* aside), Perón's first government did not oppose the increase in these 'informal' settlements, as the migrants housed there made up much of their political base (Bastia, 2010: 16) – during the 1950s by far the majority (over 90% in some *villas*) of *villeros*¹¹⁹ were Argentine (Pablo and Ezcurra, 1958). Perón prioritised the right to housing during the late 1940s and early 1950s (McGuire, 1997: 53), and he aimed to build over 100,000 new dwellings. However, only 5,040 were constructed, which was insufficient to deal with the rapid increase in population; and the growth of the *villas* continued (García, 2008b). During this period the *villas* were merely seen as working class neighbourhoods (Auyero, 1999; García, 2008b; Gutierrez, 1999), and it was not until later that they began to be stigmatised and quite so much associated with migrants.¹²⁰

After 1955, however, the situation began to change, as the period of 'de-Peronisation' (explored in the previous chapter) had significant effects on the *villas*, seen – rightly – as Peronist strongholds (García, 2008a). In 1956 a commission into the *villas* was created, and it was found that they housed 33,920 people in CABA, and 78,430 in BAMA. This was the first proper quantification of the *villas*, and it played an extremely important role in casting them as a problem that needed to be solved by eradication (Bluestein, 2001).

¹¹⁷ The term '*villa miseria*' was coined only later, by the writer Bernardo Verbitsky (1957).

¹¹⁸ To place these figures in better context, this growth is larger (in both absolute and proportional terms) than was recorded in the socio-economically similar cities of Santiago de Chile (Walter, 2005) and Montevideo (Rodríguez and Camilo, 2004), but slower than in the less industrialised Lima, where population grew from 828,298 in 1940, to 2,031,051 in 1961 (Drinot, 2011; INDEC, 2013).

¹¹⁹ The term refers to those living in the *villas*, but as will be discussed later it is also a derogatory term applied to 'neighbouring migrants' under the assumption that they inevitably live in *villas*, something which reinforces the territorialisation of discrimination.

¹²⁰ The nature of this stigma will be discussed in more detail below.

Official attitudes therefore changed from improvement supported by social plans, to relocation and eradication (Arqueros et al., 2012). Nevertheless, driven by migration the *villas* continued to grow, and neighbourhood organisations that attempted to assert the rights of *villeros* began to emerge (Serbin, 1976; Silva and Schuurman, 1989). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the migration and economic policies of the governments meant that numbers of *villeros* rose during the 1950s and 1960s, while the number of European immigrants decreased rapidly. The newly ‘hyper-visible’ *cabecitas negras* no longer had a sympathetic Peronist government in power, and official discourse increasingly portrayed *villeros* as inferior, and the *villas* as dangerous, un-Argentine places (Bastia, 2010; Cravino, 2002; García, 2008a).

5.1.3: Military dictatorship and ‘slum clearance’

As levels of rural-urban and neighbouring migration increased steadily, the *villas* continued to grow during the 1970s, and by 1977 there were 224,885 *villeros* in CABA alone (Página 12, 25/03/01), while those in BAMA accounted for an estimated 7% of Argentina’s 26.89 million people (Libertun de Duren, 2008).¹²¹ By this point *villas* were spread further across Buenos Aires, but were still predominantly focused in the south of CABA and the *conurbano* (García, 2008a). Even more than before the *villas* had come to be seen as ‘*barrios Peronistas*’, and therefore as a great threat by the dictatorship in power between 1976 and 1983. Starting on 13 July 1977, a concerted process of ‘slum clearance’ called the *Plan Integral de Erradicación* was undertaken. Driven by class prejudice, racism, stigma, and stereotypes, the plan led to the removal of 208,763 people from CABA across four years (Bastia, 2003; Página 12, 25/03/01).

Initially the dictatorship claimed the main aim of the project was to build a series of motorways, which required the relocation of certain large *villas*. However, the *Plan Integral* was in fact a key part in a radical restructuring of Buenos Aires, with the desire to create ‘the right city’ (Bastia, 2010; Libertun de Duren, 2008).¹²² Official discourse spoke of the need to improve the habitat and living conditions of Buenos Aires (Página 12, 25/03/01), yet this was deemed impossible with the presence of ‘uneducated’ and ‘uncivilised’ *villeros*

¹²¹ It must be noted that for a number of reasons it is difficult to find accurate data for the number of people in the *villas*. For instance, exactly what constitutes a *villa* is open to debate, while the ‘informal’ nature of the settlements makes it very difficult to carry out accurate surveys.

¹²² The dictatorship also banned any new industry within the capital itself (Libertun de Duren, 2008).

(García, 2008a). Poor migrants (external *and* internal) were seen as incompatible with this vision. As Guillermo Cioppo, the then Minister of Housing of the City of Buenos Aires, put it in 1980:

Not anyone can live in the City of Buenos Aires. An effective effort should be made to improve the health and hygienic conditions. In fact, living in Buenos Aires is not for everybody, but only for those who deserve it, for those who accept the regulations of a pleasant and efficient community life. We have to have a better city for the better people (cited in Libertun de Duren, 2008: 129).

The removal of not only *villeros* but the *villas* themselves was therefore a necessary precondition for this 'right city'. In a 1981 speech the then governor of Buenos Aires, Osvaldo Cacciatore, said:

Nobody can doubt that it is a duty and function of the authorities to order the urban space. This is advised for healthy cohabitation, ecological reasons and even survival possibilities in cities...With all this a new hierarchy of urban space emerges. Buenos Aires, the European face of the country, cannot see its image ruined. It has to have international standards, we need to order the physical space in relation to selected criteria, that destroy poverty or at least hide it. So that living in Buenos Aires becomes a privilege (cited in Gutierrez, 1999: 80).

There was a desire for only the 'better people' to live in the privileged territory of CABA (Stratta and Barrera, 2009). *Villeros* were therefore purged and forcibly removed. The majority were relocated – outside the boundaries of CABA – to the *conurbano*, while about 2,000 immigrant families were even physically transported to the Bolivian and Paraguayan borders (Gutierrez, 1999; Libertun de Duren, 2008; Silva and Schuurman, 1989). The *conurbano* was/is a world away from CABA, and so unwanted elements were placed out of sight, out of mind. Through the construction of the motorway network the military dictatorship (re)produced and strengthened the border between the capital and BAMA, making it both symbolic and material (Bastia, 2010; Grimson, 2008).¹²³ A related impact on CABA at this time was the consolidation of the marked divide between the affluent north,

¹²³ To this day this makes for an obviously privileged territory (Muniz, 2008), something which will be explored in much more detail in the thesis. Motorways are represented by thick white lines on Figure 5.3.

and the much poorer south (Libertun de Duren, 2008). Traditionally this divide has been represented both symbolically and materially by the *Avenida Rivadavia* (Crot, 2006). The world's longest avenue, it runs through the heart of Buenos Aires, and can be seen on Figure 5.3 just under the number '1'.

5.2: Post-dictatorship: neoliberalism, fragmentation, and territorial subjectivities

After the defeat of the dictatorship in 1983, only 2.5% of CABA's *villero* population remained – around 2,500 people. But it returned very quickly, and by 1986 eleven *villas* were home to 19,400 people. Nevertheless, the majority of *villas* and *villeros* remained in the *conurbano* (Silva and Schuurman, 1989). With the return to democracy there were significant changes in Buenos Aires, but urban poverty and inequality remained, and the de-industrialisation that had started during the dictatorship continued (Libertun de Duren, 2008). Between 1980 and 1989 the income of the poorest tenth of Buenos Aires' population declined by 15%, while the wealthiest tenth's rose by 14% (Gasparini et al., 2000). However, the period from 1989 onwards, after Carlos Menem was elected president, had an even more significant impact on contemporary Buenos Aires.

While Menem's election can be seen as the conclusion of the process of 'democratic consolidation' after the military dictatorship ended, paradoxically it can also be seen as the culmination of the dictatorship's neoliberal economic policies (Dinerstein, 2002: 14).¹²⁴ Menem placed an emphasis on economic stability and combating hyper-inflation, and so in 1991 the IMF-backed 'convertibility plan' was introduced, pegging the Argentine peso to the US dollar at a rate of one-to-one (Bambaci et al., 2002). Afterwards Menem passed a series of 'emergency legislations' which afforded him further control over the economy, and allowed him to bypass democratic procedures (Carranza, 2005). This was followed by a series of neoliberal policies, including privatisation, deregulation, the dismantling of the welfare state, and an emphasis on flexible labour (Gordon and Chatterton, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Villalón, 2007; Wylde, 2010). The traditionally strong yet paternalist unions encouraged under Peronism (see Munck et al., 1987) were also challenged, and became increasingly weak and co-opted (Cató and Ventrici, 2011). Combined with growing

¹²⁴ Menem's economic policies can also be seen to follow closely the advice of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which was heavily influenced by the then emerging 'Washington Consensus' (see Carranza, 2005).

unemployment, this proved especially problematic as social security was typically provided by the unions (Khorasane, 2007). The proportion of families below the poverty line also grew from 16% in 1991 to 37% in 1999 (Gonzalez-Rozada and Menendez, 2002; Index Mundi, 2013).

The cumulative effect of Menem's economic policies created "a novel geography of social inequality" (Libertun de Duren, 2008: 123), as 'public space' throughout the city became privatised and securitised¹²⁵ (Grimson, 2008; North and Huber, 2004), creating a type of 'neoliberal territory' (González, 2010). This disproportionately affected the lives of migrants and the urban poor, for whom parks and other public spaces were the only places they could go to socialise (Avendaño, 2006; Canelo, 2006). The government's *laissez faire* attitude did nothing to redress the fact that 75-80% of foreign direct investment went to the northern half of the city (Ciccolella, 1999), which further exacerbated the north/south divide (Crot, 2006; Cruces et al., 2008; Moya, 1998). Elements of this divide can be seen in Figures 5.2 and 5.3, which show how many more *villas* and other informal settlements lie in the south of the city (as well as BAMA more generally).¹²⁶ Rising rents and land costs within CABA forced people out of the capital, and led to further population growth in the *conurbano* (Crot, 2006; González, 2010; Stratta and Barrera, 2009), but it is also worth noting the increasing population of the *villas* within CABA during this period. The dictatorship did not completely eradicate all of the *villas*, which meant that enough of a population remained upon which new regrowth could graft itself (Bastia, 2010). So while the number of *villeros* within CABA was estimated at 2,500 at the end of the dictatorship, by 1991 it was 50,900, and by 1999 it had reached 86,666 (Auyero, 2002).

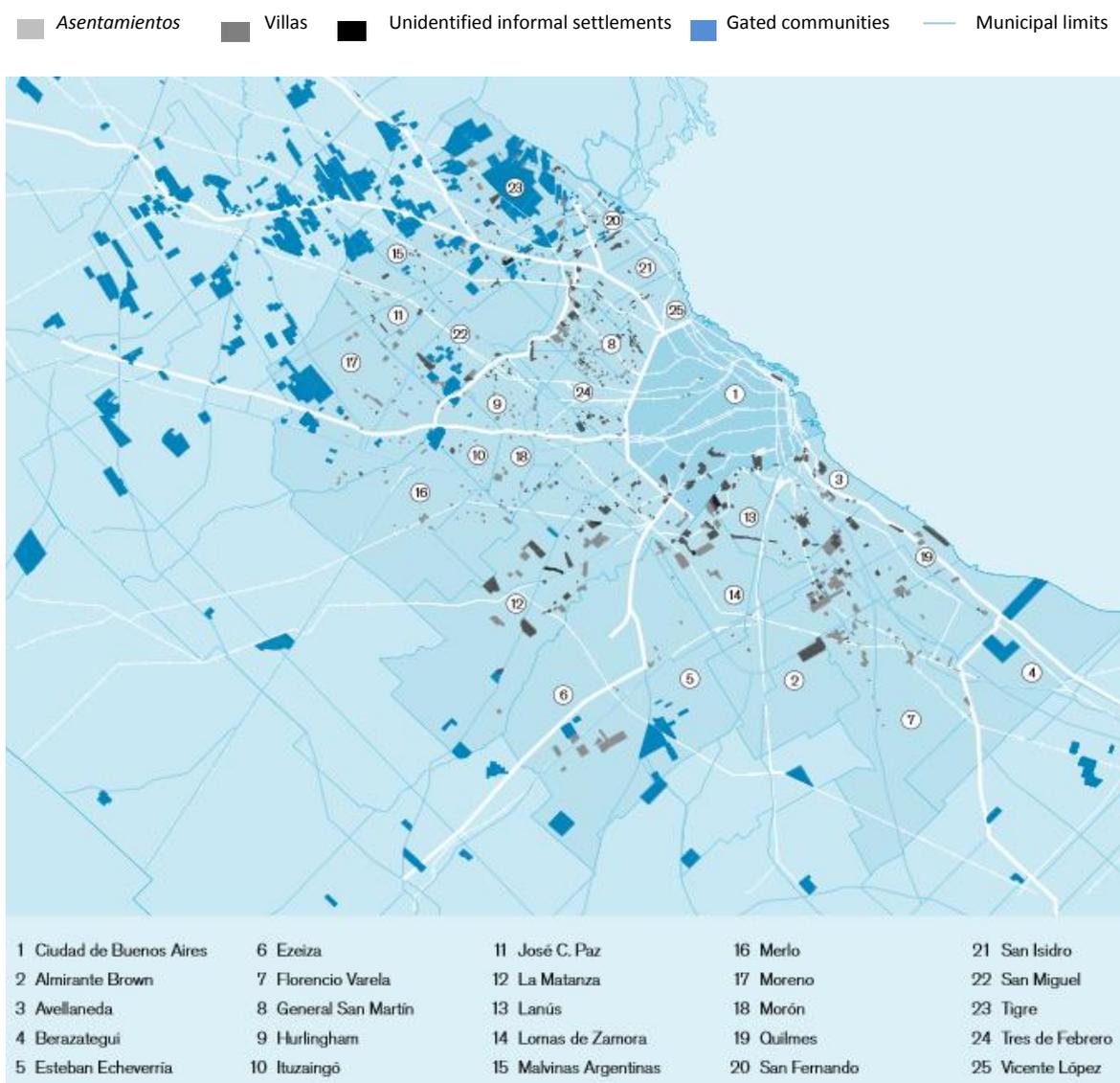
At the same time there was an unprecedented rise in gated communities, especially in the north of BAMA (see Pérez, 2002; Thuillier, 2005; Figure 5.3). This post-dictatorship period therefore created an extremely fragmented and polarised city where growing inequality was manifested territorially (Muniz, 2008). The growth of both *villas* and gated communities increased tensions between the groups of inhabitants, as their separation and lack of integration created a self-fulfilling, discriminatory relationship, based on a fear and

¹²⁵ Chapters 7 and 8 engage with issues surrounding 'public space' in more depth.

¹²⁶ In both figures, the term *asentamientos* refers to settlements that are typically smaller and more 'informal' than *villas*. In Figure 5.2, NHT refers to temporary and transitory housing camps and *Villas Urbanizadas* refers to urbanised parts of *Villa 1-11-14*.

dislike of an unknown 'other' (Pírez, 2002; Kanai, 2011; Roitman and Phelps, 2011). Much as before, *villas* and *villeros* were consistently stigmatised by much of the mainstream media (Silva, 2008). Through analysis of the consistently sensationalist reporting, Dukuen (2009, 2010) has argued that the *villeros* became discursively constructed in opposition to citizens. This othering can be seen as a form of symbolic violence (see Bourdieu, 1977, 1984) which contributes to the marginalisation of *villeros*.

Figure 5.3: Informal settlements and gated communities in BAMA, 2008



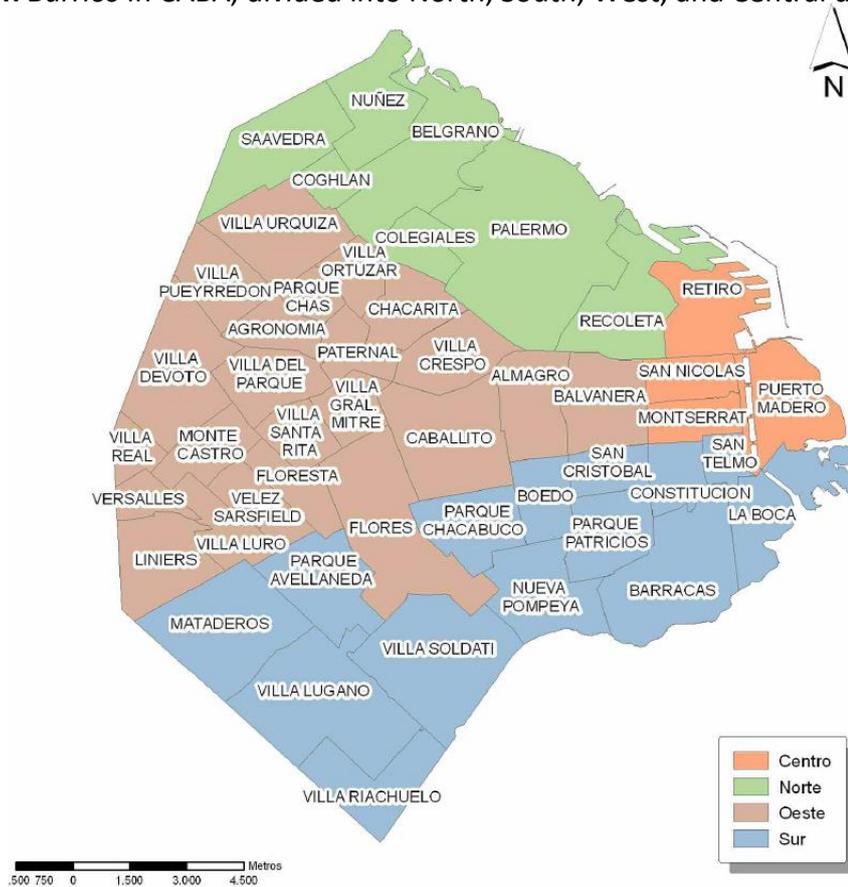
Source: UNDP, 2009

The processes of ‘territorial stigmatisation’ (e.g. Jensen and Christensen, 2012; Wacquant, 2008) that began during the 1950s also became more acute, and the *villas* themselves were ascribed specific identities (Cravino, 2002; Giménez and Ginóbili, 2003).¹²⁷ But these links between territory and identity were not exclusive to the *villas*. The fragmentation of the city meant that extreme poverty and wealth became focused in different neighbourhoods within CABA, creating a so called ‘*barrio* effect’ (UNDP, 2009) where particular neighbourhoods were only for the affluent (e.g. *Palermo, Recoleta, Belgrano*), with others for the urban poor (e.g. *Barracas, Villa Soldati, Liniers*) – *barrios* can be seen in Figure 5.4, below. These differences were maintained by a series of symbolic and material ‘urban borders’ that separated different *barrios*, causing those who crossed them to become strangers in their own city (Grimson, 2008); they have contributed to the ghettoisation of ‘neighbouring migrant’ groups.

As the effects of gentrification became more apparent in neighbourhoods such as *La Boca* and *San Telmo* (González, 2010), processes of ‘territorial purification’ took place, and those people deemed unsuitable for those *barrios* (‘neighbouring migrants’) were forcibly removed to the *conurbano*, further inscribing these emerging territorial identities. This happened most visibly in the modern developments of *Puerto Madero* and *Abasto* (the latter a shopping centre in the *Balvanera barrio*: Carman, 2006). These processes complemented the rise in rent during the 1990s which forced more people out into the *conurbano*. While much more heterogeneous than CABA, the *conurbano* still had a heavy north/south divide, the majority of gated communities being found in the north (Figure 5.3). However, the close proximity of gated communities and *villas* – as well as other ‘informal’ settlements and poor neighbourhoods – created a situation described as ‘islands of the rich’ in an ‘ocean of poverty’ (Tella et al., 2007: 146).

¹²⁷ These identities were/are often closely related to the migration patterns into the *villas* – for instance *Villa 21* is locally known ‘*la villa de los Paraguayos*’ (Cravino, 2002) – which became more constant during this period, and were consolidated by the strengthening of migration networks *within* the *villas* (Bastia, 2003). Other *villas* are also seen to have specific identities that are linked to their inhabitants. For example *Villa 15* is known as the ‘*ciudad oculta*’ (hidden city) due to its perceived links to the black market and other criminal activity, and to the fact that in 1978 the Argentine government built a wall around the *villa* in order to hide it from the international media who were covering the football world cup.

Figure 5.4: *Barrios* in CABA, divided into North, South, West, and Central districts



Source: Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2010: 9

The identities ascribed to the *villas*, the *conurbano*, and certain *barrios* can therefore be seen to territorialise the relationships between ‘neighbouring migrants’ and *porteños* that were mentioned in the previous chapter. This dialectical relationship of ‘inverted alterity’ means that processes of territorial stigmatisation do not simply ‘other’ areas of CABA and BAMA, but also reinforce and (re)produce the position of dominant identities in the social hierarchy. However, as Chapter 2 demonstrated, the power of territory lies in its naturalising and obfuscating capacities (Delaney, 2005). Therefore this territorialising of the ‘neighbouring migrant’/*porteño* relationship contributes to its perpetuation, while also deracialising discriminatory attitudes towards ‘neighbouring migrants’. Areas become stigmatised owing to their inhabitants, but once in existence this stigma then allows discrimination to be couched in ostensibly non-racist/-xenophobic/-classist terms. Chapters 7 and 8 will expand on the role territorial identities play in mediating relationships between

various groups, as well as focusing on the way these identities have been constructed. The 'place making' claims (see Lombard, 2014; Pierce et al., 2011) of 'neighbouring migrants' will therefore be considered within the broader framework of the territorial struggles discussed in this chapter, demonstrating the need to appreciate an *intersectional* production of space/territory (cf. Lefebvre, 1991; Brenner and Elden, 2009). Also, the ideas of 'in place/out of place' (Cresswell, 1996) can push the analysis further, examining how certain people and behaviours become self-evidently appropriate ('in place'), and others transgressive ('out of place'). This can help unpack the ways in which 'neighbouring migrant' spaces/territories have been constructed, and thus help de-naturalise the discrimination that is bound up in territorialisation, and the related problems of ghettoisation. In order to situate these discussions, it is important to turn to the rise of 'territorial subjectivities', and how these are intimately linked to (intersectional) class struggles.

5.2.1: Territorial subjectivities

The fragmentation explored above was not only territorial, but also had a significant impact on the class structure in Argentina and Buenos Aires (Crovara, 2004). Throughout much of the second half of the 20th century, Argentina had a strong, 'formal', and paternalistically-unionised working class that provided the base for the national, Peronist project (Munck et al., 1987). Following sustained deindustrialisation and liberalisation this changed, and by 1998 over 40% of the workforce was classed as part of the 'informal proletariat', typified by precarious employment, underemployment, and unemployment (Portes and Hoffman, 2003). While this undoubtedly had a devastating impact on levels of poverty and unemployment, it did begin to open up possibilities for new political subjectivities, beyond the traditional image of the male, industrial worker (Schmidt and van der Walt, 2009). One such group was the *piqueteros* (so called because of their use of the road picket as a tactic). The first *piqueteros* emerged in Neuquén in the south-west of Argentina, when, on 21 June 1996, recently unemployed workers from a state-run oil company and their supporters blockaded a highway in protest against being laid off. Unable to go on strike, the *piqueteros* recognised the city as a crucial site in capitalist production (Mason-Deese, 2012: 3), and found power in a post-Fordist economy by disrupting the 'just-in-time' nature of production (Colectivo Situaciones, 2007). Accordingly this tactic played an important role in the

emergence of a new political actor: the unemployed (Alcañiz and Scheier, 2007).¹²⁸ Historically, Argentine concepts and discourses of rights were framed around the ‘national worker’ but not necessarily the ‘citizen’ (Dinerstein, 2002: 16).¹²⁹ In this regard the unemployed in Argentina were an especially vulnerable and excluded group, but with the rise of the *piqueteros* they became visible subjects with their own political agency. And, as will be demonstrated, they came to play an important role in political activity surrounding the wave of struggles in response to the 2001 economic crisis (Medina, 2011; Motta, 2009a; Sitrin, 2012; Whitson, 2007a, 2007b). What is more, as we shall see, these movements emphasised the linkages between territory and (intersectional) class struggles, a relationship touched upon in Chapter 2.

The *Neuquén piqueteros* created a blueprint for protest in this period of large-scale unemployment, and contributed to the emergence of the country-wide ‘Unemployed Workers’ Movements’ (*Movimiento de Trabajadores Desempleados* or MTDs: Chatterton, 2005). In Buenos Aires MTDs were especially prevalent in the south of CABA and the *conurbano* (Mason-Deese, 2013a), traditionally areas with large populations of ‘neighbouring migrants’ (Vázquez, 2011). These movements were explicitly territorial. Not only did their *piquetes* play a territorialising role (Colectivo Situaciones and MTD Solano, 2002; Grimson, 2009), but the groups themselves also had extremely strong bases in these southern *barrios*, which allowed them to focus on “creating new ways of life and social-spatial organisation in the neighbourhoods where the poor live” (Mason-Deese, 2012: 4). For the MTDs ‘the unemployed’ was a far from homogeneous category:

Organisations of the unemployed [brought] together people with different experiences of work and unemployment, such as laid-off factory workers; those with temporary or part-time jobs; women occupied with household work, whether paid or unpaid, in their homes or the houses of others; and people living off...illegal activity, informal jobs, government subsidies, micro-loans or some combination of all of these (Mason-Deese, 2013a: 2).

¹²⁸ These movements recognised that ‘unemployed’ is still a class identity (see Chatterton, 2005; cf. Witherford, 1994), and again emphasise the way in which new political compositions are immanent to technical compositions.

¹²⁹ This therefore makes discussion about the political subjectivity of migrants in Argentina interesting.

Conventional trade unions' focus on the representation of the interests of 'formal' wage labour inevitably marginalised the unemployed, the 'informally' employed, and those involved with social reproduction.¹³⁰ Within the MTDs, wage labour was decentred, and the importance of other forms of labour and everyday activity recognised (Mason-Deese, 2012: 5), leading to the emergence of a more diffuse and 'autonomous labour subjectivity' (Dinerstein, 2013).¹³¹ This was central to the creation of 'solidarity economies' (Chatterton, 2005; Sitrin, 2012), that sought to 'decommodify' products and 'dealienate' the labour process itself (Sitrin, 2012: Chapter 6; Zibechi, 2012: 251-257). Through these networks of solidarity MTDs were able to instigate a variety of *barrio* initiatives, such as autonomous schools, health clinics, and child care facilities. This focus on territorial politics is reflected in the popular slogan of the MTDs: 'the neighbourhood is the new factory'. But as Mason-Deese explains:

This slogan carries a double significance: production is no longer centred in the factory but dispersed throughout the territory and, in parallel, labour organising must be dispersed throughout the neighbourhood as well (2012: 4).

While such territorial organisation and subjectivities are nothing new in Buenos Aires – neighbourhood organisation has existed in the *villas* since their inception (Serbin, 1976; Silva and Schuurman, 1989) – it was from the 1990s onwards that they became especially pronounced. As mentioned above, a consequence of Buenos Aires's fragmentation was that *barrios* began to have much more distinct identities (Stratta and Barrera, 2009). Similarly the MTDs and other social movements/civil society became increasingly territorial, and aimed to reshape their neighbourhoods and spaces in a more egalitarian fashion (Mason-Deese, 2012, 2013; Zibechi, 2012). It is important, therefore, to recognise that such movements are simultaneously territorial *and* territorialising (Colectivo Situaciones and MTD Solano, 2002). As we shall see, these groups were not simply struggling *over* territory, but were also seeking to create new territorial forms.

¹³⁰ As discussed in Chapter 4, the position of 'neighbouring migrants' in the labour market therefore makes them disproportionately likely to fall outside the remit of trade unions. The consequences of this are discussed in Chapter 6.

¹³¹ The ideas of class composition explored in Chapter 2 have obvious resonance here, as the MTDs maintained an explicit class identity despite their members' unemployment. Influenced by the work of Tronti (1980) and other autonomist Marxists, the MTDs therefore saw the working class defined not by its productive capacities, but instead by its potential to refuse work (see Marks, 2012).

From Menem's neoliberal restructuring to the resistance of the MTDs, class and territory (and their de- and recomposition) are therefore inextricably linked in Buenos Aires (González, 2010). As explained, the 1990s created new spaces, territories, and political actors, but it is important to heed Varley's call, and not fetishise this idea of 'informality as resistance' (2013). Hence it should also be recognised that this period saw an alarming rise in urban poverty, and paved the way for the 2001 crisis, which itself further reshaped Buenos Aires.

5.3: 2001 crisis, 'recovery', and the present day

By the end of the 1990s Menem's reforms were met with increased resistance. A change of government in 1999 did little to ease the burden on the working and middle classes, as new president Fernando de la Rúa maintained Menem's macroeconomic policies and instituted an IMF-backed austerity package (Carranza, 2005). These policies plunged yet more people into poverty, and bred discontent and social/labour struggle. Further economic instability followed and, in response to extremely low currency reserves, a limit of \$250 per week was put on the amount of money people could withdraw. Introduced on 3 December 2001, this wildly unpopular move proved to be the final straw for the de la Rúa administration (Carranza, 2005; Dinerstein, 2002, 2003; Gordon and Chatterton, 2004). By this point unemployment had grown to around 33% (compared to 6% in 1991), and of the 37 million people living in Argentina, 21 million were below the poverty line, with five million in extreme poverty (Khorasaneh, 2007). A general strike on 13 December was followed by looting in four of Argentina's major cities on the 16th (Dinerstein, 2002). Then came the events of the 19th and 20th: the *Argentinazo*.

Popular discontent became manifested in a *cacerolazo*¹³² – a form of pot banging demonstration. On the evening of 19 December, middle-class *Porteños* began banging pots and pans in their own homes. As word and noise of this spread (especially through live television reports: Villalón, 2007), the protest moved from the private to the public sphere (Grimson, 2008). Numbers grew, and hundreds of thousands of people took the *cacerolazo* to the streets, heading for the historic *Plaza de Mayo*. In response to this growing threat de

¹³² Chapter 6 will discuss the recent re-emergence of this type of protest.

la Rúa called a thirty day 'state of siege'¹³³, but far from regaining control, this action fuelled the flames (Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Dinerstein, 2003). The ensuing police repression led to the 'battle of Buenos Aires' (Dinerstein, 2002) which raged through the streets for the next ten hours. At 1.00am on 20 December finance minister Cavallo resigned, but this was not enough to placate the masses, and by 8.00pm de la Rúa had to make his escape by helicopter. By the end of 21 December there were 35 dead, 429 injured, and 3,200 had been arrested (Gordon and Chatterton, 2004: 15). Such was the strength and conviction of the protests that across fifteen days Argentina experienced five different presidents, culminating with the former governor of Buenos Aires, Eduardo Duhalde, being sworn in on 2 January 2002 (Wylde, 2011).

5.3.1: 'Recovery'

One of the first moves of the Duhalde administration was to unpeg the peso from the dollar, effectively sending the Argentina currency into freefall. From a ratio of one-to-one, the peso rose to five-to-one before settling at around three-to-one, slashing the value of many people's savings (Wylde, 2011). However, the move did remove the straightjacket from the economy, and despite forcing even more of the population into greater poverty it was a seemingly necessary step that began to pave the way towards economic recovery (Carranza, 2005).

However, popular protest continued. A cross-class alliance between the *piqueteros* and those involved with the *cacerolazos* emerged and, over the months that followed, up to four million people participated in demonstrations, strikes, and roadblocks in Buenos Aires alone (Colectivo Situaciones, 2002). An important rupture in the history of BAMA (Sitrin, 2012), the *Argentinazo* created many 'alternative spaces' for popular power (North and Huber, 2004): neighbourhood assemblies (*asambleas*) sprung up across Buenos Aires (Sitrin, 2006), while the number of MTDs (Alcañiz and Scheier, 2007), and worker-run, occupied factories increased (Lavaca, 2007). Underpinning many of these movements were the concepts of autonomy, 'horizontalism', and *autogestión* (Sitrin, 2006, 2012).¹³⁴ The animosity towards the political class was matched by a desire to create something new, but

¹³³ This gave the military the power to act when any more than three people congregated in a public space.

¹³⁴ *Autogestión* crudely translates as 'workers' self-management', while horizontalism extends these ideas beyond the workplace, and places emphasis on non-hierarchical modes of organisation.

in so doing it was important to those involved not to (re)create and the forms of domination inherent in capitalist relations (Khorasanee, 2007). The influences of the Zapatistas and autonomist Marxism were palpable – the period even being described as an ‘urban Zapatismo’ (Holloway, 2005b) – as were those of the migrant-driven, early 20th century labour movement (see Chatterton, 2005). Again there were important territorial elements to these movements. The *asambleas* sought to (re)create forms of ‘public space’ that had disappeared during the Menem era (Sitrin, 2012), but with the commitment to horizontalism and *autogestión* these ‘alternative spaces’ (North and Huber, 2004) can be seen as a type of the ‘subaltern territory’ explored in Chapter 2 (Mason-Deese, 2012, 2013; Stratta and Barrera, 2009; Zibechi, 2012). Nevertheless, despite these varied movements, much of the momentum of the *Argentinazo* became lost, and within seventeen months Néstor Kirchner was voted in as president with resounding support.

Within a year he had a 75% approval rating, with wide-ranging support from the middle classes, some of the *piqueteros*, trade unions, important human rights group the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, and even the IMF (Dangl, 2010: Chapter 3). After controversially defaulting on its external debt, Argentina entered a period of sustained economic growth. The statistics under Kirchner make impressive reading. Between 2003 and 2007 the economy grew by 9% a year¹³⁵, unemployment fell from above 20% to below 9%, and the poverty rate almost halved from around 50% to 27% (Levitsky and Murillo, 2008: 17). Taking advantage of the devalued peso, Kirchner adopted a policy of export-led growth (Richardson, 2009). This form of so-called *neodesarrollismo* (neo-developmentalism) focused heavily on the agriculture and petroleum sectors (Wylde, 2011), but with a pronounced state involvement (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2007). Despite these changes there was much socio-economic continuity from the 1990s, and the fragmented city and class structure remained intact through a predominantly ‘elite-led recovery’ (Petras, 2004; Fernández Bugna and Porta, 2008; Benwell et al., 2013).

As mentioned above, there was much overlap between the two Kirchner governments (Levitsky and Murillo, 2008). Cristina maintained Nestór’s populist brands of ‘*Kirchnerismo*’ (Moreira and Sebastián, 2010) and *neodesarrollismo* (Wylde, 2011), and her

¹³⁵ While this economic growth seems impressive, it must be noted that it was starting from a low base, while also put into the context of the general global economy in the early 2000s.

combination of export-led growth (the economy continued to grow at around 7% a year) and state-led welfare and social projects has been described as 'post-neoliberalism' (Cortés, 2009; Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012; Yates and Bakker, 2013). However, as the continuity from Kirchner to Kirchner did not lead to large structural changes (Wylde, 2011), the government maintained elements of the 'elite-led' focus (Levitsky and Murillo, 2008). So while this 'recovery' further reduced poverty and unemployment, the benefits were not always felt by BAMA's growing 'hyperprecariat'/'underclass'/'informal proletariat' (de Souza, 2009a; The Economist, 2011), which had been born from a sustained period of 'deproletarianisation' during the neoliberal reforms of the 1990s (Davis, 2006; Portes and Hoffman, 2003; Portes and Roberts, 2005).

5.3.2: Present Day

The contemporary economic situation in Argentina and Buenos Aires is a mixed bag. The size of the 'informal' economy has shrunk from its 2004 high (60.8%) to 50%¹³⁶ (Charmes, 2012; Dell'Anno, 2010) and in June 2015 unemployment was 7.1% (Trading Economics, 2015). However, the population under the poverty line has started to grow and by the end of 2013 was estimated to be as high as 30% (Index Mundi, 2013), while at the same time inflation was thought to be between 20% and 25%¹³⁷ (The Economist, 2013a). In part due to extremely stringent import/export tariffs, this inflation is most acute in basic goods and food (Trading Economics, 2014), and therefore affects the poorest most severely. What is more, restrictive currency controls have created a dual exchange rate (Hanke, 2013). The black market dollar not only exchanges for almost twice the official rate, but also tends to rise much more in step with inflation (The Economist, 2012, 2013c). Those with access to dollars (the middle and upper classes) are therefore much more able to deal with these high levels of inflation than those without (BAMA's urban poor, the working classes, and the lower middle classes).

¹³⁶ This is lower than the current Latin American average of 57.7% (Charmes, 2012: 111)

¹³⁷ There is a lot of controversy surrounding these statistics. Officially, the government currently places inflation at 10.9% but independent research repeatedly finds this claim to be wide of the mark. This 'cover up' has serious knock on effects, leading the government to claim that only 4.7% of the population is below the poverty line, based on the (outrageous) assertion that it is possible to survive on 6 pesos (around one dollar) a day (The Economist, 2013c). What is more, increases in wages tend to match only the 'official' rate of inflation (if at all), consistently driving low earners further beneath the poverty line.

In many ways, therefore, the current situation is similar to that of the last two decades, with the continued fragmentation and divergence of territory and class structure. In the last ten years both the middle classes and BAMA's *villeros* have grown by over 50%. The former are now thought to make up almost 40% of the population (Ferreira et al., 2012), while there are now more than 508,144 families living in 864 villas across BAMA (UTPMP, 2011). The number of gated communities has similarly continued to grow (Benwell et al., 2013; Roitman and Phelps, 2011).¹³⁸ The sustained growth of both *villas* and gated communities has further exacerbated the problems mentioned above, and levels of fear and animosity between their respective inhabitants are increasing (The Economist, 2013b). However, as before, the rise in the fear of crime is not borne out in reality, as levels of crime have stayed constant (Tommarchi, 2011), and Buenos Aires remains one of Latin America's safest cities (Benwell et al., 2013). The *villas* almost exclusively house 'neighbouring migrants', and this has "created the common-sense equation that urban slums are populated by dark-skinned immigrants and [therefore], by extension, that all dark-skinned people are outsiders" (Ko, 2013: 2533), again emphasising the way in which the territorialisation of identities is very powerful.

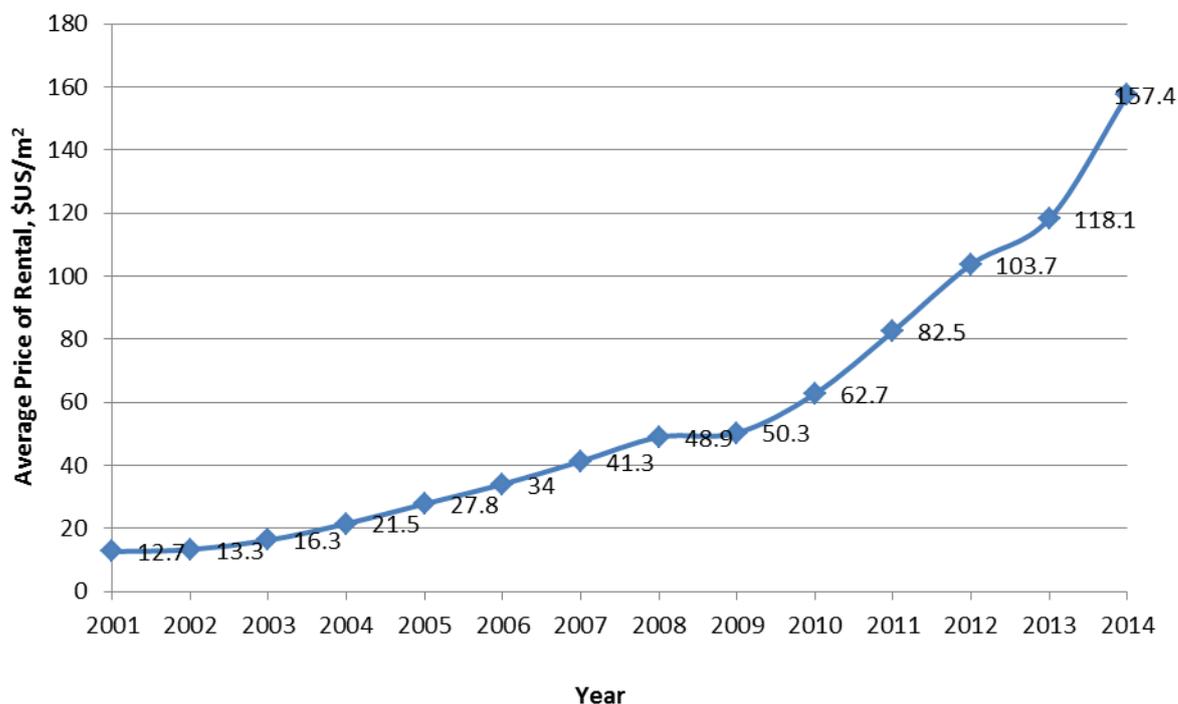
Within CABA processes of gentrification have continued. Between 2001 and 2014 average rents increased from \$12.7/m² to \$157.4/m² (Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2014: 22-23), much faster than both increases in wages and inflation.¹³⁹ Figure 5.5 illustrates that the rise in rents has been especially rapid since 2009. However, this increase is even more marked in certain *comunas* – CABA's fifteen administrative subdivisions: Figures 5.2 and 8.2. For example, between 2001 and 2014 rents in *Comuna 4* rose from \$9.8/m² to \$92/m² (838.4%), while in *Comuna 15* the increase was from \$10.6/m² to \$167/m² (1475.6%) (Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2014: 29-31).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Accurate up-to-date data is hard to find, but in 2007 there were 541 gated communities in BAMA, up from 285 in 2001 (UNDP, 2009: 16). Conservative estimates place the number of homes in gated communities at well over 90 000 (The Economist, 2013c).

¹³⁹ The high rate of inflation mentioned above is a relatively recent phenomenon, taking hold only since 2011. Unfortunately official data is available only for \$US/m².

¹⁴⁰ The differences between *comunas* are focused on in more detail in Chapter 8.

Figure 5.5: Change in CABA's Average Rent, 2001-2014



Source: Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2014: 22-24

It is also worth noting that following the 2001 crisis the only parts of CABA where rents did not fall were the *barrios* to the north of the city (those in green in Figure 5.4), which supports the idea that the effects of crisis, rupture, and ‘recovery’ were not experienced equally. Although the difference in these rents is testament to the prevalence of the aforementioned north/south divide, the precise nature of this divide is slowly changing. Areas such as *Caballito* are seeing heavy investment and development, which is matched by a rapid rise in rent (Miller, 2012, 2013), and this is starting to blur the neat, traditional divide of *Avenida Rivadavia*. However, even after decades of governmental neglect and abandonment (Lederman, 2013), a growing number of people in the far south of CABA on the border with the *conurbano* are unable to afford these rapidly rising rents. This has led to a serious housing crisis, further adding to the large numbers of people being forced into the *conurbano* and the *villas* (Benwell et al., 2013), thus reinforcing the capital/*conurbano* relationship explored above.

This difference is further emphasised by Argentina's federal political system (see Gutiérrez, 2012). While the current mayor of CABA is the conservative, anti-Kirchner businessman Mauricio Macri, the *conurbano* and the rest of the Buenos Aires province is governed by Daniel Scioli, Néstor Kirchner's vice president. Macri's typically neoliberal policies tend to disproportionately favour the rich north of CABA (where the majority of his political base live) again exacerbating the north/south divide (Mattina and López, 2013). Further, his political position leads to regular conflict with the Kirchnerist national and provincial governments, whose base – unsurprisingly given Kirchnerism's links to Peronism (Moreira and Sebastián, 2010) – tends to be in the south of CABA and the *conurbano*. The territorial manifestation of these opposing political tendencies therefore sharpens the border and strengthens the material and symbolic differences between the CABA, the *conurbano*, and the *villas*. However, this relationship between the 'formal' and the 'informal' city is complex (see Dovey, 2012; Dovey and King, 2011). While undoubtedly stigmatised and othered by sections of society, the *villas* and the *conurbano* cannot simply be dismissed as 'marginal' or 'peripheral' (cf. Wacquant, 2008). In fact, as has been argued, they still play a central role in the city's imagination and identity through the dialectical relationship of 'inverted alterity' (Laborde, 2011; Licitra, 2011). This point will be expanded in detail across the next chapters.

As mentioned, the fragmentation of class and territory can open up spaces for resistance. MTDs are becoming increasingly active in the *conurbano*, but have begun to abandon the rhetoric and tactics of the *piqueteros* from which they emerged. Instead they are almost exclusively territorial, their respective identities linked to their neighbourhoods (Mason-Deese, forthcoming). Even within CABA, radical *villero* movements (many of whose members are immigrants) are continuing to build and create their own health clinics, schools, and autonomous spaces (Zibechi, 2013). Collectives of migrant workers are also starting to play a lead role in struggles against precarious labour (Betrisey, 2012), and these groupings have also started to make significant territorial claims in *barrios* such as *Liniers* that have especially suffered from the unequal impacts of Macri's policies (Cantor, 2013). However, as mentioned these territorial claims can unfortunately lead to the ghettoisation and isolation of groups of 'neighbouring migrants', which reinforces and de-racialises discrimination, and can limit the capacity for resistance by contributing to class

decomposition. Once more this illustrates the ways in which territory is related to political compositions of class, which are themselves related to technical composition.

5.4: Conclusions

Migration has shaped not only Argentina's national identity (as argued in the previous chapter), but also its capital city. Again, 19th century European migrants and ideas have played an extremely important role. However, this chapter has argued that it was during the 20th century – with the birth and attempted eradication of the *villas miserias* – that a true territorial hierarchy emerged within the city, and territory really came to the fore in shaping attitudes towards migrants (and the urban poor more generally).

Throughout the 1990s Menem's aggressive neoliberal reforms polarised and fragmented CABA and the *conurbano*. While this plunged millions into abject poverty, it is argued that it also created conditions which led to the birth of new types of politics that involved a large number of 'neighbouring migrants'. This period also saw the (related) processes of gentrification, territorial purification, and territorial stigmatisation that reflected a particular elite vision for the city. These processes have led to a relationship between CABA, the *conurbano*, and the *villas* that moves beyond ideas of centre/periphery, and problematises ideas of 'marginality' and 'informality'. The economic crisis of 2001 represented a crucial rupture that further reshaped the city and the trajectories of increasingly territorial social movements. Since then a predominantly 'elite-led' recovery has done relatively little to change the situation: the already large number of urban poor (many of whom are migrants) is growing, alongside a simultaneous increase in the middle classes and gated communities. This growth has at times led to the ghettoisation of both 'neighbouring migrants' and sectors of the *porteño* elite, and as these territorial identities become more prevalent they can lead to situations of class decomposition.

In Buenos Aires class and territory are therefore intimately interlinked, and as such they need to be understood together, not decoupled. What is more, the intersectional nature of space/territory production must be considered. Political identities and methods of resistance are tied up in territory (see Featherstone, 2008; Mason-Deese, 2012, 2013, forthcoming; Sitrin, 2006, 2012; Zibechi, 2012), leading to a form of spatial politics (Featherstone and Painter, 2013; Nicholls et al., 2013). Chapters 6, 7, and 8 will argue that

groups that employ alternative conceptions of territory can challenge the problems associated with ghettoisation, and ultimately lead to class recomposition. However, despite their central role in many of the processes, migrants (and their political subjectivities) are often left out of the picture. The next chapters will combat this lacuna.

CHAPTER 6

Class, race, and national identity: Unpacking intersectional relationships

This chapter argues that the complex relationship between ‘neighbouring migrants’ and Argentines is made up from, among other things¹⁴¹, the intersections of class, race, and national identity, and that these linkages co-constitute and reinforce each other. Race, national identity, and class are often recast in terms of one another, which can contribute to a reticence among some ‘neighbouring migrants’ to view class as a pertinent social dynamic. This retreat from class can have problematic consequences for ‘neighbouring migrants’, yet is grounded in a narrow understanding of the structural relationship. In order to recognise class’s complexity and fundamental importance, the chapter expands upon the intersectional class struggle analysis explored in Chapter 2, and argues that ideas of class composition help unpack Argentines’ attitudes towards, and relationships with, ‘neighbouring migrants’, providing insight into a sustained period of class decomposition.

First, the chapter explores how a poor relationship between ‘neighbouring migrants’ and the labour movement has contributed to immigrants’ suspicion of class and class politics. The next section discusses the ways in which class is bound together with race (particularly ideas of whiteness) and national identity, and considers the consequences of their imbrication. In order to expand further on these ideas this section will also consider the role of the middle and upper classes in Argentina, and how they are not only intimately linked to ideas of whiteness, but crucially framed in opposition to a racialised ‘other’ (Garguín, 2007; Guano, 2004; Joseph, 2000): the ‘neighbouring migrant’. This section on intersectional class will tie in with discussions in Chapter 2 about class as a ‘historical formation’ (Camfield, 2004) which plays an important role far beyond simply the workplace. The chapter then engages with ideas of class composition, and how they can help clarify the political subjectivity of ‘neighbouring migrants’. This will be approached through a discussion of (predominantly Bolivian) workers in textile workshops, and the prominent

¹⁴¹ This list is of course far from complete and other identities and structures play important roles in shaping relationships. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, many of these were beyond the remit of this project, reflecting a practical tension in much intersectional research reflected in what Judith Butler calls the “embarrassed ‘etc.’” (1990: 143), a list of factors beyond the most obvious and apparent, that are often not able to be considered properly.

discourse of 'slave labour' which features a problematic conflation of political and technical composition. What is more, this section demonstrates how cultural traits and stereotypes (which themselves are often crude depictions of technical composition) are often portrayed in national terms.

6.1: Does class count?

We don't like to think in terms of class, we find it too old-fashioned [and] out of date. It reduces everything to a relationship with work, and it means people are only seen in those narrow and rigid terms. Thinking in terms of class is counterproductive (Manuela).

In one of my first interviews, Manuela from *Simbiosis Cultural* made her own, and the group's, attitudes towards class and class politics extremely clear. Throughout the fieldwork her concerns were echoed by many immigrants and migrant organisations, yet her statement remained the pithiest. This section explores this 'class suspicion', arguing that it is grounded in the combination of the traditional labour movement's animosity towards immigrants and its hegemonic position within the sphere of class politics. Migrant involvement in the labour movement is limited, contributing to some migrants' rejection of class's ability to reflect their lived experience meaningfully. However, as argued in Chapters 2 and 5, it is important to consider other areas of struggle grounded in the social (re)production and circulation of capital (see Dinerstein, 2013), and so migrants' struggles should not be detached from class entirely. Further, by engaging with these debates this section (and, more broadly, this chapter) is combatting the lack of dialogue between two key areas of research in Argentina: immigrations and social/labour movements.

Previous chapters discussed Argentina's labour movement, both past and present. Once strong, combative, and independent, after the rise of Peronism it became increasingly corporatist, and elements were co-opted by state and capital (see Levitsky, 2003a, 2003b).¹⁴² Despite some recent attempts among trade unions to organise along the lines of 'social movement unionism' (Serdar, 2014) and work with traditionally 'marginalised' groups such as sex workers (Hardy, 2010), these efforts remain on the fringes of a predominantly male

¹⁴² Though it is important to recognise the success the labour movement had in securing welfare and wages throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the heavy price paid by union members during the dirty war (Munck et al., 1987).

labour movement (Anner, 2011) that has its strengths in key industries such as oil (González and Medwid, 2009) and haulage (Delfino and Martin, 2012), as well as in the public sector (Lazar, 2012a, 2012b). Problematically for ‘neighbouring migrants’, these are almost entirely ‘formal’ sectors of the economy, from which they are largely excluded (see Chapter 4). However, the problems facing ‘neighbouring migrants’ in the trade union movement go far beyond issues relating simply to ‘informal’ employment.

Chapter 4 mentioned the anti-immigration sentiment of elements of the labour movement (see Grimson, 2006; Maciuceanu, 2004; Sana, 1999). This was supported in many interviews, as well as in observations and conversations at numerous trade union rallies. Marcos, a researcher and militant involved with *La Alameda* and its subsidiary Union of Textile workers¹⁴³, explained some of the tensions surrounding the mainstream unions and the textile industry:

The unions just do everything [sweatshop owners] say...the unions are complicit...Also a big issue is [in the unions], everyone talk[s] about ‘the Bolivians’... when they refer to sweatshop [workers]...it is very patronising. Unions generally don’t get involved with defending migrants...just...their own interests (Marcos).

The complicity of mainstream unions with sweatshop owners is well documented (e.g. Lieutier, 2009; Montero, 2011; Pascucci, 2011), and their self-interested nature is perhaps unsurprising. Nevertheless, the quotation expresses succinctly a number of issues that emerged throughout the research. Beyond the indirect exclusion mentioned above, even in an area dominated by migrant labour unionisation is difficult, and there is minimal immigrant involvement with the labour movement (see Betrisey, 2012). Further, the conflation of all sweatshop workers with ‘Bolivians’¹⁴⁴ emphasises how class position is often racially and nationally mediated, something returned to in this chapter.

Similar points regarding the relationship between immigrants and the labour movement were made by Sofia, a feminist political economist who researches Paraguayan domestic labour:

¹⁴³ The UTC union seeks to unionise ‘informal workers’ in sweatshops – the majority of whom are Bolivian – and through its explicit engagement with migrant labour is a rarity within the labour movement.

¹⁴⁴ The prevalence of this discourse has been noted elsewhere (Montero, 2014).

Within the unions there are not any special spaces for migrant workers. Normally migrants are organised as migrants, and in the context of their demands as migrants [these may] involve some labour demands, but there is not much dialogue between migrant organisations and trade unions. There are more links between migrant organisations and other social organisations.

The idea of ‘migrants [being] organised as migrants’ is important, supporting the idea that migrant activity is not typically viewed in class terms, instead engaging more with ‘social organisations’ than explicitly labour-focused groups (see Burchielli et al., 2014; Gavazzo and Halpern, 2012). As will be argued, national and ethnic cleavages play an extremely important role in migrants’ lives¹⁴⁵ (see Bastia, 2007, 2015), so much so that class can become overlooked, and migrant issues – even if they include labour demands – can become almost entirely separated from class politics. This is especially the case if, as Manuela says, class is understood narrowly as just linked to (predominantly ‘formal’) work, as is typically the case with the trade unions.

These issues with the trade unions are problematic, but are exacerbated by the increasingly hegemonic position traditional unions hold within the labour movement and the explicitly class-focused political landscape (Windpassinger, 2010). Chapter 5 documented the decline of class-focused MTDs, which were replaced by increasingly territorial movements (see Mason-Deese, 2012, 2013, forthcoming; Sitrin, 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014; Zibechi, 2012), and this has been concurrent with a period of union ‘revitalisation’ and ‘renewal’ (Cató and Ventrìci, 2011; Etchemendy and Collier, 2007; González and Medwid, 2009). While certain elements of this labour movement are seeking to deepen and broaden democratic control of the workplace (see e.g. Bursztyn, 2014; Kabat, 2011; Serdar, 2012), these are far from universal and mainstream. In fact, my research uncovered a much more pessimistic outlook than that reflected in much of the contemporary literature, with the bigger unions consolidating their powers, and a lack of faith among migrants in the unions’ ability to bring about meaningful change. A consequence of this conflation between the trade unions and ‘class politics’ was a suspicion towards class among ‘neighbouring migrants’ I spoke to: if an attachment to class entails that kind of politics, then alternatives were preferable.

¹⁴⁵ Chapter 7 will explore the ways in which territorial attachment and identities exacerbate these separations.

However, while this ‘neighbouring migrant’ scepticism towards class was marked, it was rooted in a problematically narrow interpretation of class. Dinerstein (2013, 2014b) has argued that since the *piqueteros*’ early struggles there has been a rise in an ‘autonomous labour subjectivity’, where class politics has diffused, frequently taking place outside traditional unions. Although this point should not be overplayed – especially given the MTDs’ move towards territorial organising – it does align with ideas of class developed in Chapter 2, which recognise social (re)production and the circulation of capital as sites of class struggle. Expanding these ideas, it is also important to understand class intersectionally. As we will see, for ‘neighbouring migrants’, national and ethnic identities may play a dominant role in solidarity/friction, but this does not mean class is entirely absent. Therefore, returning to Manuela’s quotation, while the labour movement’s dominant understanding of class may be too narrowly linked to work, and thus problematic for immigrants¹⁴⁶, this hegemony need not threaten class altogether. However, ultimately such a narrow approach to, and understanding of, class can lead to class decomposition owing to its failure to engage meaningfully with the impact of non-class identities on groups such as migrants. This has led to those groups’ issues with class. Instead, an appropriate class struggle analysis is attuned to the working class’s heterogeneity and how this affects relations within it. For these reasons, an intersectional understanding of class is vital, and can shed further light on why some groups are more, and others less, willing to view class as an important factor in determining relationships.

6.2: Class and intersectionality

This section makes a further case for an intersectional class struggle analysis. Class is always mediated and inflected by other identities: Chapter 4 demonstrated the ways in which the nation-building project and Peronism have led to an idea of class that is inseparable from ideas of race (particularly whiteness) and national identity respectively. This section expands on this, exploring how these intersections affect the everyday lives of ‘neighbouring migrants’. What is more, it considers how race and nation intertwine and perpetuate discrimination against ‘neighbouring migrants’. However, as Chapter 3 discussed, intersectional writing is as fraught with difficulties as intersectional research, and is

¹⁴⁶ Particularly given unions’ links with particular brands of Peronism which can further exclude immigrants (see Section 6.2.2).

therefore an imperfect and incomplete task (Butler, 1990; Valentine, 2007). In order to tease out certain linkages the section will have to separate discussion of class-and-race and class-and-national identity, but the manifold overlaps remain noticeable.

6.2.1: Class and race: the power of whiteness

The Argentine state desired white Europeans to populate the working class, believing they had a unique civilising capacity, as seen in Section 2.3.1 and Chapter 4. The process, however, did not always function as intended, but it certainly constructed a link between class and race, as *mestizxs* and indigenous groups were not deemed able to be part of a modern, civilised, capitalist (and therefore class) society (Taylor, 1997).¹⁴⁷ This relationship between whiteness and class is now most prevalent among the middle and upper classes (discussed in more depth in Section 6.2.3). However, the working class, or at least elements of it, are still racialised, although now through a (comparative) *lack* of whiteness. Contemporary poverty in Argentina has been described as having ‘Creole features’ (Torrado, 2002), and there is an extremely strong ‘ethno-national’ relationship with class position (Bastia and vom Hau, 2014; Lederman, 2013). This section will first explore how for many migrants racial discrimination has the biggest impact on their everyday life, and then argue that race plays an extremely important role in determining class solidarity/division.

During the research it became apparent that there is a qualitative difference between ‘lacking whiteness’ in something akin to a *mestizx* identity, and the ascription of an ‘indigenous’, typically Andean, racial category. With state attempts to promote (limited) inclusion and forms of multiculturalism (see Ko, 2013; Taylor, 2013), the former identity is far less in tension with Argentine working-class identity than the latter (e.g. Smith, 2013; cf. Ray, 2011). As one interviewee put it:

If you see a Paraguayan...walking down the street it could be an Argentine, but not with a Bolivian. Because it is much easier to spot...Bolivians...it makes it easy [for people] to be racist (Marcos).

Race therefore plays an extremely important role for ‘neighbouring migrants’, and such is the strength of this racism that, according to many of the migrants I spoke to, it was a far

¹⁴⁷ Similar processes took place in Peru, where there was a fetishisation of industrialisation predicated on the need for white labour (see Drinot, 2011)

more pressing issue than any discrimination they received on the basis of their class position. This can reinforce the concerns with class explored in the above section, and, for instance, was a major reason behind Manuela's objections.

However, racial discrimination affects specific groups of 'neighbouring migrants' differently. Responding to my question about the strength of xenophobia in Buenos Aires, another Bolivian migrant (and member of *Simbiosis Cultural*) spoke of the particular problems that Bolivians faced in predominantly racial terms:

It's not xenophobia...Xenophobia refers to discrimination against all immigrants. However the Colombians, the Spanish and everyone, don't suffer the same xenophobia. Really, it comes from us having a very particular skin colour, very beautiful [laughs], but it makes us different straight away. [With some people in the street] you don't know if they are Colombian or Uruguayan. But you see one of us...and you identify them as Bolivian. Why? Because of their skin colour, their stature, their features, their characteristics. However a lot of people fit into those characteristics, for example *Jujeños* [people from Jujuy], *Salteños* [people from Salta], Peruvians, Bolivians, some Ecuadorians too. So it's [discrimination] towards certain facial features (Luis).

Reinforcing Marcos's point, Luis's quotation emphasises the power of racial discrimination in determining attitudes towards migrants. Both quotations also allude to the fractures within the 'neighbouring migrant' category that were explored in Chapter 4, where Bolivians are seen as the archetypal 'neighbouring migrant', and Paraguayans are seen as more likely to assimilate into *porteño* society thanks to their perceived similarities to the more *mestizx* Argentine working classes (Chamosa, 2008; Telles and Flores, 2013). . However, these issues transcend nationality. Luis touches upon how people from Argentina (as well as Andean countries) with similar appearances to Bolivians can receive the same discrimination and stigma. This is reflected in the derogatory term '*bolita*', which is applied to the range of people who 'look Bolivian' in the way Luis describes, and is used across Argentine society (Caggiano et al., 2014; Pizarro, 2012b).¹⁴⁸ The assumption in the usage is that to be Bolivian (or a '*bolita*') is self-evidently inferior to being Argentine. Those Argentines who fail to map

¹⁴⁸ In my experience the term was fairly ubiquitous, and was used by middle and upper class *porteños* as well as trade union members. It was also one of the most consistently obvious reminders of the everyday racism and discrimination immigrants endure.

on to the desired/imagined national identity are therefore distanced discursively from it. This therefore not only helps to perpetuate the myth of a white nation (and thus the intersections between race and national identity), but reinforces racial discrimination.

A related point raised by several interviewees was that discrimination also applied to immigrants' children (as well as grandchildren, great-grandchildren, etc.), irrespective of their documentary status or nationality (see also Gavazzo, 2012a, 2012b, 2014; Grimson, 2000, 2003, 2006). As Juan, a Bolivian member of *La Alameda* put it:

Many of those who get called 'immigrants' are Argentines. They are children of Bolivians, but because they are dark skinned...for *porteños* they *are a* Bolivian. It is a very interesting change compared to previous waves of immigration [where] children of immigrants became fully assimilated Argentines. So unlike if you were the child of a Spaniard and an Argentine, [for Bolivian migrants] the stigma follows them for generations and generations and they are very, very separated from society. This is a very powerful process that is marked into the [colour of] skin, and classes people as inferior.

An almost identical point was made by Daniela, a white, Argentine academic whose work focuses on migration:

But these children and people are not 'illegal'. There are lots of rules that have to be followed, all sorts of documents...you need to...become an Argentine national. But there is always another barrier that has to be crossed to be considered as 'part of us', and that barrier is racial. It doesn't matter if they were born here. In many cases children of immigrants that are actually Argentine are still seen as foreigners [...while] the people who were children of European immigrants have become immediately Argentine without any questions because they are white. But it is now these same people who are children of Italian migrants who speak ill of Bolivian migrants, but don't see themselves as children of immigrants.

Despite their different social positions, both interviewees mention how again being dark skinned 'marks' you in Argentina and can preclude you from becoming Argentine, whatever your nationality.

Similarly, being 'legal' has to do much more with discourses surrounding race than with official documentation, something I had first-hand experience of. During the second trip in my fieldwork I overstayed my visa, and thus was in the country illegally. From then on I raised this point in a number of interviews and discussions in an attempt to provoke responses and challenge entrenched stereotypes. Typically the statement was met with derision; apparently someone as white and European as myself could never be an 'illegal immigrant'. When I insisted, people would typically claim that it was a mere technicality, and I wasn't the 'proper' or 'real' kind of 'illegal immigrant'. My whiteness and nationality/continentality brought with them an assumed class position incompatible with being an 'illegal immigrant', a category typically seen as synonymous with 'neighbouring migrant', irrespective of the person's actual status or nationality. Similarly, an experience shared by almost all of the white, European and North-American immigrants I spoke with was that they were never viewed as immigrants at all. As Daniela put it:

The fact is that an upper class immigrant is not even an immigrant. That is, immigrants in general are seen to be related to work – the immigrant has been conceptualised as a worker.¹⁴⁹ So for example a Peruvian who owns a business would not be seen as an immigrant.

Class, race – in particular whiteness – and national identity are therefore intertwined. Whiteness affords migrants a higher social status, and they are often able to be incorporated into the nation. Whereas for those migrants racialised as non-white, the opposite is true. Further, Daniela's quotation also makes interesting points about the relationality and mutability of whiteness, as discussed in Chapter 2. She claims that it is almost possible to 'buy' whiteness through superior class position (not simply the other way round, as has been discussed above: see Wade, 2010), and therefore the relationships between class and race can be mutually reinforcing (Levine-Rasky, 2011; cf. Brahinsky, 2014).

However, the ability to 'buy' whiteness is not absolute, something another member of *La Alameda* (this time Argentine) spoke about:

¹⁴⁹ This was echoed in a discussion with a professor of migration, whose perspective on this matter hinged on seeing "high class" migration as "mobility", whereas for the lower classes movement across borders was immigration.

[Of course] class affects the situation of immigrants – a first world immigrant is not the same as [one] from a neighbouring country. But, importantly, it is a matter of class *and* race...a rich Bolivian could come [to Buenos Aires], but because of how they look they will be discriminated against. Same with the people from *Salta* (Laura).

Further, combined with two earlier quotations from Daniela and Marcos, Laura's words support the idea of a 'pigmentocracy' that was discussed in Chapter 2 (Chasteen, 2001; Telles, 2014). So while some Paraguayans can supposedly pass as (admittedly *mestizx*, working-class) Argentines, and affluent Peruvians are not necessarily seen as 'immigrants'; according to Laura similar 'privileges' are not afforded to Bolivians.¹⁵⁰ The idea that a rich Bolivian immigrant would still receive high levels of discrimination due to the way they look and have been racialised was not exclusive to Laura, and similar points were made by all the Bolivian migrants I spoke to – admittedly none of these were rich. Not only does this once more emphasise the idea of Bolivians being the archetypal 'neighbouring migrant', but as Section 6.3.2 argues, such is the strength of the racialisation of Bolivian migrants, and the associated lack of social status, it can contribute to a problematic obfuscation of class divides *within* the Bolivian community.

Class and race, it has been argued, have been inextricably linked since the birth of the modern Argentine nation-state. However, the situation is further complicated by the links between class and nation, which will be touched upon in the next section, and in particular the Peronist idea of the 'national popular' further complicates attitudes toward 'neighbouring migrants' class position.

6.2.2: Class and national identity: Peronism and the national popular

This section expands on the previous, and examines ways in which the links between class and nation have important consequences for 'neighbouring migrants'. It focuses on contestations over Peronism, particularly the disconnection between the different discourses of the labour movement and the government, arguing that the labour

¹⁵⁰ Other migrant groups also receive similar levels of discrimination, if not more. For instance, a friend who had met the Cameroonian ambassador to Argentina told me about the daily problems the official faced in convincing people that he was not a street vendor. This reinforces the points about a lack of whiteness precluding not only certain class positions, but also (re)producing the problematic conflation between certain types of work and particular cultures and nationalities (see Anderson, 2014), something that is discussed in Section 6.3.

movement's attachment to a specific brand of Peronism further alienates 'neighbouring migrants'. While the focus of this particular section is the links between class and national identity in Argentina specifically, the section will also lay the foundations for arguments that will be taken up later in the chapter, about the strength of stereotypes based on identities ascribed to other nations, how these are themselves based on the intersections of class and race, and the way in which the stereotypes affect 'neighbouring migrants'.

Peronism is a diffuse phenomenon. Its lack of clear definition was repeatedly mentioned throughout the research as a great source of frustration – for those both within and outside of the Peronist movement. As one union member pithily put it, "Peronism is everything and nothing." Despite (or arguably because of) its vagueness Peronism retains an extremely prominent role in political activity and discourse (Moreira and Barbosa, 2011). Its domination of the political terrain is such that for many it creates an inescapable binary, something that is particularly problematic for the non-Peronist left, such as a number of territorial, neighbourhood movements. A member of the MTD *La Matanza* explained to me that the links between Peronism and the working class are so strong that it is almost impossible to position yourself successfully outside of the Peronist/anti-Peronist dichotomy, and that attempts to do so limit meaningful engagement with much of a working class imbricated so heavily with the history of Peronism. Accordingly, I was told by a number of people that many groups position themselves as having vague links with Peronism to avoid the alienation of large populations, consequently contributing to Peronism's increasingly amorphous nature (see Castoriana, 2012; Monteagudo, 2006).

Crucially, though, almost irrespective of what Peronism actually *means*, it has an enduring power. Most pertinent here is the way in which, as already noted, it drew explicit and irreducible connections between the nation and workers (McGuire, 1997: 76). Class and nation were therefore intertwined, but in such a way that the actual class divide – between capital and labour – was obfuscated. The category 'worker' was in one sense broadened, but in another narrowed through the exclusion of non-nationals¹⁵¹, something that a number of interviewees brought up. I was told that because of their national connotations, discourses of 'the worker' and 'the working class' were often quite narrow. This was said to be most

¹⁵¹ Not to overlook the connections between Peronism and machismo which can exclude non-men (see Seveso, 2011).

common within the labour movement, and something that masked the types of discrimination and xenophobia alluded to earlier. Union leaders were therefore able to invoke seemingly progressive ideas of ‘the worker’, without being in tension with the often anti-‘neighbouring migrant’ stances of the members. However, the breadth of interpretations of Peronism has serious consequences, as conflicting stances are traced back to a singular (yet nebulous) ideology.

Over time Peronism has fractured, leading to multiple sub-ideologies that run much of the political gamut, each typically presented by its proponents as *the one true Peronism* (Fodor, 1989; Mackinnon, 2002; Munck et al., 1987; Szusterman, 1989). The full ramifications and peculiarities of these splits are not this thesis’s focus, but an important theme is the disconnection between the contemporary, state-led ‘*Kirchnerismo*’ (Aytaç and Öni, 2014; Moreira and Barbosa, 2011), and the Peronism adopted by much of the labour movement. The former adopts an ‘open’ approach, emphasising the importance of regional integration and cooperation (Wylde, 2010b, 2012), while the latter typically remains more ‘closed’ in its national and popular brand of class politics (Delfino and Martin, 2012). Nevertheless, this disconnection is important as *Kirchnerismo* remains explicitly grounded in ideas of Peronism – the idea that Cristina and Nestor Kirchner are/were the modern-day Juan and Eva Perón is promoted by the current government (see Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1: Government sponsored banner on a café in central Buenos Aires.

Source: Author

Daniel, a UNICEF researcher, alluded to the breadth of Peronism, the way in which *Kirchnerismo* departs from it, and how this relates to migration:

Peronism is many things and hard [to define]...There is a more traditional Peronism – typically in the labour movement – [that] is nationalist and can cause problems [for migrants]. *Kirchnerismo*...is not without a nationalist tinge, but it has been very open to migration issues. In recent years [it has tried to] facilitate migration. I think it has been quite open, and has led to many links with *MERCOSUR* and *UNASUR*¹⁵²...The problem is that it can be quite rhetorical, but...there have been some changes.

Other interviewees echoed these sentiments, drawing repeated distinctions between the ‘open’ and ‘progressive’ *Kirchnerismo* supposedly compatible with contemporary migration patterns¹⁵³, and the ‘traditional’, ‘closed’, ‘backward’, and ‘top-down’ Peronism of the labour movement – thus supporting the secondary literature cited earlier. Therefore, according to many of the left-wing Argentines I spoke with, *Kirchnerismo*’s regionalist rhetoric and imagery, while undoubtedly still national and popular, was not typically felt to exclude immigrants. Even Elena from the MTD *La Matanza*, herself usually very critical of *Kirchnerismo*, said:

It is interesting as I know a lot of...Bolivians [and] Paraguayans, [who] go to marches that are fairly national and popular. [A lot of them] will say that they came to Argentina to get good healthcare, and things like that. So I guess they buy into some of the imagery [of *Kirchnerismo*]...even though they are not Argentine.

However, while a number of immigrants I spoke with confirmed they often attended such pro-*Kirchner* demonstrations and events, and also drew the links between beneficial changes in migration laws and progressive *Kirchnerismo* that Elena touched upon, the comments need interrogating. Some immigrants told me their attendance had been ‘bought’ in order to make up numbers – suggesting that clientelism remains strong among the working class and those living in the *villas* and the *conurbano* (Auyero, 2001; Bastia, 2015). Similarly, there is also a big difference between attendance at a march – whatever the

¹⁵² UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) comprises the MERCOSUR and CAN (The Andean Community – Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru) blocs.

¹⁵³ One academic I interviewed cited Peronism’s association with the *cabecitas negras* as proof that immigrants from neighbouring countries associated with the ideology, at once emphasising the importance of race and the ‘neighbouring migrant’.

motivations – and active support of and involvement with a political group/ideology. Further, building upon points made in Section 6.2.1, the amount that different ‘neighbouring migrants’ can engage with these movements varies. Bolivian migrants in particular faced real difficulties when trying to engage with these types of political activities as they consistently received more discrimination. As discussed earlier, Bolivians (and Andean migrants more generally) often suffer discrimination beyond that which Paraguayans face, as they find it harder to pass as ‘Argentines’ (and in particular *porteños*). This was something confirmed to me by a number of Bolivian immigrants I spoke to, saying that they were frequently marginalised during demonstrations, and often suffered abuse and discrimination from their supposed ‘comrades’ – all things I repeatedly observed myself at a range of events, including one leader from a Peronist group telling a number of Bolivian protestors to ‘Fuck off back to La Paz’ on International Workers’ Day. Accordingly, while Bolivian migrants of course have multiple, intersectional identities, these often become reduced to a mutually imbricating combination of national identity and race, which can exclude them from a position in the Peronist working class (see Dodaro and Vázquez, 2012; Vázquez, 2011).

These points also support Daniel’s claim that the shift to a more outward-looking, progressive Peronism/*Kirchnerismo* is at times “rhetorical”, and has not always been manifested in action. Nor, as Luis from *Simbiosis Cultural* claims, has this supposed shift reflected the desires of all Argentines or Peronists:

All the stuff Cristina [talks about] is framed in terms of...a united Latin America, right? “Progressive” governments, in inverted commas, all focus on this...union. That is quite interesting, but underneath [are] complexities and problems. Many...things and policies have moved forwards. There are advances, but these are not always wanted or demanded by all the people. There is a big difference between the government’s laws and talk, and the reality.

This returns to the disconnection mentioned earlier, and, while acknowledging certain strides forward, touches upon problems immigrants face with much of the Peronist base in the labour movement – expanding upon issues discussed in the earlier section. In many ways this gap between the Peronist state and base is similar to the limited success of the government’s promotion of multiculturalism, diversity, and inclusion among the broader population (discussed in Chapter 4 and Section 6.2.1). As has been argued, immigrants’

involvement with the labour movement is limited for a number of reasons, and this is exacerbated by the movement's attachment to Peronism, something mentioned by Marcos, a researcher and militant with *La Alameda*, who has worked extensively with both immigrants and trade unions:

The problem with Peronism for migrants is that it is really difficult to understand [laughs]. There isn't really a definition for Peronism. It is supposedly national and popular, right? That's the discourse. I wouldn't say that Peronism explicitly aims at rejecting migrants' participation, but I wouldn't say that it really appeals to migrants either [...and it] keeps a lot of migrants from getting involved with politics and the trade unions.

Beyond the stories I heard of direct antagonism towards immigrants from neighbouring countries, Marcos's contention that Peronism further alienated immigrants was supported by other interviewees and respondents – even immigrants with their own extensive histories of trade unionism distanced themselves from the Peronism they encountered in the labour movement. Another point in Marcos's quotation reiterates ideas developed in Section 6.1, that the labour movement hegemonises (class) politics: Peronism is seen to limit immigrants' involvement with the trade unions, as well as 'politics' more broadly.

This section has argued that, due to the strength of Peronism, ideas of class in Argentina are inextricably linked with nationalism and national identity. While the more open, inclusive, and regionalist approach of *Kirchnerismo* may have a level of appeal and relevance to immigrants from neighbouring countries, attitudes in the labour movement have not always reflected this ideological shift. Given, as has already been argued, the labour movement's hegemonic position within the sphere of class politics, this attachment to more traditional Peronism contributes to further scepticism among immigrants from neighbouring countries about the relevance/importance of class – something admittedly felt unevenly across different immigrant groups, and their relative (in)ability to engage with Peronist politics due to their levels of racialisation. These issues are therefore contributing to class decomposition, as potential solidarity bound up in shared class position is being overlaid by a nationally (and at times racially) inflected construction of class. These linkages reiterate the importance of an intersectional class analysis that recognises the way in which class intersects with nationality and national identity (as well as race).

6.2.3: *The middle classes and porteñidad*¹⁵⁴

This section provides a counterpoint to the above discussions by focusing on the *porteño* middle/upper classes instead of on 'neighbouring migrants'. However, before continuing it is necessary to clarify the use of 'middle class'. Instead of a specific social class position/location (e.g. Savage et al., 2013), I am using it to refer to a shared yet heterogeneous subjectivity that includes both the working and the ruling classes. This definition allows the term to be both a "social 'norm'...and a descriptive analytical tool" to reflect upon the nature of particular class compositions and their striations (De Angelis, 2010: 960). The concept therefore adopts different meanings in different locations, and thus needs to be situated.

Chapters 4 and 5 explored the historic strength and importance of the Argentine middle classes through the 19th and 20th centuries – something particularly noticeable in contrast to other Latin American countries at the time (Brown, 2010; Lewis, 2003; cf. Cardoso and Faletto, 1979; Drinot, 2011) – and the way in which they were predominantly focused in certain parts of Buenos Aires (Scobie, 1974; Wilson, 2000). Further, it has been argued that central to the construction of this strong middle/upper class identity were ideas of whiteness, Europeaness, and the othering of the supposedly 'barbaric' (racialised) lower classes (Garguín, 2007; Guano, 2002, 2003a, 2004; Joseph, 2000) – as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the two have a dialectical relationship of 'inverted alterity' (Laborde, 2011), the spatialities of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

However, following the 2001 economic crisis, newly impoverished members of the middle classes made up elements of the 'new urban poor' (Levey et al., 2014; Ozarow, 2013, 2014) and became involved in forms of political activity previously alien to them (North and Huber, 2004; cf. Colectivo Situaciones, 2002). But since the crisis they have benefited most from the subsequent 'recovery' (de Souza, 2009a; Levitsky and Murillo, 2008; Wylde, 2011), and in the last decade their numbers have supposedly grown by over 50%, and now make up between 40% and 53% of the total population (Cárdenas et al., 2011; Ferreira et al., 2012).¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Ideas put forward in this section will be explored further in Chapter 7, which focuses on the way in which middle-class identities are becoming de-racialised and de-classed through the construction and increasing power of the territorial subjectivity of the term '*vecino*' (neighbour).

¹⁵⁵ Questions have been raised about the validity of these statistics as well as the definitions the study employed, but the fact that the middle classes are growing once more is accepted. It is also worth noting that

So the middle classes are back, and in very real senses ‘matter’ in the governing and shaping of contemporary Buenos Aires (Kanai, 2010).¹⁵⁶ But many of them are also angry at what they perceive to be growing insecurity and crime, problems with the economy (rising inflation and their inability to buy dollars), and the corruption of the Kirchner administration.¹⁵⁷ As a result, throughout my fieldwork there were three *cacerolazo* protests (increasing in size) which not only manifested this middle-class discontent (see Piva, 2014; Telechea, 2014), but also perfectly crystallised the intersections between class, race, and national identity that have such an influence on attitudes towards ‘neighbouring migrants’.

The first of the *cacerolazos* took place on 13 September, 2012, the day after I arrived in Buenos Aires, and was called as a protest against Cristina Kirchner’s economic policies and alleged corruption. Estimates placed numbers between 10,000 and 200,000, depending on the news network’s affiliation, but this ‘Anti-K’ protest was attended predominantly by the middle and upper classes from the northern parts of CABA.¹⁵⁸ The demonstration was awash with nationalistic imagery and colours, and the majority of the chants revolved around the idea that Cristina needed to “return our country”. However, a large number of the crowd engaged in aggressive, racist, and misogynistic chants – an adapted football chant went down extremely well with the crowd in *Plaza de Mayo*, the vast majority of whom cheerily bounced the night away to “he [sic] who doesn’t jump is either black or ‘K’ (pro-Kirchner)”. The incredible efficiency of this multiple discrimination was found in other classic chants such as: “go ahead and die bitch, go ahead and die”, “bitch, thug, *montonera*¹⁵⁹”, and “fuck off to Cuba, but let us buy dollars”. The expropriation of previously radical sayings was both noticeable and bizarre, with cries of “*que se vaya*¹⁶⁰” and “we are the 46%¹⁶¹” commonplace. Talking to protesters during and after the event I was frequently told that Cristina was

in the same period the *villas* have grown by over 55% (UTPMP, 2011), demonstrating a worrying trend and/or questionable statistics.

¹⁵⁶ Something that will be explored in Chapters 7 and 8.

¹⁵⁷ Although a significant proportion of the middle class is pro-Kirchner.

¹⁵⁸ During this protest an extremely affluent looking, white, middle-aged woman had a sign saying “In *Barrio Norte* (an informal name given to some of the richest parts of CABA) we are also hungry.” This led to widespread derision from the left-wing and pro-Kirchner media, who claimed it proved the protests only involved the super-rich. It does, however, reinforce the way in which class, race, and space/territory are so intertwined in CABA, which is the focus of Chapter 7.

¹⁵⁹ A follower of a militant form of Peronism.

¹⁶⁰ This is an adaption of the phrase “*que se vayan todos*” (out with them all – in reference to the political classes) that has come to define the *Argentinazo*. Tellingly, during this protest it was used in the singular, referring solely to Kirchner, therefore losing almost all its original meaning and power.

¹⁶¹ In reference to the proportion of the non-K vote in the 2011 general election.

“worse than Hitler”, and several people claimed that the current situation was far worse than the dictatorship because, as one put it, “at least then we could buy dollars”. While such opinions (or at least their open and unguarded vocalisation) were of course to the extreme end of those involved, the worry about dollars and the country becoming Cuba or Venezuela was ubiquitous and palpable.

The protest was neither huge (at least in comparison to the following two) nor diverse, but it certainly reinvigorated elements of the middle classes. Despite its smallish size (the claims of 200,000 appeared only in the most anti-K media outlets) the protest gained a disproportionate amount of extremely polarised media coverage, which either lauded it as the most important thing to happen politically in years, or mocked and belittled all of those involved (de Dios Pantano, 2013). María, a migration lawyer and researcher, touched upon this:

Certain newspapers made it a bigger event than it was; it was still only a smallish part of society. Although enough people are bothered by the fact that they can't access dollars [and] their money is not all secure, it was definitely blown up by the Kirchner-hating media...But lots of people were discussing it, so on Facebook there were photographs, saying “look these are the kind of people on the *cacerolazo*”, rich old women with lots of plastic surgery, carrying a poodle. There is one very famous photograph...of a woman...in the street, *cacerolazoing* with her housemaid banging the pan for her [*laughs*]...Things like that are pounced upon by the other side...who [try to] completely discredit it...by saying “it is all ridiculous, they are all really rich...”, while the other side says “this is an authoritarian state because we can't access dollars...we are becoming Cuba or Venezuela” [*laughs*].

The second protest was organised predominantly through social media, and was known as #8N as it took place on 8 November. While larger than the previous demonstration (between 135,000 and 800,000)¹⁶², the crowd was still almost exclusively the white middle/upper classes (Gómez, 2014). In fact, Figure 6.2 shows the only non-white people I saw involved with the demonstration at all. However, they had been hired to perform for the pleasure and amusement of the protesters, as well as to sell the #8N merchandise they

¹⁶² There were also solidarity protests across the country, and outside a number of Argentine embassies worldwide.

can be seen wearing. Once the protest started their presence was no longer deemed necessary/desirable and they left, thus not compromising the whiteness of the demonstration. Such exoticisation (Lacarrieu, 2002) and reduction of immigrant cultures to non-threatening, consumable commodities (Hale, 2002) contributes to the repeated racialisation and marginalisation of ‘neighbouring migrants’ (Aguiló, 2014), as well as demonstrating the potential to construct a multicultural, yet predominantly ‘white’ nation (Ko, 2013).¹⁶³

More than at the previous demonstration discourses of insecurity and fear were prominent, but these were frequently linked back to the state of the economy. Common chants, songs, and placards included phrases such as “we are no longer scared” and “insecurity is a reality, not a sensation”. A protestor I spoke to claimed that it was only on “nights like this with other people like this” that he “felt safe in his own city”. One group handing out xenophobic flyers was given a platform on the main stage, where they claimed that beyond the insecurity caused by inflation and the lack of dollars, the real problem was the “parasitic migrants” that were “ruining the country” and making “decent people” scared to leave their homes. The crowd cheered.

¹⁶³ These ideas are expanded upon in Section 7.1.2.



Figure 6.2: Street performers in central Buenos Aires during #8N. *Source:* Author.



Figure 6.3: Banner from #8N. *Source:* Author.



Figure 6.4: Pots being banged on #8N. *Source:* Author.

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 (above) also demonstrate (among other things) a key concern of many of the protestors: press freedom. These protests took place as the Kirchner administration was attempting to break up the *Clarín* group's hegemony over Argentine print, television, and radio media. For many, particularly those opposed to the government, this was seen as proof of their/her dictatorial nature and corruption. Figure 6.3 shows a banner that demanded liberty, as well as telling 'Kristina' they have had "enough of the deaths", claiming that "today they go for *Clarín*, tomorrow for you", and that they should "govern not rule". Further, both photographs highlight the white and seemingly affluent nature of the crowd. It was these people who were speaking for 'their' country, and a huge amount of national imagery is visible in the photographs, once more strengthening the intersections between class, race (particularly whiteness), and the imagination of the nation/city, which excludes 'neighbouring migrants'. This is exemplified in the figure on the banner in Figure 6.3 depicting a white, pot-banging Argentine as some sort of heroic saviour.

The final protest, #18A (18 April, 2013), was considerably bigger again. It was consistently estimated by a number of sources that over two million people took to the streets of Buenos Aires, and there were once more protests throughout the country and the

world. However, what truly distinguished #18A from the previous two was the involvement of civil society organisations, neighbourhood groups, and even movements such as *La Alameda*.¹⁶⁴ But despite this shift it is important not to overlook the fact that the protest remained predominantly white and middle class, and the coming together of different groups was at best an uncomfortable, temporary, and strategic alliance. Many of the same banners and chants remained dominant, those with access to the speaking platform put forward the same ideas and discourses, and I was greeted by the sight of a whole group of people banging champagne bottles full of coins instead of pots and pans. Once more the protests strongly reinforced the connection between whiteness and the middle-class *porteño* identity, something protestors felt was being fundamentally challenged by a racialised ‘neighbouring migrant’ other, whose presence was supposedly encouraged by the national government’s policies.

Despite the scale of the protests, many people I spoke to questioned their strength and importance, variously describing them as vague, incoherent, niche, self-interested, and without popular backing outside the anti-Kirchner middle and upper classes. Much of this may be the case, and the shrilly-polarised nature of the reporting helped blow protests out of proportion, but it remains the case that a series of predominantly middle-class protests led to the largest-ever demonstration against the current government, and mobilised huge numbers in many different countries: the middle classes still matter in Buenos Aires. As demonstrated by the repeated references to the reclamation of ‘our country’ (among both protestors and the media), the protests also played an important role in (re)producing the links between whiteness, class position, and *porteñidad* – as well the Argentine national identity more generally, given their (inter)national reach. This emphasised that these identities are not confined to the past, and once more questions the success of government discourses of diversity and multiculturalism. Consequently, the *cacerolazos* and their coverage contributed to the marginalisation of ‘neighbouring migrants’.

¹⁶⁴ Although their attendance did cause significant internal debate and tension, many members expressing unhappiness at being associated with such types of protests. Nevertheless, it did gain them considerable press coverage, made their struggle seem more ‘legitimate’ (they were seen as ‘in place’), and it enabled them to build links with a number of more middle-class neighbourhood movements from *barrios* such as *Recoleta*. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

This section has argued for the importance of an intersectional class analysis. Race, class, and national identity combine in a complex and mutually-reinforcing hierarchy that shapes attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants'. While class is never just about class, and is inevitably shaped by and lived through national identity and race (as well as other identities and structures), the specificities of the Argentine case make this especially problematic for immigrants. Further, by adopting a brand of Peronism that fails to appreciate the differences and nuances within the working class, the labour movement and its hegemony have contributed to a lack of immigrant involvement in 'class politics', ultimately contributing to class decomposition. Instead, migrants organise separately as migrants (if at all), and understandably view racial discrimination as most significant. However, given the intersections explored above, this discrimination can never be decoupled fully from class, and often becomes framed in national terms. This is all in the face of a growing articulation of a white, middle-class *porteño* identity which is making strong claims to the nation itself. The next section will turn to the way in which a class composition analysis can help unpack some of the persistent stereotypes attached to 'neighbouring migrants' which, it is argued, are a contributing factor to this class decomposition.

6.3: Class composition and stereotypes

This section focuses on the causes and effects of the pervasive stereotypes applied to 'neighbouring migrants', stereotypes, the employment of which I witnessed throughout the research. While aspects of these stereotypes are grounded in supposedly cultural traits (see Gavazzo and Halpern, 2012; Grimson, 2006; Rivas and Cartechini, 2008), it is argued that the nature of different immigrant groups' employment also plays an extremely important role. Crucially, such ascription comes from a crude class reductionism which engages only with the technical composition of migrant communities, and in so doing almost denies the existence of their political composition. What is more, these stereotypes again reflect the way in which ideas of race and nation are intertwined, typically in such a way that the latter bounds the former. To expand upon and better contextualise the arguments in this section, there is a particular focus on Bolivian labour in the textile industry and in the debate over the discourse of 'slave labour'. This played out particularly strongly through interviews, observations, and discussions, and neatly encapsulates the power of the stereotypes that 'neighbouring migrants' face – as well as the ways in which they can attempt to challenge

them. The discussion will also demonstrate the importance of placing proper emphasis on class within intersectional analyses, and how insufficient focus is often placed on class dynamics *within* migrant communities. The section will conclude by arguing that proper intersectional analysis of both technical and (potential) political composition is vital in attempts to build unity and solidarity.

6.3.1: The role of migrant types

Argentines commonly mention national stereotypes. They base them on the very fixed idea of putting everyone in boxes – where they are from, what people look like, what people do (María).

Upon arriving in Buenos Aires I realised I would have no problem in hearing various attitudes towards migrants. While it later emerged that access to ‘neighbouring migrants’ and social movements would be much harder than initially hoped (see Chapter 3), I was never short of *porteño* opinions. Particularly notable was not only the ubiquity of stereotypes about migrant types, but also the way the holders of these views came from a vast range of social backgrounds. For instance, on the flight over and in the taxi from the airport I heard two identical stories: there are three ‘main types’ of immigrants in Buenos Aires – Bolivians, Peruvians, and Paraguayans. Peruvians are all criminals, Paraguayans all work in construction and steal jobs, and while there are too many Bolivians they are very hard workers, something most *porteños* could learn from. These particular perspectives came from a (self-defining) white, middle-class, businessman who lived in a gated community to the north of the city¹⁶⁵, and a proudly working-class taxi driver from the *conurbano* to the south¹⁶⁶, but almost identical claims permeated the rest of the research. Most obviously, the root of these stereotypes comes from the particular employment niches that different immigrant groups predominantly inhabit (these were discussed in detail in Section 4.5). However, as will be argued, the conflation is unhelpfully absolute, and can serve to reinforce damaging discourses and attitudes, but their linkages to employment highlights how class plays a role in their creation.

Across a number of ‘elite’ interviews I reflected upon the prevalence of these

¹⁶⁵ He was also desperate to assure me that his ‘blood was in Italy’, and that he identified more as a European than either an Argentine or a Latin American.

¹⁶⁶ He also quickly told me his ‘blood was in Spain’, and that he would one day return.

stereotypes, asking about their emergence and perpetuation. The following quotations (from a UNICEF researcher and a migration lawyer/academic respectively) emphasise the historical nature of these employment niches, as well as the way in which immigrants are often defined in terms of their precarity and relationship to the 'informal' economy:

There has always been some kind of specialisation [and] 'employment niches'...The negatives come with greater access to informal activities. And that's where the big problem is, because the insertion in the precarious informal [sector] is to do with the wage relation. For example, a person who works in construction and has a poor contract or a person who is 'autonomous' and not taxed, they are perceived as not contributing to social benefits and social security (Daniel).

Discrimination towards [immigrants is] in terms of the labour market and access to certain working conditions. Only certain migrants have such a strong presence in the 'classic workspace', as they are usually involved with precarious work (Lucas).

The role of precarious and informal work is important here, as traditionally the influence of Peronism has placed great importance on finding dignity through labour (Elena, 2011). The importance of 'the worker' and not just 'the citizen' can even be seen in radical groups such as the *piqueteros*, the MTDs, and the occupied factory movement, who often maintained a discourse of reclaiming dignified work (see Bryer, 2012; Dinerstein, 2014a). Many immigrants' 'informal' and precarious jobs create a tension with this ideal, and can thus shape attitudes towards them. As demonstrated, 'the worker' is itself already a nationally inflected category, but immigrants also face extra discrimination. With Paraguayans, for instance, the fact that many men are employed in the construction industry, but typically in an undocumented or 'autonomous' capacity, is sufficient for a stereotype to be universalised. Paraguayan men are therefore 'guilty of stealing Argentine jobs', and directly linked to the wide-ranging economic problems facing the country. Bolivian and Peruvian workers, on the other hand, may not be 'stealing jobs', but instead are employed in occupations that (middle class) Argentines would rather not carry out themselves. However, because of this they tend not to be classed as 'dignified', and thus are once more excluded.

What is more, these stereotypes become self-fulfilling. Immigrants' employment niches are increasingly distinct (OIM, 2012a, 2012b; OIT, 2011), driven by the strengthening of migration networks (e.g. Bastia, 2007), the rise of the 'professional migration industry'

(Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sorensen, 2013; Montero, 2011, 2012), and the ghettoised nature of much immigrant life (discussed in Chapter 7). The more immigrants are employed in specific areas, the stronger the links between migrant groups and particular jobs become. That is, types of work are seen as having characteristics such that only certain migrant groups are able to carry them out properly. While this is particularly noticeable in the case of Bolivian migrants and the textile industry (e.g. Montero, 2014), the same thing happens with other immigrants from neighbouring countries, for example Paraguayan women carrying out domestic and sex work:

Lots of women come from Paraguay for domestic work, and also in brothels. They are the most important victims – the majority of the victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation. They are the most important victims because they are ‘white’, do you see how it works? They are supposedly the most attractive to Argentine people (Marcos).

Supporting points made above, the quotation also touches upon the way certain jobs and stereotypes also have racial connotations, not simply associations with class and nationality. Similar processes can be witnessed with the stereotypes associated with immigrants from Korea, Japan, China, and Taiwan, many of whom run supermarkets known colloquially as ‘*Chinos*’ – a name which itself emphasises a level of supposed racial and national interchangeability. The employment patterns of these migrants become normalised, as does the discrimination associated with them (Betrisey, 2012; Kim, 2010; Ko, 2013; Trejos and Chiang, 2012). Class and nationality combine in such a way that the important Peronist idea of dignified work is often in tension with niches of immigrant labour. Further, these stereotypes can also invoke racial and cultural tropes, perpetuating the social position of ‘neighbouring migrants’ in the ways discussed across Section 6.2.

Immigrants’ role in the wage-relation (their class position) therefore plays a determinant role in shaping attitudes towards them. However, these stereotypes themselves reflect problematic approaches to class. For instance, the conflation between dignified and ‘formal’ labour is problematic. Not only does it inscribe hierarchies within the working class, but it also fetishises types of work that, while perhaps ‘formalised’, need not

necessarily be dignified in any sense (Neilson and Rossiter, 2008; Seymour, 2012).¹⁶⁷ While there have been attempts to challenge this binary through a reclamation of 'dignity' through the MTDs and territorial movements, as well as broader attempts to decommodify the (re)production and exchange of capital (see De Angelis, 2007; Lavaca 2007; Sitrin, 2012; Zibechi, 2012), the extent to which these initiatives have resonated with the broader population is debatable. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 2, it is important to understand class and class analysis beyond the narrow confines of the (formalised) workplace (e.g. Barnes, 2013). Such an understanding can also shed light on the stereotypes discussed above. One of the reasons that the stereotypes seem so reductive in their understanding of class is that they only consider the technical composition of the respective migrant groups. In fact, such precedence is given to this aspect of the class relation that the political composition is overlooked entirely. While the technical composition plays an extremely important role, it tells only part of the story, and such a narrow understanding can then overlook the multiple forms of resistance that go on within the groups. The invocation of the stereotypes that I repeatedly witnessed reduced immigrants to little more than the nature of their work, and their class position was seen as a category extremely pertinent to their identity. Problematically, reducing stereotypes to technical composition is very powerful in the way it effectively deracialises (among other things). As stated, the construction of the characteristics applied to employment niches often went beyond a simply contingent relationship between migrant groups and that form of work, invoking a further set of racial and cultural stereotypes bound up within a national understanding. Once this stereotype takes hold, recourse to the description of the technical composition of migrants is the crucial factor. Not only is this a narrow (mis)representation of class, but it can also perpetuate other forms of discrimination: class and race remake each other in Argentina (Aguiló, 2014). However, the fact that even the technical composition of class cannot be decoupled from other factors such as race and national identity (and the cultural elements that are ascribed to these) once more emphasises the importance of intersectional analyses, and the way in which they can begin to denaturalise some of these stereotypes.

¹⁶⁷ It can also exclude domestic labour, once more overlooking the importance of social (re)production and highlights the gendered nature of Peronism.

The strength of the stereotypes was such that the nationalities to which they were ascribed became a strong and seemingly fixed characteristic (albeit one constructed through the processes described above). A consequence of this strength is the way in which it homogenises migrant groups, obfuscating class differences within communities. The next section focuses on this, exploring how certain migrant leaders perpetuate aspects of these stereotypes in order to further, among other things, economic interests. In these situations the denial of class differentials has significant consequences, and therefore emphasises an argument made in Chapter 2: the importance of not reducing class to an 'identity' within intersectional analyses, instead maintaining its unique role in the perpetuation of capitalism.¹⁶⁸

6.3.2: Stereotypes and class differences within migrant groups

Earlier sections discussed how race and nationality can combine in such a way that they can seemingly override immigrants' class position. On many occasions I was told by 'neighbouring migrants' that no amount of money could buy them the whiteness needed to gain social status. The strength of this racialisation has the consequence of portraying migrant collectives as homogeneous, something exacerbated by the *external* stereotypes mentioned above. However, it also became apparent that at times these stereotypes were also promoted from *within* migrant collectives. There are very obvious and sensible reasons for the promotion of ideas of solidarity within immigrant groups. The level of discrimination that faces many 'neighbouring migrants' is such that there really is a form of safety in numbers, and, especially for more recent migrants, such ghettoisation can ameliorate cultural and linguistic shocks (Bermudes, 2012; Pizarro, 2009b). Ghettoisation is also exacerbated by strong cultural networks within the city, such as immigrant radio stations, markets, and food shops (see Gavazzo, 2004; Sassone and Mera, 2006; Vior, 2006).

However, I was told by a number of immigrants (as well as by Argentine members of *La Alameda* and other social movements) that some immigrant business owners play up their shared heritage in order to locate *and* placate members of their workforce. This practice is most common within the Bolivian community (e.g. Bastia, 2007; Montero, 2011, 2014), and this will be the main focus of this section. Nevertheless, similar claims are also

¹⁶⁸ Again, this is not to say that other identities, structure, and relationships are less important, instead simply different, and in need of their own, proper form of analysis.

made by and about other migrant groups. For instance, research has demonstrated how the category 'Andean' (in reference to migrants from Peru, Bolivia, and even those internal to Argentina¹⁶⁹) is not commonly used by migrants themselves, but is instead adopted by community leaders to promote – to the state and businesses – the idea of a united, yet passive, group of migrants (see Canelo, 2006, 2008). Stereotypes are thus used by members of migrant communities to play down differences, and position themselves as being able to speak legitimately for all other members.¹⁷⁰ Similar points were touched upon in more detail in an interview with a member of *Simbiosis Cultural*, who spoke about the role of stereotypes, with particular focus on the Bolivian community:

The stereotypes categorise [the large number] of Bolivians in that type of work, so that is [immigrants'] place. That is very useful to the Argentine state [and] society to segregate and maintain [hierarchies]. However, it is also useful for [leaders of] the Bolivian community. This is a "visitor's consciousness". This thing about "we can't annoy, we can't organise ourselves, we can't bring up other problems". Why? Because we came to visit, we came to work, *they* have the "kindness" to give *us* hospital access, to give *us* a place to work¹⁷¹, so [stereotypes] are also useful to those who control the community's labour [and] economic system...One of the things [some] representatives of the Bolivian community [say] most. "We're all Bolivians, we're all workers, there are no class differences within the Bolivian Community". [So] when [others] attack the [textile] workshops – the Bolivian community's economic system – they are attacking all Bolivians. It's because of that that [leaders] need to maintain those stereotypes. So we are Bolivians, we are humble, we are submissive, we are workers. We can't suggest anything else. Why? Because we came to visit, we came to work, etc. So that is useful for [both the] Bolivian community's internal [economic system] as well as the external one...The media have all these strong

¹⁶⁹ The use of the description 'Andean' is particularly interesting as it is closely linked to phenotype, and as can be seen by considering those it refers to, cross-cuts national borders. However, it does have the problem of reiterating the importance of race and indigeneity, and in so doing once more emphasising the relationship between Argentina and whiteness, as well as the radical alterity that shapes attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants'.

¹⁷⁰ A complicating matter is the way in which certain, predominantly left-wing, groups also attempt to mobilise around the idea of being 'Andean', intending to find strength and unity in shared ideas of indigeneity. However, as discussed in Chapters 2, 4, and 5, such movements have found less success in Argentina than countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador.

¹⁷¹ This fits with the earlier quotation from Elena about her immigrant friends and comrades who attended pro-Kirchner demonstrations.

stereotypes... [They] maintain a system of power that gives power to some Bolivian leaders who maintain that economic system (Luis).

Luis mentions a number of issues facing the Bolivian community in particular. The way in which stereotypes are entrenched and perpetuated by leaders (as well as the media and those outside the migrant community) is mentioned, as are the problematic consequences. However, the obfuscation of class divides within migrant groups is the key point here, as leaders are able to invoke shared nationality in order to trump class divisions. This allows them to weaken the political composition of the workforce by perpetuating the 'visitor's consciousness' that Luis mentioned (see also Simbiosis Cultural, 2011; Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011), as well as creating a crude 'us versus them' mentality, which allows them to portray anyone who has concerns with working conditions in the textile workshops as an enemy of the Bolivian community (see Betrisey, 2012; Cantor, 2013). The next section on 'slave labour' will focus on this in more depth, but a brief quotation from a Bolivian member of *La Alameda* (in which they discuss the animosity aimed towards *La Alameda* from much of the Bolivian community – again, discussed in the next section) expands on these points:

The problem isn't with *La Alameda* itself, but a consequence of the Bolivian community leaders...These leaders are much more powerful than *La Alameda* within the Bolivian community...they control things like the radios. [The leaders] are all linked to the sweatshops as well, that is how they make their money...You need to see *within* the migrant community, see its shape, and look at...class relationships *within* the communities (Juan).

As we shall see in more detail, the strength of leaders is such that they are often able to dictate the demands, interests, and behaviours of migrant communities. This is achieved in a number of ways which solidify the migrants' national identity, coalescing around the strength that ideas of race, indigeneity, and culture play, and thus masking the role class differences make. As Juan says, it is crucial to "look at the class relationships *within* the [migrant] communities", precisely those relationships and differences which the leaders, through their perpetuation of stereotypes, are trying to obscure.

At times, stereotypes are also perpetuated both from within and without the migrant communities. Laura, another member of *La Alameda*, told me about such an example:

There was a famous case with a judge who defended the workshops and talked about the *ayllu*¹⁷², and said that they were performing an important Inca community system. [He defended the workshops] because of these supposed ties...There are many different ways in which people here defend workshops, and they are often seen as a logical [part of] the Bolivian community...The workshops have the very family-like logic, but that makes it easier for Ayala. Ayala is like a *puntero*¹⁷³...I mean he's someone if you're unemployed, you go to get a job, you get it at a workshop but you get a job. If you got sick or needed to take your child to the hospital, he can organise that for you, but he basically controls you, and this is a dynamic that many groups don't understand.

In comparing the textile workshops to a form of *ayllu*, the judge is not only reinforcing the supposedly cultural links between that type of work and the Bolivian identity (Montero, 2014), but this naturalisation is also used by *punteros* such as Ayala to justify their own interests. Many migrants are so beholden to community leaders that this dual-perpetuation of stereotypes – from both inside and out – makes it very hard for migrants to break out of the identities and roles ascribed to them (Amengual and Wolfson, 2011). The stereotypes therefore function at a number of levels, drawing on racial, cultural, and indigenous tropes, which then become framed in terms of national identity – itself a problematic bounding. As a consequence the role of class differences within migrant collectives is overlooked, and this can contribute to the gross (self)exploitation of hundreds of thousands of ‘neighbouring migrants’. There is therefore a need for more research into the heterogeneity of immigrant communities in order to appreciate fully the specific issues immigrants face, often caused by particular technical compositions. Further, it is necessary to understand how these

¹⁷² *Ayllu* is the form of community found particularly in Aymara and Quechua culture. It is akin to extended family groups that own land collectively and have reciprocal obligations to each other, and it is a model that underpins indigenous local governments in a number of countries (see Fontana, 2014; Lazar, 2012; Perreault and Green, 2013).

¹⁷³ Alfredo Ayala is a very powerful member of the Bolivian community who is involved with the perpetuation of a huge number of the textile workshops in BAMA (see Montero, 2011; Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011). A *puntero* is form of community leader typically found in *villas* and other poor neighbourhoods. They typically exert a lot of political control over those living in the area, and are heavily tied up with the clientelism related to Peronism (see Auyero, 1999, 2001; Levitsky, 2001).

compositions intersect with other identities and structures – including those which may at times seem to supersede class altogether.

However, the importance of researching heterogeneity was mentioned in interviews with militants from a variety of groups, and can be seen in the forms of militant collective-*autoethnography* carried out by a number of MTDs and occupied workplaces (see Lavaca, 2007; Mason-Deese, 2013a, 2013b; MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Sitrin, 2012; Zibechi, 2012). Elena from the MTD *La Matanza* spoke about how the MTD movement as a whole reflected upon the importance of class categories when speaking about ‘the unemployed’, trying to move reflexively beyond narrow and class reductionist categories:

Within the [MTD] movement [ideas of the] ‘multitude’ [were] helpful, in the way that there isn’t one [unemployed] subjectivity...There are men who lost their jobs, there’s a lot of young people who never had jobs, there’s women who do a lot of communal housework, it’s all of those things. [And] initially there was never really an attempt to try to establish what was ‘the unemployed’. It was always based on much more of a loose definition...it is clear enough that it is very heterogeneous, that nobody assumes that their experience is universal...Groups in *La Matanza*...have written about how being unemployed is such a fragmentary experience. So one of the important things they have been able to do really well is provide an alternative to that fragmentary experience of being unemployed.

In working through these issues in a collective fashion, members of the MTD were better able to understand their situation. The mention of ‘the multitude’ demonstrates the influence of autonomist ideas (particularly the work of Hardt and Negri) among MTDs and other similar movements (Holloway, 2005b; Khorasane, 2007), and supports the importance of envisioning (intersectional) class beyond the workplace. But, conspicuously, there is little mention of the peculiarities and specificities of being a ‘neighbouring migrant’ in Buenos Aires. In contrast, Mayra from *Simbiosis Cultural* spoke about their attempts to carry out militant research within the workshops where many Bolivian members work. However, they faced many problems and difficulties, and she is again worth quoting at length:

Working with each other helped us understand...the workshops [...and] all the machinery that makes them work...and as we started to get deeper, we found other

realities that were also pretty similar. [Bolivian immigrants] have the same basis in the textile workshop, but diverse experiences...So we started...to think about how we are as migrants here. And [something]...we shared was that we all came to work in textile workshops, but in different ways...And we started doing story workshops, labour relations workshops, loads of things, to understand the situation. And that's when we [came up with] the central idea of 'migrant work'.

Initially we focused on the idea of "Bolivianess", and what that meant in the Bolivian community. [But] when we started to [focus]...on the system of work, a lot of the [Bolivian] organisations and groups...distanced themselves because the subject...was too uncomfortable and difficult. Also because lots of their members were sewing machine operators, it was uncomfortable to talk about their way of working. Or they were children of workshop owners, or they had some relation [who was] economically linked with the workshops. Or they were already owners...or ran radio stations, and so on. There is a strong relationship [between many members of the Bolivian community], and so then a type of distancing began [between the Bolivian community and *Simbiosis Cultural*]. So we were only able to lay out the problem, but importantly that happened *within* the collective, not from outside of the community...What we saw the most was the need to hear the voice of Bolivians. There are lots of studies done about this form of work and everything, but none led by...Bolivians.

Once more the technical composition of the Bolivian collective is fundamental. However, it is not all-encompassing – Mayra repeatedly emphasises the differences as well as the similarities of Bolivian experiences in the workshops. Instead, as the next section will argue, it is important to consider the political as well as technical composition. Mayra also mentions the importance of textile work to the Bolivian community, even talking about 'migrant work', but crucially she and *Simbiosis Cultural* are seeking to denaturalise these stereotypes and discourses. They are not simply taking them for granted and (re)producing them. Instead they are challenging them from within the workshops and the collective itself. In that sense it is an immanent critique, which Mayra acknowledges places it firmly in the minority.

Given the strengths of the stereotypes and the way they are perpetuated from inside and outside migrant collectives, they contribute to incredibly cohesive migrant identities,

which can ultimately lead to self-exploitation and class decomposition. The next section on the 'slave labour' discourse will further explore these ideas.

6.3.3: Slave labour?

My work with both *La Alameda* and *Simbiosis Cultural* revealed an extremely marked difference between them regarding the textile workshops: the former consistently spoke about 'slave labour' and 'sweatshops', the latter never adopted such language. For *La Alameda* and many of its members, the workshops are self-evident, non-problematic examples of slave labour: textile workers often work 16–18 hour days, 6 days a week; are forced to sleep, work, and live in cramped, over-crowded conditions (resulting in events such as the fire in the *Caballito* neighbourhood, discussed in Chapter 4); pay is consistently withheld, and those who raise concerns are threatened with deportation by their employers (Bastia, 2007; Lieutier, 2009; Montero 2011; Vera, 2009). For most of the members of *La Alameda* I spoke with, talk of slave labour found its power as an emotive and media-friendly discourse – a prime example being the key role it played in framing a campaign to pressure the city government into a series of inspections and closures of textile workshops (see Amengual, 2011), and the success of this campaign was therefore cited as justification for the use of the discourse.

However, for a number of reasons there is animosity from *Simbiosis Cultural* and other immigrant groups towards the discourse. First, its media strength is also one of the slave labour discourse's biggest issues. It powerfully (re)produces the stereotypes discussed in the previous section, and this is especially problematic given that this cultural connection is consistently used both inside and outside the Bolivian community to defend the workshops (Cartechini and Rivas, 2006; Rivas and Cartechini, 2008; Simbiosis Cultural, 2010; Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011). Portraying Bolivians as slaves therefore reinforces their subalternity, strips them of agency, and homogenises the community (Betrisey, 2012). Further, the discourse demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the particularities of the Bolivian community and their relationship to the workshops, ignoring the community's heterogeneity (discussed in the previous section).

La Alameda's promotion of the discourse, however, is especially problematic. Not only is it guilty of the issues discussed above, but it comes from outside the Bolivian

community, and acts with little reflexivity. Many members of *La Alameda* were utterly intransigent in their use of the word, one accusing me (and others who problematise the idea of 'slave labour') of engaging in "too much discourse and not enough action". But without careful consideration of the desires and interests of Bolivian workers, this focus on 'action' can alienate significant proportions of the Bolivian community, and lessens the potential for solidarity (and ultimately class recomposition). As Luis said in an earlier quotation, attacks on the workshops are often taken as attacks on the whole Bolivian community. *La Alameda* is therefore seen by many Bolivian immigrants as a threat to their livelihoods. As one Bolivian interviewee put it "they are public enemy number one", and the stigma against *La Alameda* is so strong that Bolivian members told me that they had become altogether ostracised from the Bolivian community and described as 'traitors'. Consequently there have been a number of Bolivian protests against *La Alameda* (see Cantor, 2013). Members of *La Alameda* told me that these protests were proof of the strength of the Bolivian community leaders and *punteros*, and their ability to promote a type of 'false consciousness' among the(ir) workforce – see Juan's quotation, above. However, while immigrant leaders' power and ability to promote stereotypes and supposed homogeneity is undoubtedly strong, there is a danger in stripping all agency from Bolivian immigrants. Without wishing to downplay the very real problems of trafficking, many Bolivian immigrants are often aware of gross exploitation and terrible conditions of the workshops, yet 'choose'¹⁷⁴ to migrate and work there (Bastia, 2005, 2006). Therefore shutting down the workshops does have a very real and serious effect on the lives of many Bolivian immigrants.

Thus, the debate over the slave labour discourse is a prime example of just how important the stereotypes (and related downplaying of class differences) are. Interviews with two of *La Alameda's* more reflective members raised a number of interesting points:

There is a strength [in using] 'slave labour', because your struggle against it gains more visibility...It makes people aware...that it exists, and it has to be contested...It helps in terms of press, and social recognition of the problem. But it doesn't help in [creating] 'victims'...and actually...demoralises [people in the workshops] and it keeps them away...If you call me a slave, I will never come to you and ask for support or get

¹⁷⁴ This agency is of course constrained by the broader structures of capitalism (see Coe and Jordhus-Lier, 2011).

involved in your struggle. It is patronising. It is like “join me I’m going to save you”...*Simbiosis*, for example, are very clear in terms of “OK, this is terrible working conditions and we have to...struggle against it...but, we should avoid talking about slaves, because we need them to get involved with the attempt to fight against it.” [Bolivians] themselves have to fight against it from within the collective (Marcos).

And Laura said:

The worst thing is that the person become victimised, they are interpellated by that word. If you will say that someone is a slave then it is harder to understand their situation and build solidarity. For people working in a workshop, the worst [thing] you can do is treat them like a victim...You have to empower them, and to treat them like a slave is not doing that. I know it is harder to give that power, and I also know in many ways there is not a better word, but I don’t think it should be used.

The idea of interpellating the victimisation of the ‘slave labour’ discourse is an extremely important one, and highlights the damaging effect stereotypes can have on immigrants themselves (see also Cartechini and Rivas, 2006). What is more, there is explicit acknowledgment of how the discourse causes divisions and hinders solidarity. Marcos also makes an important point about the need for struggles to come from “within the [Bolivian] collective”. This was strongly echoed by Luis from *Simbiosis Cultural*, who took real issue with groups such as *La Alameda* and their attempts to force exogenous change upon the Bolivian community without the proper, deep, and reflexive understanding and analysis discussed in earlier quotations. However, especially significant for him are again the problems that come with victimisation:

That is what most differentiates us from *La Alameda*: we are nobody’s servants. There is power within those workshops; there is power to be able to change. It’s not currently exercised but it’s there. That’s what differentiates us...because they consider it [slave labour], and we don’t believe [that is] a solution for anything. If you don’t raise the power that there is within each of us and each of the workshops a little bit, it doesn’t change anything. They become victims on all sides, and are seen only to serve, and you need to think about migrants beyond just the workshop.

Like Laura he understands that the type of struggle and change they are advocating is much harder than a top-down solution, but he is adamant that there is power within the

workshops (that new political compositions are immanent to previous technical compositions: Roggero, 2010: 205; Shukaitis, 2013). The 'slave labour' discourse can therefore perpetuate the 'visitor's consciousness' spoken about in earlier sections, and inhibit forms of immigrant-led struggle and resistance. Luis's claim that "you need to think about [Bolivian] migrants beyond just the workshop" emphasises the need to tread a tightrope in acknowledging the centrality of the workshops (and therefore technical composition) to Bolivian identity while trying not to normalise and reify these stereotypes, and as such class composition is central to the debate surrounding the 'slave labour' discourse.

Class is thus crucial to immigrants' lives, but the concept must not be applied too narrowly. While an extreme example, the debate over 'slave labour' demonstrates the frequent elision of immigrants' political composition with their technical composition, in such a way that there is often almost a denial of the former's existence altogether. Further, a failure to unpack the problematic cultural, racial, and national connotations associated with the discourse – instead, like *La Alameda*, treating it simply as a labour rights issue – highlights the issues with a *non*-intersectional class analysis: an uncritical, (over)focus on class can alienate 'neighbouring migrants', create divisions, and contribute to class decomposition.

This section has argued that a class composition analysis helps understand attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants'. Stereotypes are framed in predominantly national terms. However, they contain allusions to deeper, racial, cultural, and at times indigenous tropes and identities. What is more, they can then become naturalised and reified in the technical compositions of migrants, which can perpetuate discrimination and exploitation. But this also reflects a perspective on class that is too narrow, masks migrants' diverse (if constrained) subjectivities, and fails to grasp the full range of possible resistance properly. It has also been argued that these stereotypes can sometimes be mobilised 'from within', and lead to situations of self-exploitation, particularly within the Bolivian community. A failure to engage properly with class differences within migrants communities, stemming from an over-focus on other (admittedly salient) identities and categories can therefore have serious consequences. Class composition analysis therefore needs intersectionality and vice versa.

6.4: Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated the importance of an intersectional class composition analysis. It has shown that among 'neighbouring migrants' there is a suspicion towards the salience of class, with typically more emphasis placed on forms of discrimination along racial and national lines. However, the lack of engagement with class can cause problems when trying to understand the hierarchies within migrant groups, where class differences are often (intentionally) blurred. Given the intersections between class, race, and national identity, the way people are racialised and excluded/included from the nation can preclude/dictate social class position in such a way that the actual class divide is frequently obfuscated. Class composition is particularly appropriate for attempting to understand these relationships, as in many situations the technical composition of groups (and in of particular migrants) is overplayed to the extent that their political composition is frequently ignored. What is more, the niches of migrant work are such that even a seemingly narrow focus on technical composition can itself contain racially-inflected, nationally-bound perspectives, which once more emphasise the intersections between these different structure and identities. The unpacking of these intersectional relationships between class, race, and national identity, however, is only part of the story. They play an important role in the lives of 'neighbouring migrants'; yet, as the next chapter will argue, migrants' experiences and the attitudes towards them must also be understood territorially.

CHAPTER 7

Territorial politics and identities: *Barrios, vecinos, and the conurbano*

This chapter explores how territory affects the lives of ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires. It shows that a range of competing territorial claims within CABA and BAMA are shaped by the intersections between class, race, and national identity, and how they normalise and reinforce discrimination. It also focuses on the rise of ‘territorial politics’, and how this influences *porteños*’ interactions with ‘neighbouring migrants’ and political subjectivities more broadly: territorial identities shape and are shaped by political activity. While these territorial attachments and identities can supersede other identities and relationships, they can never be fully divorced from them. It is therefore argued that territorial identities should be understood within intersectional class struggle analyses, and accordingly this chapter complements arguments made in the previous one.

7.1: Neighbourhoods and territorial identity

This section considers how *barrios*’ territorial identities influence attitudes towards (and among) migrants. The first section explores the intersectional processes involved in *barrio* formation, and the effect these have on ‘neighbouring migrants’. It lays the ground for the next section’s discussions about the consequences of *barrio*’s territorial identities, where it is argued that *barrios* are ‘multiterritories’ shaped by relational, intersectional processes, which affect the formation of political identities (cf. Featherstone, 2008).

7.1.1: The striated city: gentrification and ghettoisation

Chapter 5 showed that since the 2001 crisis and ‘recovery’, CABA has witnessed significant gentrification (Herzer et al., 2015) with some neighbourhoods registering eightfold rent increases. Nevertheless, this process remain incomplete, and as demonstrated the territorial decomposition of the 1990s is not yet fully redressed, allowing ‘neighbouring migrants’ to make territorial claims, and ethno-national divisions are becoming increasingly important in

shaping urban space (Bastia, 2015).¹⁷⁵ Buenos Aires's urban fabric has been shaped by, among other things, immigration and class struggles, and these changes provided the conditions for the emergence of social movements that are both territorial *and* territorialising (MTD Solano and Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Zibechi, 2012). This territorial nature of the class relationship was a theme commonly encountered during my research, and was perhaps best expressed by a feminist economist and expert on Paraguayan migration:

There is strong contempt from the middle [classes] towards the popular or working classes, and there is strong resentment from the popular classes [the other way]. It is a matter of great tension...and these tensions are expressed in terms of territory, with very concrete conflicts. [Argentina] is a country where...protest is usual, and the street is the space to express this dissatisfaction (Sofía).

The territorialising of class antagonism can concretise tensions, leading to a mutually reinforcing relationship: class divisions become territorial and this in turn can lead to territorial differences reproducing class fragmentation.

One of CABA's most obvious divisions is the north/south one. As mentioned, the boundary is typically considered to be *Avenida Rivadavia* (see Figure 5.3), but with gentrification the divide is moving further south. This movement is important as 'neighbouring migrants' and the poor tend to live in the south of the city (Caggiano and Segura, 2014), and as a consequence there are fewer and fewer areas that are affordable, forcing people into *villas* and the *conurbano* (Schapira, 2014; The Guardian, 03/07/14). This point was made at length in an interview with a UNICEF researcher:

The north/south divide...can be imagined at *Avenida Rivadavia*...Land and...property is much cheaper in the south of the city, which generates a greater attraction for potential migrants, [as they] have less capacity to live elsewhere...There are...areas of the south that are beginning to transform, but the transformation does not benefit migrants. [It] actually ejects and excludes migrants because the areas end up being much more expensive (Daniel).

¹⁷⁵ However, given the pressures of an increasingly 'striated' city, as will be argued, these territorial claims can lead to ghettoisation and further divisions between groups – something which affects class composition. Ghettoisation can therefore reinforce discrimination against 'neighbouring migrants'.

Migrants being 'ejected' from the city is especially important (and will be discussed in more detail in 7.3) as it reflects the fact that CABA is a 'privileged territory' in contrast to the much less affluent *conurbano* (Stratta and Barrera, 2009). It also shows how the class-driven processes of gentrification affect the city and the lives of 'neighbouring migrants' within it.

This movement of, and contestation over, the north/south divide is key. As discussed, there is a desire among the city government for CABA to become a global 'mega city', a prerequisite of which is 'the right type of people' (Wilson, 2000). Changes to CABA – particularly in the south – reflect this, and can be seen in the growth of certain *barrios* at the expense of others. Sánchez (2009) notes how *Palermo* – already the biggest *barrio* in population *and* size – is starting to subsume areas. For example, the more affluent shopping streets in the east of neighbouring *Villa Crespo*¹⁷⁶ have become known as *Palermo Queens* among estate agents wishing to increase the value of property (González Bracco, 2013). Julieta, an Argentine anti-gentrification activist, ruefully commented that "if Macri has his way, all of the federal capital will become part of *Palermo*". However, similar processes can be found in the south of the city as it becomes increasingly gentrified, privatised, and securitised (e.g. Carman, 2006; Janoschka et al., 2014; Orueta et al., 2003; Pérez, 2002). This point emerged across many interviews, but was expressed particularly interestingly by an activist:

The city is quite literally being gentrified. [There is a] colonisation of the city, which in my neighbourhood [*Boedo*] is *Caballito* coming closer and closer (Elena).

The idea that the city is being 'colonised' by more affluent groups is a telling inversion of the frequently-heard, predominantly elite-led discourses of 'invasion' by 'neighbouring migrants' discussed in Chapters 4 and 8. It was also a point made by many long-term residents of the south of the city (including 'neighbouring migrants') whose experiences resonated with Daniel's earlier words: they felt that they and their families were being 'squeezed out' and/or forced in to smaller areas of the city, and that the identities of their *barrios* were changing in such a way they often felt uncomfortable and even 'unsafe'¹⁷⁷ – they felt

¹⁷⁶ All *barrios* can be seen in Figure 5.4.

¹⁷⁷ This is particularly interesting, as areas are typically portrayed and described (by the media, city government, and many *porteños* I spoke with) as 'unsafe' if they have a high proportion of 'neighbouring immigrants'. The most obvious case here are the *villas*, but often people I spoke with who live in the *villas* said that they felt safe at home, and unsafe when they left their *villa*, and came in to contact with more affluent

increasingly out of place. It is also interesting that instead of describing *Boedo* (where she lives) as becoming more expensive or elitist, Elena says that “*Caballito* is coming closer and closer”. *Caballito* has the second largest population of all *barrios*, and is typically viewed as a traditional, middle-class neighbourhood¹⁷⁸ (Azuela and Cosacov, 2013; Ciccolella, 1999; Heredia, 2011; Sebreli, 2011).¹⁷⁹ In contrast, *Boedo* is much more working-class (Landau, 2013). So, as the next section argues, these entrenched territorial identities reflect intersectional relationships and identities, and therefore *Caballito*’s advancement is more to do with people who are richer and whiter living further south, than with the fact that the *barrio* itself is growing: such people would be out of place in *Boedo* but not in *Caballito*. Identities are therefore becoming recast in territorial terms, and territory, class, and race are intimately linked and reshape each other. The gentrification discussed above emphasises how the city is divided along the intertwined lines of class, race, and nationality. As discussed, the north of the city is predominantly inhabited by richer and whiter people, while, in contrast, the south is more diverse, and home to the majority of CABA’s ‘neighbouring migrants’ and poor.

While there have long been neighbourhoods associated with specific immigrant groups, given changing migration patterns the emergence of neighbouring ‘migrant neighbourhoods’ has been a relatively recent phenomenon (Mera and Vaccotti, 2013). This now means that race and nationality shape both *villas*’ internal dynamics (Bastia, 2015) and the use of ‘public space’¹⁸⁰ (Canelo, 2006, 2009). While my research strongly supported such conclusions – national divides in *villas* and racially-mediated access to ‘public space’ were consistently emphasised – the links between race, nationality, and territory extended beyond these two examples. This is demonstrated by the emergence of migrant ‘ghettos’ within CABA, a marked shift from the situation over a decade ago, when research showed that the city’s large divisions mapped predominantly on to class rather than racial and national lines (see Orueta, 2003). In contrast to the situation in the *conurbano* (discussed in

people. This is testament to the contested, multiterritorial nature of *barrios* which is discussed in the next section, as well as the different weight given to various social groups’ ‘place-making’ claims, discussed in Chapter 8.

¹⁷⁸ Although it is important to note that despite this middle-class image, as we shall see, there are significant ‘neighbouring migrant’ populations in *Caballito*. It is also home to a number of garment workshops and sweatshops, including the one which was involved with the deadly fire in 2006 (see Montero, 2011; Symbiosis Cultural, 2010). Again, this emphasises the importance of multiterritorial understandings of *barrios*.

¹⁷⁹ It also contains the *Avenida Rivadavia*, so is often seen to contain the north/south divide.

¹⁸⁰ This is discussed in Chapter 8.

Section 7.3), within an increasingly gentrified CABA, external pressures have caused the ghettoisation of migrant groups, and these territorial divisions can reinforce the racial differences that are often coded in terms of nationality. However, because of these pressures, such ‘ghetto’-formation – be it within or outside the *villas* – is often the only way ‘neighbouring migrants’ can combat the housing crisis through the use of kinship networks (Benwell et al., 2013; Cravino, 2012; Sorín, 2012), which can afford them the comforts of feeling more at home (Bermudes, 2012; Cantor, 2013). Daniel alluded to many of these points:

The formation of...‘ethnic neighbourhoods’...has positive elements but also many negative issues. [Migrants] have to pay additional premiums to live on their own, there are issues of discrimination, there are issues concerning ghetto [creation] when these neighbourhoods where ethnicity is a central feature [emerge]...There are neighbourhoods that correspond to specific populations. These ethnic neighbourhoods...are entrenched in different areas of Buenos Aires.

The idea that migrants have to pay a “premium” in order to live in specific areas was echoed in an interview with Mayra, a Bolivian migrant involved with a wide range of migrants’ rights organisations:

Villa Celina is a place that has practically no paved roads [or] pavements, however the property is much more expensive than in *Caballito*. Do you understand why? Because they say “Ah no, Bolivians will pay whatever...to live inside a ghetto” and so they charge like that.

While *Villa Celina* is a neighbourhood just outside CABA, other interviewees (including Daniel, quoted above) emphasised that similar examples were commonplace within CABA, in both *villas* and more ‘formal’ neighbourhoods. In these cases immigrants are paying more for less, but while this is an obvious “negative issue”, it is not the only consequence of ghettoisation. Mayra said that Bolivian migrants are willing to “pay whatever” in order to “live inside a ghetto”, as it is only within these places that many people feel comfortable or at home: she told me that “it is only here that we feel happy and safe to meet, to sing, to dance”. Similarly, Arturo, a young, male Bolivian told me about his love for the *barrio Liniers*¹⁸¹:

¹⁸¹ *Liniers* is focused on in Section 7.3.1.

You can even see Bolivian peoples' little stalls, selling *empanadas* and everything...There are loads of people who walk along the roads around the plazas. After 6pm and at weekends – especially Sundays – [it's] almost full of Bolivian people, who go to play, to pass time, and feel comfortable and happy.

Immigrant *barrios* – or areas within *barrios* – are extremely important, and for 'neighbouring migrants' there are therefore obvious benefits to living this way. It produces somewhere where they can feel 'in place'¹⁸², helps recent migrants settle in, and provides longer-term migrants respite from regular discrimination. Nevertheless, the emergence of 'little Bolivias' (see Bermudes, 2012) and other immigrant enclaves can cause problems. Not only does it drive rent increases, but ghettoisation can make migrants' lives quite parochial, reducing interaction between different migrant groups. Marcos, a researcher and militant from *La Alameda*, explained how this highly territorialised way of living hinders integration and political unity:

Between *barrios* the [immigrant] collectives are normally quite separate...they don't often mix spatially...So...they are separated spatially at that scale, but also within [*barrios* and *villas*] they don't really relate to each other. Because migrants come here, and there [...are] very defined places for them to live...and [they have] their own networks of radios, they keep themselves to themselves, and they have their own expressions of culture. So it is very easy to arrive to the country and the first people you join with are the same as you, and you talk about politics...or football back in your country. It is really easy to get into that dynamic and not interact with other groups.

Solidarity *within* migrant groups from different countries may be strengthened by this ghettoisation, but it can also lead to conflict *among* these groups, as well as with Argentines. In this way it contributes to (intersectional) class decomposition. Territory affects the political composition of specific migrant groups: the nature and proximity of their living conditions can help build bonds of unity, deepen trust, and facilitate the spread of political ideas (cf. Ealham, 2010). However, the territorial separation can also reify divisions between migrant groups, and prevent solidarity from emerging across these different groups of the

¹⁸² Although the temporal nature of this must be considered. As Arturo and others mentioned, the nature of individual's employment affects where and when they use and produce space. As will be argued, in the same *barrio* 'neighbouring migrants' can be in place at one time and out of place at another.

working class. What is more, this ghettoisation can perpetuate and exacerbate the issues discussed in the previous chapter surrounding the denial of class differences within particular migrant groups, by emphasising the supposed homogeneity of immigrant collectives.

This section has demonstrated the ways CABA is striated by intersections of class, race, and nationality. The next section expands on these ideas, and argues that *barrios* should be understood as multiterritories.

7.1.2: The barrio as a multiterritory

The *barrio* has long been an important political space in Buenos Aires (e.g. Centner, 2012a, 2012b; Crot, 2006; North and Huber, 2004; Pérez, 2002; Sitrin, 2012). Kanai (2011) notes a '*barrio* resurgence', in which an increasing number of neighbourhood movements make a range of political claims, and Chapter 5 argued that *barrios* can be understood as territories. This section focuses on multiterritoriality *within* neighbourhoods, since more traditional and 'top down' readings of territory can contribute to the perpetuation of neighbourhood identities that obscure social differences (see Martin, 2003). When *barrios* are understood as territories (bounded political spaces), the role of class in their production is important (Brenner and Elden, 2009; Lefebvre, 1991). But territory (the *barrio*) can in turn shape class relations, and, as demonstrated in the previous section, the construction of neighbourhood territorial identities is an intersectional process (Caggiano and Segura, 2014) which creates a social hierarchy of *barrios*. Territories are reflective of the social order within which they are produced (Delaney, 2005), and so this ranking of *barrios* maps closely on to the social hierarchy which was described in the previous chapter: while class is important in dictating relationships between different social groups, these are also mediated through ideas of race which are recast in national and cultural terms, leading to discrimination against 'neighbouring migrants'.

During the research it became apparent that *barrios* have distinct identities ascribed to them by different groups, supporting the idea of the '*barrio* effect' mentioned in Chapter 5 – as a housing activist put it, "each *barrio* is like its own world". However, these identities have far-reaching consequences, dictating what is deemed *in* or *out* of place, and CABA has symbolic and material boundaries which dictate people's movement and senses of

belonging (Grimson, 2008). Grimson notes that when people 'go up' to *barrios* of higher social levels they adopt different, supposedly appropriate behaviour in order to attenuate their 'foreignness' once they have crossed the 'urban border'. Other work mentions the strength of *barrio* identity (e.g. Baer, 2010; Cravino, 2004) and how *barrio* attachment plays an important role in processes of othering (Guano, 2003b). A similar point was made by María, a migration lawyer, who mentioned a hierarchy of *barrios*:

They have very defined identities. And people don't tend to go below the...social level of their neighbourhood. So...if you live in *Recoleta*, you wouldn't really go anywhere [else]...And then if you lived in *Belgrano*, you might go to *Belgrano* or *Recoleta*. And then if you lived in *Palermo* you might go to *Palermo*, *Belgrano*...and then you have *Villa Crespo* and the others. So you will go up, but you won't go down...[Also] people carry and embody those identities of the *barrios*, of the areas [where] they live themselves. There is a lot of loyalty, but then it also means a lot of disregard for other areas. [People think] "I'm good, so in this *barrio* we are alright, but that one over there having trouble isn't".

This also touches on ideas of 'territorial stigmatisation' (e.g. Jensen and Christensen, 2012; Wacquant, 2007), and the way in which these territorial identities can become self-perpetuating, hiding and naturalising the processes that formed the particular *barrio* and its identity. For this reason it is important to consider the social hierarchy of the *barrios* mentioned above in more detail. Not only are these neighbourhoods the most elite and exclusive due to their high rents, but they are also some of the whitest (Heredia, 2011). As demonstrated, the city is segregated along the intersections of class, race, and nationality explored in Chapter 6. These discourses and power structures have therefore become embedded in, and embodied by, the identities of the *barrios* and their inhabitants, those at the top being closer to this rich, white ideal, and those further away closer to the bottom. Once territory is created it then has the capacity to shape further behaviour, and the territorial identities of the *barrios* influence people's behaviour and interactions (Grimson, 2008). As a Paraguayan migrant put it:

While there are always things to differentiate [between groups], for example national identity, for me the social question has most to do with where you live...[You] can transform [your] life by living elsewhere...[your *barrio*] modifies you in some way.

That is, the place where you live changes your lifestyle (Gabriel).

Territorial identities affect behaviours and interactions, which in turn reinforce the identity of the *barrios*, and reify the symbolic boundaries that divide them (Grimson, 2008). Territorial differences not only reflect class antagonisms, but the idea that *barrios* such as *Recoleta* and *Palermo* are deemed to be at the top of this social hierarchy, emphasises the importance of intersectional analyses of the construction of urban spaces and territories (Caggiano and Segura, 2014). But crucially the construction of these territorial identities can concretise the idea that such intersectional identities are themselves superior, demonstrating the power of territory to make the contingent and contentious seem potentially self-evident (Delaney, 2005).

An example reinforces some of these ideas. At various times during my fieldwork *La Alameda* organised *escraches*¹⁸³ against sweatshops, drug dealing spots, and brothels across the city. The demonstration that garnered the most interest focused on a brothel allegedly involved with the trafficking of young Paraguayan girls in a respectable apartment block in *Recoleta*. While the turnout was relatively modest – around 200 people – there was enormous media interest, all the main TV channels being present. There was also an abnormally large police presence, but instead of occupying their usual role of harassing the demonstrators, these specially-organised metropolitan police officers aided and supported the demonstration, helpfully stopping traffic to allow protestors to complete their route. It became immediately apparent that the interest in the protest stemmed from it being in *Recoleta*. Not only was it out of the ordinary to see a number of *Recoletans*¹⁸⁴ protesting and behaving in such a manner, but people found it shocking that there could be a brothel like this in that particular area. One onlooker asked me what the protest was about, and had to double check when I replied it was against a brothel, simply saying “What? Here?”. People were seemingly shocked not by the existence of a brothel involved with the forced trafficking of children, but by its location. For example, a talk-show presenter said, after the *escrache*, “you expect things like this to happen in *Bajo Flores*, but not in *Recoleta*.” So

¹⁸³ These are noisy, visible protests that are designed to make residents aware of the presence of a particular person/location in their neighbourhood. They were most famously used to uncover the whereabouts of people involved with the military dictatorship and to let people know they had murders in their *barrio* (Colectivo Situaciones, 2009).

¹⁸⁴ These people are the archetypal *vecinos* (neighbours) discussed in Section 7.2.

according to the presenter, not only is this type of brothel out of place in *Recoleta*, but thoroughly in place in a *barrio* like *Bajo Flores*, which is in the south of the city, contains a number of *villas*, and is home to a large ‘neighbouring migrant’ population. The territorial identity of neighbourhoods can be seen to play a role in dictating what *is* and *is not* appropriate there, and it is through transgressions that these identities are revealed and solidified (Cresswell, 1996).

I regularly witnessed other examples of this same process, in which territorial identities and attachments were invoked, frequently at the expense of other identities and structures, and typically without critical thought about the identities’ construction. *Barrio* identity was very much naturalised, and supporting María’s quotation, was often grounds for discrimination. People from other *barrios* – especially those from opposite ends of the social hierarchy – were regularly treated with suspicion, with their territorial identity cited as the main driver behind this animosity. When pushed on this, people from more affluent/whiter *barrios* would deny that they were being discriminatory at all, simply saying that it is universally accepted that certain *barrios* and their residents are problematic. However, the *barrios* most regularly deemed troubling were those in the south and with high proportions of ‘neighbouring migrant’ populations. The invocation of territorial identities can therefore insidiously mask racial, national, and class discrimination, and perpetuate ‘neighbouring migrants’ lowly social status.

However, while the existence of this neighbourhood hierarchy was seen as entrenched by research participants, these identities have been dynamic. For instance, the now chic *Palermo* was much more working-class in the early 20th century, when it was home to a young Borges (Wilson, 2000). Similarly, as the previous section illustrated, areas such as *Caballito* and *Boedo* are changing due to gentrification. Beyond emphasising the dynamism of territorial identities, this alludes to the importance of multiterritoriality, as the fluid nature of neighbourhood identity is in part due to multiple and competing claims to this identity. *Barrios* contain many different types of people living and working there; and even in the face of rapid, and at times violent (see Carman, 2006), gentrification, the ejection of undesirable people – be it through direct or indirect means – remains an incomplete process. Put simply, *barrios* have multiple inhabitants and as such have multiple identities, but certain claims tend to carry more weight. It is important to recognise which of these are most

powerful and thus most likely to gain traction (as this will be reflective of the intersectional power dynamics at play), but simply to assert this dominant description without acknowledging other, competing claims is problematic. Not only is it extremely disempowering, implying that only the already powerful are able to dictate territorial identities, but it also perpetuates the predominance of the type of territory critiqued in Chapter 2.



Figure 7.1: Mural in *Palermo*. Source: Author

Returning to the example of *Palermo*, Figure 7.1 shows a mural which illustrates the multiterritorial nature of even such an exclusive *barrio*. The image was created by a group of artists approached by the city government to design an image that reflected the neighbourhood. Given its location in such an exclusive and affluent neighbourhood, the image is interesting given the presence of not only the white figure but also the *cartonero* on the right. A friend of the artists told me it was their intention to demonstrate the multicultural and poly-class nature of *Palermo*. However, in so doing they inadvertently recreated a number of troubling discourses. On the one hand, the whiteness of the woman is emphasised, and with her use of technology her relative wealth – supported by the fact that she is jogging and thus has access to sufficient leisure time. This is all without

mentioning how she is scantily clad and objectified. In many ways she is the archetypal *Palermo* resident: glamorous, rich, and white. On the other hand, far from being defined by leisure activity, the much smaller *cartonero* is hard at work. Not only is the character much smaller, but in an attempt to represent indigeneity, it is portrayed as an almost grotesque figure, reaffirming the links between race, indigeneity, and class. So while the mural aims to demonstrate *Palermo* and its identity, it shows, far from some utopian multiculturalism, an obvious social divide. Different groups may be present in *Palermo*, but, as will be argued in Section 7.2 not everyone can be a proper inhabitant or 'neighbour'. As Grimson puts it: "*Palermo Chico*, the most expensive residential zone in the capital, is frequented exclusively by workers and residents" (2008: 505). The woman on the left is a resident in a way that the *cartonero* could never be, as is demonstrated by their different sizes and relative domination of the image. Especially noticeable is how the whiteness and affluence of the woman is made more obvious in contrast to the other, poor, non-white figure. As has been argued in the previous chapter, this 'othering' is central to the dominant white, middle-class *porteño* identity, and the same can be said with territorial identities.

More affluent residents of *Palermo* often recognised the multiterritorial nature of the *barrio*, but were typically quick to make claims similar to Grimson's ideas that 'neighbouring migrants' only worked in the *barrio*, and were therefore not neighbours. In this sense the dominant *barrio* identity remains intact, as the presence of 'neighbouring migrants' is typically on other people's terms and temporally bounded¹⁸⁵, emphasising the different weights afforded to territorial identity claims. As the mural illustrates, when working in *Palermo*, 'neighbouring migrants' are not necessarily out of place, but in other situations can be transgressive. For instance, a consultant economist to the CABA government described the most significant changes she had noticed over the previous few years:

There's a homeless family now under the bridge in *Palermo*. That would have been outrageous just a few years ago, it just wouldn't happen. People are getting mugged at a higher frequency in nicer places (Jane).

Most telling is Jane's shock that crime and homelessness are now taking place in "nicer places" and even *Palermo*. The problem is not that gentrification is causing a rise in crime

¹⁸⁵ This idea is expanded in Section 7.3.

and homelessness (something which she said “you expect...in South American cities”), but that the homeless are in *Palermo* and visible. Such people and behaviour are out of place in this prestigious neighbourhood, and are therefore transgressive – especially as they are not leaving every evening like those who work. Creswell (1996) argues that transgression is revealing, and in the case of *Palermo* it is clear that its territorial identity is reflective of an intersectional hierarchy that values whiteness and affluence, which is reinforced through alterity (Caggiano and Segura, 2014) – be it counterpoised to workers/non-neighbours *within* the *barrio*, or in other *barrios* entirely. The multiterritorial nature of *barrios* means that ‘neighbouring migrants’ are able to make some territorial claims in *barrios* such as *Palermo*, but these are limited. However, even in predominantly migrant areas and *barrios*, multiterritoriality is still important.

For example, after spending time in *Villa 1-11-14* in *Bajo Flores* (see Figure 5.2), I was surprised by the many sub-divisions. As shown in Chapter 5, much of the mainstream media portrays *villas* as relatively uniform, where any differences tend to be *between* not *within* them: they are depicted as universally dangerous and rundown, overlooking important internal dynamics (see Silva, 2008). For example, even within one small area of *Villa 1-11-14* I was shown around several distinct areas, such as the much smaller *Barrios Rivadavia 1 & 2*. My guide Ramiro, a teacher in a co-operative school and community group based in the *villa*, explained how these subdivisions were unknown to the majority of people outside the *villa*, but were extremely important social divisions within it. This point was expanded upon by Patricia, a Paraguayan migrant who has lived in *Villa 1-11-14* for over twenty years. She explained that there were the obvious differences between different neighbourhoods and areas within the *villa*, which were reflected in the way in which they were built, when they were built, and by whom. More recent ‘neighbouring migrants’ were more likely to live in self-built and more ‘informal’ housing, while those who had lived in the *villa* longer often lived in (increasingly dilapidated) state-built social housing. This made for obvious divisions within the *villas*, but these boundaries were more than merely material:

Social class is extremely important here [in the *villa*]; it dictates where you can and cannot go. Even though you [pointing towards me] look foreign, because you are from a certain class you can go where you want. It is about class, but I suppose also

how you look, it also has to do with race...There are a number of symbolic boundaries within [Villa 1-11-14] which certain people cannot cross.

Again, symbolic boundaries which are dictated by class, yet mediated by race, are said to shape (further) the neighbourhood, and can become reified by material divisions: territory is intersectionally produced. Relatedly, other people within *Villa 1-11-14* emphasised the importance of nationality, one resident saying the territorial division between nationalities was so strong that it was like a form of 'membership' that prevented non-members having access to particular areas. This supports the earlier points about national ghettoisation, and its impact on class composition. The quotation also resonates with points made in Chapter 6 about the importance of whiteness and its associated connotations, and how those fortunate enough to 'pass as white' can have doors opened for them (Saldanha, 2007). Because of my social position and whiteness I was deemed to have the ability "to go where [I] want". However, although it is certainly true that I was enormously privileged to be able to leave the *villa* when I wanted, Ramiro was quick to remind me that I was only able to explore safely parts of the *villa* only when I was with him, and even then many areas were "off limits". Therefore, the universality of Patricia's claim should be read with some caution, as my perceived positionality both opened and closed doors (see Chapter 3). And while it is important to acknowledge its power in shaping urban space and territory (see Shaw, 2011), whiteness should not be portrayed as omnipotent.

Another pertinent example of multiterritory is the yearly festival celebrating the Virgin of Copacabana, Bolivia's patron saint. Initially this took place in *Barrio Charrúa*, a predominantly Bolivian neighbourhood located between the 'formal' *barrios* of *Nueva Pompeya* and *Villa Soldati* in the south of CABA. The *fiesta* involves traditional, folkloric dancing, dress, and music, and is an opportunity for the Bolivian community to celebrate its heritage and collective identity. However, it was originally also small and took place within a 'Bolivian neighbourhood'. That is, it was clearly *in place*. However, as the Bolivian community has grown, it has now become much larger and is officially sponsored by the CABA government. Every year at the start of October the festival takes place in central Buenos Aires, tens of thousands of dancers and musicians take to the streets, and the parade ends in the central *Plaza de Mayo*, in front of the presidential *Casa Rosada*. Figure 7.2 demonstrates the integrative nature of the festival, the banner reading 'folkloric cultural

integration, Bolivia in Argentina’ and combining Bolivian colours with a picture of Che Guevara¹⁸⁶ (all in front of Eva Perón). Figure 7.3 shows an interesting contrast between the group of Bolivian dancers in front of the *Casa Rosada* and the official banner behind them calling for an ‘organised’ and ‘united’ Argentina. Reminiscent of the *cacerolazo* protesters seen in Figures 6.3 and 6.4, the figures on the banner are extremely white, something which not only makes the dancers seem out of place, but reinforces the links between whiteness and a desired Argentine identity. But while the presence of large numbers of Bolivian migrants in such a central area typically associated with white, middle-class *porteñidad* – the same area that those on the *cacerolazos* sought to reclaim – might be assumed to be out of place, this was not the case. However, as will be argued, this counterintuitively reinforced the subalternity of immigrants.



Figure 7.2: Bolivian dancers on *Avenida 9 de Julio*.

Source: Author.

¹⁸⁶ Che Guevara’s Argentine heritage, combined with his death in Bolivia, means his image is particularly pertinent to Argentine-Bolivian cooperation.



Figure 7.3: Bolivian dancers in front of the *Casa Rosada*.

Source: Author.

Despite the fact that the *fiesta* is a rare occasion where a huge number of Bolivian migrants feel safe and able to express themselves in such a public and typically off-limits part of the city, many migrants I spoke to had issues with the event. As one put it:

Once a year we are allowed to dance down *9 de Julio* but that's it. That is our only visibility. As soon as the *fiesta* is finished we have to leave straight away (Mariana).

Others expressed frustration that the whole of Bolivian culture had been boiled down to such folkloric dancing, saying that it felt as if they were performing for *porteños'* pleasure and perpetuating damaging stereotypes (such as those discussed in Section 6.3). These concerns of the migrants I spoke to also reflected the issues surrounding the commodification of migrant culture mentioned in Section 6.2.3, something that Daniela, an academic whose work focuses on migrants' use of 'public space', mentioned:

Migrants can do certain things, but only in very controlled and particular spaces, and normally only 'the folkloric' is approved [by the government]...So there's this 'double game', right? The immigrants are used [by the city government] to celebrate the cosmopolitan city of Buenos Aires with its immigrants: Chinatown, the Bolivians with

Charrúa, but it is all very folkloric, and all in its *right place*. The parties with the typical foods that we will try, and ethnic restaurants – all that is good. But when an immigrant has...specific needs, or wants to claim their rights: no, that is not so good.

Returning to the arguments proposed in Chapter 6, this commodification is central to *porteño* identity construction, and the perpetuation of ‘neighbouring migrants’ position in the social hierarchy. Migrants’ ‘culture’ is seen to be fine when it can be consumed (and therefore patronised and subordinated), and their presence fine when controlled, but as Chapter 8 demonstrates, when this is not the case it becomes problematic.

Ultimately, territory has been shown to have significant influence on the everyday lives of, and attitudes towards, ‘neighbouring migrants’. Territory can be seen to have a ‘morphogenetic’ relationship with political action (see Archer, 2010), as territories and their identities are shaped by the activity within them, but then go on to influence future activities themselves. Extending arguments in Section 7.1.1, this section has also demonstrated that an intersectional understanding of class is important when analysing the production of territory and territorial identities. The increasingly striated nature of CABA has led to the emergence of a number of migrant ghettos that can perpetuate class decomposition. However, to extend the ideas of neighbourhood politics and territorial identities, the next section considers the rise of the *vecino* (neighbour) as a ‘territorial subjectivity’.

7.2: The changing face of the *vecino*

The idea of the *vecino*¹⁸⁷ (neighbour) has played an important role in Buenos Aires, and this section argues that the term’s meaning has shifted over time, and is now insidiously exclusory, racialised, and classed. However, the discourse of *vecino* also emphasises how these structures of domination become embedded within territorial representations, reiterating the need for a spatial, intersectional analysis of attitudes towards migrants in Buenos Aires. Further, according to Ahmed (2000), the ideas of a racialised ‘stranger’ and the ‘neighbour’ are dialectically intertwined, promoting a problematically narrow, colonially-inflected image of proper citizens that ultimately recentres whiteness. I argue that the

¹⁸⁷ For most of this section the word *vecino* will be used in the masculine, as this reflects its most common usage, and the overwhelming current of *machismo* prevalent in Argentine society. However, in some situations the female *vecina* will be used, and in others *vecinx*.

vecino and the ‘neighbouring migrant’¹⁸⁸ function in similar ways, and will therefore expand upon ideas of ‘inverted alterity’ discussed in Chapters 4 and 6 (see also Laborde, 2011). However, unlike Lévinas’ (1979, 1987) ideas (see also Plant, 2012; Žižek, 2005; Zukić, 2009), in Buenos Aires the *vecino* is not something ‘other’, but is instead an ideal type around which powerful groups’ desired/imagined identities crystallise.

To better understand *vecino*’s contemporary usage, it is important to place it briefly in historical context. Influenced by the 16th and 17th century Spanish usage (see Carzolio, 2002), initially the term referred to respected, property-owning individuals (Elliott, 2007: 45; Herzog, 2008: Chapters 2 and 3). As will be demonstrated, this early usage resonates with contemporary understandings of *vecinos*, and functioned as an exclusory form of citizenship. In the post-colonial era, this understanding remained, and did not change until the 1930s. During that decade, examples of neighbourhood politics emerged, as neighbourhood organisations and councils appeared in poor neighbourhoods and *villas* in order to fill the gap left by the state when it came to basic service provision (Silva and Schuurman, 1989: 48). However, it was not until the ‘*vecinazos*’ (neighbourhood protests) of 1982 that the idea of a ‘*vecino*’ came to represent a new, specific political subject (Bombal, 1988; Iñigo et al., 1992; Ouviaña, 2003). Throughout this period ‘*vecino*’ tended to have firm working-class connotations, yet emphasised a form of political activity distinct from the union or workplace (Silva and Schuurman, 1989: 51); accordingly it commonly referred to those people living in the poorer, more ‘informal’ neighbourhoods¹⁸⁹ (see Bastia, 2010). However, in the wake of the 2001 economic crisis the *vecinx* took on a different guise – again shaped through political activity. Chapter 5 spoke about how the *asamblea* movement opened up and created alternative spaces for political action (North and Huber, 2004), and the neighbourhood became a ‘terrain of subjectification’ (Colectivo Situaciones, 2002: 169). For this movement the *vecinx* occupied a central role as it sought to transcend class differences and unite disparate groups, while emphasising the territorial nature of political activity.

¹⁸⁸ A similar relationship between *vecino* and *okupa* (illegal occupier of land) is demonstrated in Chapter 8.

¹⁸⁹ However, as explored below and in Chapter 8, the understanding of *vecino* has shifted to such an extent that this would now be unthinkable.

7.2.1: Vecinocracia¹⁹⁰

Since the economic ‘recovery’ the *vecino* category has remained extremely important, but its meaning has changed significantly – it has gone from the inclusive *vecinx* to an exclusive *vecino*. Much research has shown how discourses of the *vecino* (and in particular the *buen vecino*) have been promoted by the city government and its sympathetic portions of the media as Buenos Aires’s ideal citizens (see González Bracco, 2009, 2013, 2014; Hernández, 2012, 2014a, 2014b; Zicavo, 2009). The discourse has featured most prominently in city mayor Mauricio Macri’s electoral campaigns which, in adopting the phrase “*vos sos bienvenido*” (“you are welcome”), delineated the specific groups that were welcome in, and appropriate for, CABA (López, 2013) – as Macri later put it, in a press conference, the *vecino* is “a property owner, he [sic] that pays taxes, the citizen”, reiterating the similarities with *vecino*’s earliest incarnation. Through these repeated (re)presentations the *vecino* identity has become interpellated (Bayardo, 2013), and now carries significant cultural capital, providing a supposedly positive counterpoint to similarly commonplace yet derogatory terms like *villero*, *bolita*, and ‘neighbouring migrant’ (Caggiano and Segura, 2014). As will be demonstrated, the power of the *vecino* discourse lies in its ability to present an exclusory and particularistic identity in ostensibly inclusive and universalistic terms¹⁹¹, as only certain people are eligible to be this kind of *vecino*.

The prevalence of the discourse was something I witnessed throughout my fieldwork. I attended meetings organised by various groups intentionally self-defined by their neighbour-ness; many of those involved with the large protests discussed in Section 6.2.3 explicitly framed the *cacerolazos* around the need for *vecinos* to reclaim their city, and *vecinos* and *vecinocracia* were topics frequently raised by interviewees. The (at times self-) definitions people gave mapped closely on to the media and city government (re)presentations mentioned above, supporting the strength of the category’s uptake. People involved with the neighbourhood movements discussed below variously described *vecinos* as: “good people from nice *barrios*”, “real, proper *porteños*”, and “honest...hardworking citizens”. They were also seen as extremely important politically (cf.

¹⁹⁰ *Vecinocracia* is hard to translate, but refers to the process described in this section: a form of politics which features an implicitly white, middle-class *vecino* as its main protagonist. The word comes from a book by *Simbiosis Cultural* which discusses the occupation of the *Parque Indoamericano*. This occupation is the focus of Chapter 8.

¹⁹¹ Similar processes revolving ‘public space’ are discussed in Chapter 8.

Painter, 2012), and fundamental in struggles against supposedly rising insecurity in CABA. However, such glowing accounts were given by people who saw themselves as *vecinos*, and can therefore be seen as forms of self-aggrandisement. Nevertheless, while ‘non-*vecinos*’ I spoke to were less positive in their descriptions, they still recognised the importance of the figure. Those who felt marginalised by the term (or at least recognised the marginalisation despite the fact that they could pass for a *vecino*) saw *vecinos* as “self-interested”, “reactionary”, and even “racist”. Whatever the description, there was always a normative aspect to the character – even if it remained implicit – and a recognition that the meaning has shifted, something that a member of *La Alameda* acknowledged:

People who talk about neighbours [now] are generally not progressive. The word neighbour has changed, because in 2001 and in those struggles it was seen as more of an inclusive term with the neighbourhood assemblies, but now it has become more of a divide (Marcos).

Nevertheless, while it is true that a more open understanding of *vecinx* was seen as central to struggles after 2001 (see Sitrin, 2006), more conservative understandings were certainly present. For instance, *Colectivo Situaciones* have argued that communitarian elements of the concept had become ‘privatised’ and “interpellat[ed through] the modality of the *consumer*: the person who has taken refuge in her privacy after the fall of the law, politics, and state regulation.” For the group, as resistance fragmented and ultimately stagnated, the *vecina* became “constituted by retreat, fear of exclusion, and consumption in the home” (2002: 169). This process has continued as neighbourhood movements within CABA have become increasingly parochial, rarefied, and dominated by those people seen in Section 6.2.3 (Mijal Orihuela and Tella, 2013), radical territorial movements now being more common in the *conurbano* (Mason-Deese, forthcoming; Section 7.3).

Consequently, *Simbioisis Cultural* argues that *vecino* is now grounded in “shared values of property, fear, consumption and security” (2011: 33). Much like territory, *vecino*’s power lies in its ability to naturalise multiple discourses, and, as Chapter 8 demonstrates, ultimately justify a series of racist, xenophobic, and classist comments, policies, and actions. Macri’s definition (“a property owner, he [sic] that pays taxes, the citizen”) also concretises the link between *vecino* and citizen. As discussed in earlier chapters, the citizenship of

'undesirable' groups has been 'denied' in order to maintain a desired national identity: white and European (Guano, 2004). 'Neighbouring migrants' have been cast as illegitimate (irrespective of their actual citizenship status), but importantly this category also contains people of Argentine descent, as well as second and third generation immigrants (Gavazzo, 2012). As argued, citizenship is therefore tied up not only with nationality, but also intersects closely with class and race. Therefore this discursive manoeuvre allows the perpetuation of the 'Argentine myth' without seeming racist – the 'denial of citizenship' is part of the broader denial of race discussed in Chapter 2 (see Canache et al., 2014; Dulitzky, 2005).

The move from citizen to *vecino* (*vecinocracia*) takes this process even further. With the consolidation of the *Patria Grande* scheme¹⁹², more and more people are eligible for, and have claimed, citizenship, and thus it is a decreasingly exclusive category. However, *vecino* in its current incarnation is more specific than 'citizen', yet seems more neutral. It is also intimately and inextricably linked to identities of *barrios*, which, as we have seen in the previous section, can be very distinct. In this sense to be a *vecino* in one part of the city does not guarantee it in another, and like whiteness, *vecino* is relational and mutable. The concept makes clear the importance of spatial/territorial identity in shaping attitudes towards groups (including 'neighbouring migrants'). *Vecino* is such a powerful concept as it serves to naturalise and at times reify the symbolic boundaries mentioned in the previous section.

In this sense the *vecino* represents everything the 'neighbouring migrant' is not. *Vecinos* are *in place* across the majority of CABA and their territorial claims carry real weight. But as stated, the two identities are dialectically intertwined – this is especially apparent as many movements of *vecinos* see struggles against 'neighbouring migrants' as fundamental to their purpose, demonstrated in this section and Chapter 8. Like the 'neighbouring migrant', the *vecino* is made up of intersections between race, class, and national identity. These intersectional identities are not only at the opposite end of the social hierarchy to 'neighbouring migrant' identities; they are also territorialised in a

¹⁹² As mentioned in Chapter 4, this scheme started in 2006 and allows any immigrant from MERCOSUR (as well as Bolivia and Chile) to work in Argentina freely, as long as they have no criminal record in the last five years and a passport.

mutually reinforcing relationship with *barrio* identity, where *vecinos* are typically from *barrios* higher in the hierarchy discussed in Section 7.1.2; and people from those *barrios* are *vecinos*. As with the construction of ‘neighbouring migrants’ and *barrio* identity, it is therefore important to unpack the intersectional processes that produce *vecinos* and *vecinocracia*.

The idea of *vecinocracia* is neatly captured by a story I was told early in my research. Members of *La Alameda* attended a neighbourhood protest in *Caballito* against rising insecurity, which took the shape of an evening march around supposedly dangerous areas of the *barrio*. Before the demonstration started, some other protesters came over and said that Ximena, a Bolivian member of *La Alameda*, was not a *vecina* and was therefore unwelcome. She was told that the protest was by *vecinos* and for *vecinos*. It was against crime, insecurity, and people like her were the problem, while ‘proper *vecinos*’ such as the other, Argentine, members were encouraged to stay. Tellingly, even though Ximena lived in the *barrio* (and her comrades did not), raising this point made the situation worse: the fact that *their barrio* had someone *like her* living in it was exactly the problem that needed to be resolved by the *vecinos*. This example illustrates the power of *vecinocracia*. The fact that you live in a *barrio* is not sufficient for you to be classed as a neighbour. As members of *Simbiosis Cultural* explained to me the discourse is about more than simply property ownership, and is particularly racially coded. The power lies in the hands of those able to decide who can and who cannot be a *vecino*, and in many ways this is about systems of racial and class domination, which become entrenched in competing territorial claims, only some of which are deemed legitimate – those by *vecinos*.

The group, *Buenos Vecinos Once*, provides another interesting example. Based in the central *barrio* of *Once*, it is a recent neighbourhood organisation that focuses on combating insecurity and issues in the neighbourhood, and I attended many of its meetings, protests, and events. *Once* is an extremely divided *barrio*, and home to significant populations of ‘neighbouring migrants’. It also contains major transport links, and is one of the two main points where the cheaper long-distance buses (from both within and outside of Argentina) arrive.¹⁹³ As an important node for low cost transport, it is one of the first points of entry to

¹⁹³ The other is *Liniers* which has train links with *Once*. *Liniers* is discussed in Section 7.3.1.

the city for new migrants, and is also a way in and out of the city for those living in the *conurbano*. Because of this it is a central *barrio* in which ‘neighbouring migrants’ are often very visible (especially in the mornings when many of the buses arrive, and families of migrants can be seen resting/meeting contacts in the main square *Plaza Miserere*), and there is¹⁹⁴ also a large number of ‘informal’ street sellers based in the area – the majority of whom are ‘neighbouring migrants’. However, it is also witnessing rapid gentrification linked to the building of the nearby *Abasto* shopping mall (see Janoschka et al., 2014; Miller, 2012, 2013). These factors have combined to make *Once* a neighbourhood with much interaction between various social groups: an extremely multiterritorial *barrio*.

Buenos Vecinos Once claim its intention is to challenge inequality and improve conditions for *all* neighbours in the *barrio*, but its first main ‘success’ was getting the city government to evict and clear (violently) street sellers from the main streets and *plazas* of *Once*.¹⁹⁵ Street sellers were described as *extranjeros* (foreigners) and much attention was paid to their ‘illegal occupation’ of the *vecinos*’ ‘public space’.¹⁹⁶ Apparently, these people did not deserve to be there, and their presence underpinned rising insecurity. Crucially these people were not *vecinos* (let alone *buenos vecinos*). Similarly to the story above, even though many of the hawkers lived in the neighbourhood, because of their social standing as ‘neighbouring migrants’ – dictated by the intersections between (among other things) class, race, and national identity – they were unable to be *in place* there. The *buenos vecinos* felt that their presence was affecting the territorial identity/integrity of the *barrio* – something which, this chapter argues, shapes subjectivity, in the form of (intersectional) class composition. The evictions were seen by the group as positive, and were explicitly justified as being in the interests of all *Once*’s *vecinos*. This is therefore another example of the power of the spatial political identity to mask discrimination against ‘neighbouring migrants’. Combined with the story from *Caballito*, it also gives a good example of the power contained in *vecino*.

¹⁹⁴ Or at least were at the time of the research.

¹⁹⁵ This process has clear similarities with the examples of ‘territorial purification’ that were precursors to the building of *Abasto* (Carman, 2006).

¹⁹⁶ For whom ‘public space’ is allowed is discussed in Chapter 8.

Finally, the experiences I had with the *Recoleta Insegura* neighbourhood meeting¹⁹⁷ provide another example of how *vecino* has changed, and how and by whom it is currently used. *Recoleta* is one of the most exclusive and affluent *barrios* in Buenos Aires¹⁹⁸, and this fortnightly *asamblea* started in early 2013 in response to worries about insecurity. A world away from the post-crisis *asambleas*, far from taking place on street corners or other examples of reclaimed ‘public space’, meetings are held in a heavily securitised church. Despite patently being a foreigner, and explaining I was a researcher living in a different *barrio*, I was welcomed with open arms and immediately referred to as *vecino*. During discussions in one meeting, a key member of *Buenos Vecinos Once* was trying to build links between similar and sympathetic groups. Interestingly, despite being a *buena vecina* in her own neighbourhood and its *asambleas*, and someone who played a central role in the eviction of the hawkers, she described herself as living in a “very poor *barrio*” when in *Recoleta*. This supports the points made in earlier quotations and in the work of Grimson (2008): territorial identities are relational and embodied, when in other *barrios*. What is more, the *Once vecina* repeatedly referred to other members of the group as *vecinos*, but at no point was the compliment returned.¹⁹⁹ Except in extreme conditions such as those described in Chapter 8, *vecino* typically ‘travels up’ but not down. Echoing the ideas surrounding people’s movement between *barrios*, those in lower socio-economic positions refer to those ‘above’ them as *vecinos* but this is not typically reciprocated. In the same meeting, despite members of *Recoleta Insegura* refusing to refer to the woman from *Once* as a *vecina*, they spoke with great pride about how their struggles had inspired “fellow *vecinos*” in Montevideo to form their own neighbourhood group against insecurity. Like whiteness (see Joseph, 2000: 335), neighbour-ness can be read across national boundaries, and these examples demonstrate how the symbolic boundaries between *barrios* in Buenos Aires have very real consequences.

The examples above help unpack the intersectional processes that have gone in to the construction of *vecino*. For instance, being Argentine is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for being a *vecino* but, as we have seen, some nationalities are certainly

¹⁹⁷ These include the example of the anti-brothel protest given in Section 7.1.2.

¹⁹⁸ For specific data see Table 8.1.

¹⁹⁹ A similar fate befell a member of the *Versailles* neighbourhood group in a later *Recoleta asamblea*, as they were similarly deemed inferior due to the identity of their *barrio*.

precluded. Instead, whiteness plays an important role, and can afford privileged access to the *vecino* identity. However, as shown elsewhere in the thesis, whiteness is not only mutable and relational, but it also contains (and intersects with) a range of other privileges, identities, and structures – it is particularly intertwined with class. A territorial identity/subjectivity itself, *vecino* is also closely linked to *barrio* identity. But again, living in a specific *barrio* is neither necessary nor sufficient, and although attachment to certain *barrios* (predominantly those in the ‘south’ of the city) can limit people’s ability to be a *vecino*, as Section 7.3.1 and Chapter 8 demonstrate this is not absolute. Instead being a *vecino* is often linked to *barrios*’ imagined identities in such a way that the multiterritorial nature of neighbourhoods is overlooked, and, as in Section 7.1.2, the territorial claims of ‘neighbouring migrants’ in areas such as *Palermo* are marginalised. As stated, identities of *vecinos* and *barrios* are mutually reinforcing, and the rise of *vecinocracia* helps to perpetuate the idea of CABA as a ‘privileged territory’ (Stratta and Barrera, 2009), which again overlooks a range of counter-hegemonic territorial claims. But most importantly for ‘neighbouring migrants’, *vecinocracia* powerfully perpetuates such discriminatory politics in an ostensibly neutral way, and is grounded in territorial identities that have the power to obfuscate the processes that went in to their creation.

However, much as in the discussions surrounding ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Section 6.2, conflicting attitudes towards the roles of race and class in shaping the *vecino* discourse can prove extremely telling. In an interview with a judge the idea of *vecino* came up:

Separation between *vecinos* and non-*vecinos* has more to do with class than ethnicity. I think people who come from Bolivia but are well-off are considered *vecinos*, [and] can be inserted into Argentine society without any problem. With Paraguayans it is the same, and with any nationality. I do not think that the discriminatory factor that separates *vecinos* and non-*vecinos* is necessarily ethnicity. I think the worst situation is a different ethnicity and poverty. But I think poor Argentines are also not classed as *vecinos* (Javier).

This quotation raises some significant issues. It acknowledges the importance of intersectionality (“the worst situation is a different ethnicity and poverty”), and makes the extremely important point that “poor Argentines are also not classed as *vecinos*”. However,

the judge's words should of course be considered critically, as the idea that migrants of "any nationality" could be considered a *vecino* contradicts the experiences of the research. As discussed in Section 6.2.1, the force of racial discrimination in Buenos Aires is such that some people are defined permanently as 'neighbouring migrants'. Therefore the idea that a wealthy Bolivian could become a *vecino* – given a suitably lofty class position – was contested by 'neighbouring migrants'. This level of emphasis on class was, however, commonplace among more affluent *porteños* such as Javier, who often lacked serious engagement with the importance of race; this demonstrated the role white privilege can play in shaping attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants'.

In conclusion, the figure of the *vecino* has long played an important role in Buenos Aires, yet it has changed drastically. While its current usage is a world away from the radical and inclusive form that emerged after the 2001 crisis (cf. Colectivo Situaciones, 2002), it still emphasises the explicit links between territory and political identities. As the city has become increasingly gentrified, and 'public space' controlled and privatised, the term has gained a much narrower meaning. As stated, just as territory has the power to obfuscate and naturalise, so has territorial identity. *Barrios* in Buenos Aires have distinct identities and hierarchies, created by processes of intersectional class struggles. *Vecinos* are the protagonists in these processes, but are also shaped by their consequences. This is particularly important for 'neighbouring migrants' as the discourse can legitimise a whole series of discriminatory discourses, as will be shown in Chapter 8. The *vecino* can therefore throw light on the changing role of neighbourhood politics (Painter, 2012), and the importance of territory on 'neighbouring migrants' lives in CABA.

7.3: The *conurbano*

This section focuses on depictions of the *conurbano* and how these shape and reinforce territorial identities. First, it expands on issues raised in Section 7.1.1 by exploring how CABA's gentrification affects the growth of the *conurbano*, and demonstrates how CABA and the *conurbano* make and remake each other relationally. Then, through a focus on liminal, border *barrios*, the territorial claims of 'neighbouring migrants' are expanded upon, as are arguments about territorial identity. Section 7.3.2 then focuses on examples of territory

aiding class recomposition in the *conurbano*, demonstrating that territorial attachment is not always as ghettoising as is typically witnessed in CABA.

7.3.1: Relationality and liminal barrios

Chapter 5 traced the 'ejection' of poor 'neighbouring migrants' by various city governments, which deemed this a necessary step for the creation/maintenance of CABA's desired territorial identity. More than just a consequence of gentrification, this is a much longer process of 'territorial purification', seeking to realise and then maintain a white, European-influenced, middle-class identity for the city (see Carman, 2006; Stratta and Barrera, 2009). These ideas were touched upon in an interview with a housing activist:

The city government...wants to take them [the poor and 'neighbouring migrants'] out of the city. Take them to the *conurbano*...throw them all out! And what happens...is the city gets increasingly expensive, pressing everything and increasing the value of the property [and] land (Agustin).

Agustin's claim also ties in with earlier points from Section 7.1.1 about the rising pressure that is being placed on southern *barrios* and their inhabitants as the north/south divide moves and CABA becomes more striated. An obvious consequence of these 'ejections' is significant population growth in the *conurbano*. The rapid growth of the *conurbano* caused by changing patterns of migration was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and it is especially interesting given how constant CABA's population has remained, something that reiterates the ways in which CABA is a privileged territory. These ideas were mentioned by Elena:

In the *conurbano* [over] the last two years...the population has grown a lot [from] people who are being kicked out of the city. Because of gentrification [there is] a displaced and surplus population from the federal capital.

CABA's gentrification and 'territorial purification' are therefore seen to contribute to the heterogeneity of the *conurbano* (and as discussed in Section 6.3.2, this is affecting political action and class composition); thus the fates of CABA and BAMA are intimately linked. Further, given that 'neighbouring migrants' are disproportionately likely to be ejected from CABA, the links between 'neighbouring migration' and the *conurbano* are apparent. Consequently, as with the 'south' of the city, the *conurbano* is often a stigmatised territory, a

view which in turn affects the lives of its inhabitants, again this emphasises the morphogenetic relationship between territory and political activity/everyday life.

The relationship between CABA and the *conurbano* and the consequence this has for ‘neighbouring migrants’ are illustrated by considering the *Tren Blanco* (named after its colour), a free train service for *cartoneros* that ran between 2001 and 2007 (Página 12, 15/08/07).²⁰⁰ The service ferried *cartoneros* into CABA’s central stations in the morning, and out again to the *conurbano* at night. Reinforcing arguments in Section 7.1.2, the presence of *cartoneros*, who are disproportionately ‘neighbouring migrants’ (Chronopoulos, 2006; Parizeau, 2013), in the richer *barrios* of CABA is appropriate during work hours, but not at other times – the train was funded to ensure that they did not remain any longer than was needed in CABA (Gorbán, 2006). As reflected in Figure 7.1, since the 2001 crisis *cartoneros* may have become part of everyday life for middle-class *porteños*, but they remain othered (see Domenech and Magliano, 2008; Grimson, 2008). As stated by Laura, who is involved with the *cartoneros*’ trade union: people know they exist, (begrudgingly) appreciate the work that they do, but if possible do not want to see them (see also Parizeau, 2013). As well as reiterating the need for a temporally-sensitive approach to being in place/out of place, this example further emphasises the relationality of the *conurbano* and CABA, as they are reliant upon each other. Their identities are inextricably linked and through the movement of people constantly make and remake each other (Caggiano and Segura, 2014; Licitra, 2011). Although the train no longer runs, a number of interviewees all made similar points that *conurbano*-based migrants working in CABA – particularly in more affluent *barrios* – have their presence tolerated during work hours, but are then expected to leave. As one *Recoletan* said, “immigrants are allowed here [*Recoleta*] until 6pm, when they have to back to their homes in *provincia*²⁰¹”.

The strength of the symbolic boundary between CABA and the *conurbano*, and how this is reified, materially, through a series of large motorways (Blanco, 1999; Grimson, 2008), was mentioned in Chapter 5. Throughout the research, these boundaries certainly contributed to the idea that the *conurbano* is something ‘other’. As one expatriate whose

²⁰⁰ The service was stopped as it was no longer deemed financially viable: the rolling-stock that was used had become so run down. However, the end carriages of current trains typically have no seating and are used by *cartoneros*.

²⁰¹ This word is often used interchangeably with *conurbano*.

work takes him all over BAMA put it, “between the *capital federal* and the *conurbano* it is like a whole different world”. While such remarks may seem hyperbolic, they were very much indicative of opinions held by many of the middle class *porteños* I came into contact with. The *conurbano* really is seen as a different world (see Licitra, 2011), and the idea of how ‘unsafe’ it is came up repeatedly. Another quotation that emphasises some of these ideas comes from an article about the rise in numbers of ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires, where one commentator says that the city “is European up until *General Paz* [the motorway], then after that not at all”.²⁰² Again this is an overly simplistic view, but shows how for some there really is a belief that CABA is a privileged territory, which is represented by its ‘Europeanness’.

These examples emphasise the relationship between the *conurbano* and CABA. In a very real sense they are linked by the fact that the *conurbano* houses much of CABA’s workforce and thus plays a fundamental role in capital accumulation.²⁰³ Further, the *conurbano’s* status as CABA’s ‘other’ is in many ways a territorial analogue of the role ‘neighbouring migrants’ play in the construction and maintenance of a white, European, and middle-class *porteño/vecino* identity (Joseph, 2000; Garguín, 2007). Chapters 4 and 6 explored this intersectional relationship of alterity which replicates colonial power relations (e.g. Fanon, 1967; Said, 1995) whereby “[t]he negative construction of non-European others is finally what founds and sustains European identity itself” (Hardt and Negri, 2000: 124). In this sense, once othered, the non-European, ‘neighbouring migrant’ plays a central role. Similarly CABA’s identity is inextricably linked to the *conurbano* (Licitra, 2011). The *conurbano* thus cannot be dismissed as marginal, and instead it is important to understand how centre and periphery constantly remake each other (Dovey and King, 2011; Hart, 2002, 2004; Lawson, 2007), thereby challenging entrenched binaries such as ‘formal’/‘informal’ and centre/periphery itself (Dovey, 2011; Stavrides, 2010; Varley, 2013). What is more, the two areas’ territorial embodiment of the aforementioned identities serves to reinforce the relationship and othering, and again emphasises how important territorial identities can be.

²⁰² The article and discussion can be found here: <http://www.diarioregistrado.com/sociedad/85758-argentina-sin-inmigrantes-limitrofes--una-repudiable-campana.html>

²⁰³ It is also crucial in the circulation of capital, which was why the blockades and *piquetes* of the bridges separating CABA from the *conurbano* were so powerful in the wake of the 2001 crisis (see Colectivo Situaciones and MTD Solano, 2002; Grimson, 2008; Hardt and Negri, 2009).

These points are reinforced by a focus on *Liniers*, which throughout my research was represented to me as an ‘immigrant *barrio*’. For instance, Arturo’s quotation in Section 7.1.1 emphasised how comfortable and *in place* he felt there, with other Bolivian immigrants visible and many shops and stalls selling Bolivian items – typically resplendent in the colours of the Bolivian flag (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5) – and, supporting this, many other Bolivian immigrants told me how they spent much of their free time in *Liniers*. However, the presence of other immigrant groups should not be ignored, and I was told by people living in *Liniers* about an ongoing feud between Bolivian and Peruvian groups over control over certain key commercial streets. Similarly, as discussed below, there is a number of non-immigrant territorial claims to *Liniers*, emphasising multiterritoriality. Nevertheless, *Liniers* was typically described to me as the archetypal ‘little Bolivia’ (Bermudes, 2012), a type of ghettoised Bolivian territory discussed in Section 7.1.1. This reinforces the idea that Bolivians are not only the archetypal ‘neighbouring migrant’, but also that the category ‘Bolivian’ is often used very loosely – ideas expanded upon in Chapter 8.



Figure 7.4: Clothing shop in *Liniers*.

Source: <http://comoelpulpo.wordpress.com/2011/08/17/bas-little-bolivia/>



Figure 7.5: Food shops in *Liniers*.

Source: <http://comoelpulpo.wordpress.com/2011/08/17/bas-little-bolivia/>

Liniers's position on the edge of CABA makes it an interesting case. As argued in Chapter 5 and Section 7.1.1, gentrification in CABA, while significant, remains incomplete, and areas in the decreasing 'south' are where 'neighbouring migrants' living in CABA cluster (Caggiano and Segura, 2014). These *barrios* with significant immigrant populations therefore occupy a liminal space: although they lie within the privileged territory of CABA, by bordering the *conurbano* their territorial identity is such that 'neighbouring migrants' there are not necessarily out of place.²⁰⁴ Reflection on such liminal *barrios* is therefore similarly revealing for analysis of the moving north/south divide, and what these symbolic and material borders demonstrate. *Liniers* functions as a fascinating meeting point between CABA and the *conurbano*, and accordingly the multiterritorial conflicts and claims that take place reveal the intersectional processes that have constructed both territorial identities.

²⁰⁴ Although as Chapter 8 demonstrates, 'neighbouring migrants' are not always in place, and their presence can lead to conflict, especially as these *barrios* are most affected by CABA's housing crisis.

These ideas can be seen in a quotation from a newspaper article about a new campaign set up by *La Alameda* members, which is attempting to combat organised crime and insecurity in *Liniers*:

On the edge of the federal capital, crossed by the *Sarmiento* railroad tracks and surrounded by the *General Paz Avenue* and Highway *Perito Moreno*, *Liniers* offers a suitable territory for criminals, who can immediately cross into *provincia* to escape or "cool" for a while from the eyes of the law, taking advantage of the complete lack of coordination between the two jurisdictions....

In this leafy, middle-class neighbourhood, the crime map, which is updated constantly, details the location of 15 brothels, 21 clandestine sewing workshops, dozens of kiosks selling drugs, illegal gambling stops, shops and salvage yards [used for] plotting robberies and assaults in homes, businesses and public spaces, [thus] delineating the contours of what they themselves [the group of *vecinos*] describe as a "liberated zone".²⁰⁵

The quotation immediately makes reference to the motorways that surround the *barrio* and act as such a strong reminder of the differences between CABA and the *conurbano*, reiterating the link between material and symbolic borders. But perhaps most telling is the idea that *Liniers* is a "suitable territory for criminals", given that its location makes it possible to make incursions into CABA and then escape into the *conurbano*. The *conurbano* is being portrayed as a different world, as some sort of lawless area, in direct contrast to CABA. It is as if such behaviour is to be expected in the *conurbano*, but, as the second part of the quotation demonstrates, not within the city itself.²⁰⁶ However, the contrast between the second and first part of the quotation is extremely marked. When referring to the activities of the group of *vecinos* from *Liniers*, the *barrio* has now become classed as a "leafy, middle-class neighbourhood", or at the very least it is proposed that this is what it could be if control was regained by *vecinos*. *Liniers* is therefore a prime example of a contested multiterritory, and its liminality raises important issues surrounding the discursive construction of the *conurbano* as some sort of homogeneously chaotic other to the civilised CABA.

²⁰⁵ The article from *Clarín* can be found at: http://www.clarin.com/zona/vecinos-Liniers-asedio-delito-organizado_0_527347463.html

²⁰⁶ These ideas are thoroughly explored in Chapter 8.

Nevertheless, *Liniers*'s association with immigrants (in particular 'Bolivians') and its location have led to it becoming quite stigmatised (Melella, 2013; Mijal Orihuela and Tella, 2013). A member of the group discussed above cited both of these reasons as the cause for the supposed rise in crime, and said that "*Liniers* is no longer a nice place to live, it is now very dangerous". In many ways, as the *barrio* had come to be seen as in place for migrants, it has simultaneously started to be out of place for more middle class *porteños*, and it is for this reason that the *vecinos* are so keen to 'reclaim their *barrio*'. Often areas where migrants feel 'in place' are the same areas that are territorially stigmatised: the *villas*, parts of the *conurbano*, *Liniers* and other liminal *barrios*. These stigmatised areas often get portrayed as immigrant or ethnic neighbourhoods as part of the othering processes so central to *porteñidad*; a process which helps to perpetuate ideas of whiteness that are coded in terms of nationality. The fact that migrants are in place in these *barrios* can unfortunately reproduce and solidify the idea that these negative identities are in some sense inherent to 'neighbouring migrants', and again the morphogenetic relationship between territory and intersectionality is seen. Understandably, because of the pressures placed on areas within CABA, and the relatively few areas where 'neighbouring migrants' can feel in place on their own terms, 'neighbouring migrants' are keen to consolidate *their* places/territories, and this contributes to the ghettoisation already mentioned. However, this has the problem that it yet further reinforces the links between stigmatisation of both a territory and its inhabitants. *Liniers*, its liminal position, and the various identities ascribed to it, therefore provide an important example that helps tease out the relationship between CABA and the *conurbano* and this interaction's consequences.

However, just as depictions of CABA as homogeneously affluent or European have been problematised, it is important to do the same with the *conurbano*. Chapter 5 discussed the growth of gated communities predominantly within northern parts of BAMA (Pírez, 2002; Thuillier, 2005; Roitman and Phelps, 2011), and it should be noted that some of BAMA's most affluent and exclusive neighbourhoods – for example *San Isidro* – are to be found in the *conurbano*. As stated, the *conurbano* has been described as 'islands of the rich' in 'oceans of poverty' (Tella et al., 2007: 146), something María, a migration lawyer, echoed:

People think it must be dangerous as it is *provincia*, and it is not *Zona Norte*, but bits of it are surprisingly affluent. It changes very quickly, it is not a whole single big

barrio: there are a lot of very wealthy people right next to a kind of migrant worker holding pen.

The *conurbano* should also be understood as a multiterritory, yet the dominant idea explored above tends not to fit this image. Further, in something resembling an inversion of the immigrant *barrios* within CABA, it is worth noting the ghettoisation of affluent areas within the *conurbano*. This point is obvious with reference to gated communities, but the ghettoisation extends beyond these. Returning to topic of *San Isidro*, an interviewee (with relatives living in the *barrio*) explained to me how in 2009 a number of walls had been built around the outside of the neighbourhood in order to “make it safer”, by dividing it from the surrounding *barrios* in which many ‘neighbouring migrants’ live. The wall was the idea of the mayor of *San Isidro*, Gustavo Posse, who said that it was necessary to “help [the] honest people” who lived in the neighbourhood – the *vecinos*. Other groups disagreed, however, and members of the lorry drivers’ union toppled much of the wall, and argued that it discriminated against the many people who worked, but could not afford to live, in *San Isidro*. The mayor of the neighbouring *San Fernando* (the area from which separation was deemed particularly necessary) went even further with his words, saying the wall was “an exercise in discrimination and xenophobia” (La Gaceta, 09/04/09). The wall is therefore a prime example of in place/out of place, as it was built to keep migrants not only *out* of one *barrio*, but *in* another. Thus in the *conurbano*, like CABA, inequality is manifested territorially, and intersectional power dynamics can become reinforced by these territorial divisions.

7.3.2: Territorial recomposition

Extending ideas from Section 7.1.1, this section explores how territorial attachments can aid class recomposition, not just serve to ghettoise and decompose. The first point to be made is how the difference in ‘territorial pressure’ outside of CABA does have an impact on the everyday lives of ‘neighbouring migrants’. Within CABA, it has been argued that the external pressures placed on ‘neighbouring migrants’ can lead to their ghettoisation, and that this can, in turn, perpetuate discrimination and segregation between groups. However, the relative lack of pressure on the *conurbano* and its heterogeneity (as discussed above) means that this is not always the case (Licitra, 2011). When asked if migrants living in the city face different problems from those in the *conurbano*, Luis from *Simbiosis Cultural* said:

What happens is that things are mixed together much more in the *conurbano*. In fact it [the *conurbano*] is a place that is...thoroughly migrant...[Whereas in CABA people] want to be separated from the internal immigration or [immigrants] from bordering countries that they don't like.

While Luis overstates that the *conurbano* is “thoroughly migrant”, the point is important, and there are fewer striations than in CABA. Of course this is not to say that none exist – many interviewees made the point that *villas* in the *conurbano* are often still divided along ethnic and national lines (see Bastia, 2015), and the earlier discussion of *Villa Celina* also supports this – but that it is more possible for alternative territorial claims to be made. It is also interesting to discuss further the idea of the *conurbano* being “thoroughly migrant”. While many media and city government depictions of the *conurbano* stress its apparent danger, insecurity, and poverty (see Bettatis, 2009; Van Gelder, 2010; Van Gelder et al., 2013), they also repeatedly make explicit links between these problems and the presence of ‘neighbouring migrants’ (Caggiano and Seguro, 2014; Dalle, 2013; Gavazzo, 2014; López, 2012). As said, the ‘othering’ of ‘neighbouring migrants’ that underpins ‘inverted alterity’ (Laborde, 2011) can be seen to be represented territorially by the *conurbano* (Licitra, 2011).

Nevertheless, despite the obvious examples of territorially bounded national divides, in a number of interviews with academics and activists (some of whom are migrants) who work and live in the *conurbano*, it was repeatedly explained to me that nationality often lost its salience as a category. Although this process of transcending nationality was most apparent among groups that organised territorially in the *conurbano*, it was not exclusive to such groups. Precisely because the *conurbano* is populated by a large number of ‘neighbouring migrants’ – including many people displaced from CABA – these national differences were seen to become less important. This is not to say that they completely disappear, and expressions of nationalism can be very strong during festivals and national holidays important in the migrants’ ‘country of origin’ (e.g. Gavazzo, 2006; Gavazzo and Halpern, 2012). To support this point, it is worth quoting at length an interview with Elena about her experiences in *La Matanza* (see Figure 5.1):

In *La Matanza* there are lots of migrants, but people do not... really see those type of [national] categories as much....There are other categories that become much more important than nationality...mainly [things] like ‘unemployed’ or being a woman...or

being part of that territorial organisation....In [CABA], areas have very specific identities, and people are affected by these. But it [is] really different in the *conurbano*...there is not really that sort of identity in the different areas. Groups identify with where they are, but it is not as obvious and as played out as in the more affluent areas in the capital.

So while the number of migrants in the *conurbano* (in this case in *La Matanza*) is mentioned, the importance of these categories to migrants is questioned. As discussed in the previous chapter, self-definition as a migrant can be an important step in building collective identities, but it can also preclude class solidarity, and Section 7.1.1 argued that the territorial pressures of CABA can reinforce and perpetuate this. However, as Soledad, a researcher into social movements and housing struggles in the south of the city and the *conurbano*, put it the situation is fundamentally different in the *conurbano*:

In the *conurbano* solidarity is not necessarily shaped by class or nationality, but more from *being there*. It is the attachment to a place that matters...Identity around nationality can sometimes sort of 'disappear', [but] things such as gender and employment status [remain] important. Although I will say that Bolivian migrants often have a difficult time, and sometimes come under attack from other groups, and other groups of migrants.

Soledad's description of the increased levels of discrimination suffered by Bolivians in the *conurbano* certainly chimes with the earlier quotation from Mayra and Luis. She argued that this reflected the important role race and indigeneity play, as Bolivian migrants suffered more owing to their physical appearances, and the cultural traits that are associated with them. So although both quotations emphasise the strength of territorial identities, these should not be seen as so powerful that they entirely replace other, intersecting identities and structures. Instead there should be recognition of the processes that formed them, and the way the territorial identities and these processes reinforce each other.

Elena notes that territorial identities tend to be less "specific" than in CABA, and this alludes to different interpretations of the concept of territory itself. In CABA territorial identities and attitudes are often ascribed by those in power from the top down, and often heavily influenced by the state and the interests of capital. *Barrios* may be multiterritories, but as the city becomes increasingly gentrified and striated alternative territorial claims are

increasingly difficult to make. In response, ‘neighbouring migrants’ are often becoming ghettoised, and this spatial separation can reinforce discrimination, and contribute to class decomposition. Territorial identities are therefore extremely strong, but given that they tend to be ascribed by those in power, they can be extremely disempowering for migrants – and the working class more broadly. However, as argued in Chapter 2, there are multiple types of territory, which can have different political connotations. Within CABA the dominant understandings of territory tend to share similarities with more traditional approaches, which emphasise control, ownership, and well delineated boundaries that play an important role in dividing who is within or without (e.g. Elden, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). However, as stated, the type of territorial subject and subjectivity is dependent upon the types of territory that are invoked. Therefore, while in CABA territorial struggles can lead to class *decomposition*, in the *conurbano* the opposite can be the case: territory can promote solidarity among groups, and thus class *recomposition*. This requires, however, territories and their related identities to be created, from the bottom up, by groups in struggle.

Alternative understandings of territory underpinned the work of many social movements I engaged with, and was a common topic of discussion with activists. For the groups organising territorially, territorial attachment, instead of further dividing an already fractured working class (as above), was seen to have the potential to unite, foster difference, and encourage the emergence of different politics and subjectivities, thus resembling the kind of ‘subaltern territory’ discussed in Chapter 2 (Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Escobar, 2008; Porto Gonçalves, 2001; Stratta and Barrera, 2009; Sitrin, 2012; Zibechi, 2012). For example, one member of a movement based in the southern *conurbano* said that when “organising territorially...there is no inside/outside of the movement...It is...about trying to build power in [your own] neighbourhood”, thus emphasising the importance of territorial, neighbourhood attachment, but in a more open and relational way. Similarly, a Paraguayan militant living in the northern *conurbano* explained that alternative understandings of territory underpinned her group’s politics of *autogestión*, which was seeking to combat a “neoliberal capitalist territoriality” that controls, divides, and commodifies: a predominantly state territory that perpetuated injustices. In contrast, she spoke about how their group’s understanding of territory tried to be more inclusive and helped to generate new identities, social relations, and senses of belonging embodied by “territorial subjects”. She was also

adamant that approaches to territory are always manifestations of politics, through which it was possible to “impose a particular worldview”, often insidiously. As in many other discussions I witnessed and was involved with, the idea that different forms of politics and understandings of power both require and beget different forms of territory came through very strongly (see Clare and Habermehl, 2016).

But potentially most importantly for ‘neighbouring migrants’, people and groups said they found such territorial organising much easier and arguably more successful in the *conurbano* (see also Mason-Deese, 2012). As stated, the particular attachment to territory aided solidarity and could at times transcend national differences, but it also aided political activity: people saw their territorial activities as explicitly political, but also fundamental to their survival and any potential future successes. Again, Elena spoke about the situation in *La Matanza*:

I actually think [a territorial focus] makes it easier...It helps to have each group very grounded...[But when] grounded in [your] own neighbourhood, certain problems have come up that are not limited to their neighbourhood...The problems they face go way beyond the neighbourhood. So it’s the whole police force, for example...and so being grounded allows them to connect to other groups on the basis of those specific issues, and allows something a bit more concrete. So it has actually been enabling.

More open and relational forms of territorial organising can therefore help build bonds of solidarity and aid the circulation of struggles (see Cleaver, 2004; Marks, 2012; Shukaitis et al., 2007), thus affecting the political composition of those involved.

However, this is not to say that all such territorial organisation takes place exclusively in the *conurbano*, nor that all territorial organisation in the *conurbano* adopts the same approach. Although there are numerous examples of ‘subaltern territories’ in CABA, such as occupied factories, autonomous health clinics and schools, squats, and spaces for the neighbourhood *asambleas* (e.g. Sitrin, 2012; Trigona, 2014; Zibechi, 2012, 2013), in my experience, these supposedly ‘free territories’ (cf. Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014: 36-37) suffered from the pressures described in Chapter 5 and Section 7.1.1, and in some cases were becoming increasingly insular, or as one activist said “very inward-looking...parochial...and

closed off". Nevertheless, processes of gentrification and territorial purification remain incomplete, and pockets of territorial resistance, however inchoate, do exist – something which an understanding of *barrios* as multiterritories can help to unpack.

In this sense, the recomposition of class can be linked to the decomposition of traditional forms of territory. It is within 'cracks' (cf. Holloway, 2010) in the dominant territorial constructions that new forms of territorial subjectivities can emerge (see Stratta and Barrera, 2009). But as argued in Chapter 2, new political compositions are always immanent to previous technical compositions (Roggero, 2010: 205), and the same can be said for territorial subjectivities and compositions. The way in which territories are constructed reflects the political situation from which they emerge (Delaney, 2005). Expanding on the ideas put forward in Chapters 2 and 6, in Buenos Aires class, race, and national identity intersect and reinforce each other in specific ways, and this is reflected in the territorial constructions of *barrios*, as seen in Section 7.1.2. On the other hand, the *conurbano* as a multiterritory embodies, and is constructed by, different forms of intersectional power dynamics and structures. Importantly, the links with territory and politics work both ways. To repeat a point made earlier, while territory is shaped by political activity, once created, territory can then begin to influence future action. As has been discussed, the presence of 'neighbouring migrants' (as well as certain types of politics) can at once be seen as 'appropriate' in the *conurbano* but wholly 'inappropriate' in CABA. Territory, itself shaped by pre-existing (intersectional) class compositions, has the capacity to influence future (intersectional) political composition.

7.4: Conclusions

The chapter began by exploring how urban territory and space is intersectionally produced and (re)produced, creating an increasingly striated city. These processes have a number of consequences, and the pressures facing 'neighbouring migrants' have been shown to lead to ghettoisation, which is problematic as it can contribute to class decomposition. The importance of *barrios'* multiterritorial identities was then discussed, and it was demonstrated how these influence the behaviours of, and attitudes towards, 'neighbouring migrants'. What is more, these identities formed a hierarchy of *barrios* which reflected and reinforced the intersectional relationships discussed in Chapters 4 and 6. To expand on these

points the rise of the territorial subjectivity '*vecino*' was explored. By first putting it in historical perspective, the term's contemporary use was shown to resonate with much earlier understandings. It is therefore an insidiously exclusory term, unlike the radically inclusive idea of the *vecinx* that underpinned social movements in the wake of the 2001 economic crisis. The strength of the political discourses associated with the *vecino* – *vecinocracia* – was highlighted, with a particular focus on how this simultaneously marginalised 'neighbouring migrants' and promoted whiteness through the territorialisation, and ultimately normalisation, of intersectional power dynamics. Given that the above discussion focused on CABA, the chapter's final section complemented these arguments by exploring the *conurbano*. A particular focus on *Liniers* – a liminal, 'immigrant *barrio*' – demonstrated how CABA and the *conurbano* relationally make and remake each other. What is more, the ways in which 'neighbouring migrants' were variously in and out of place further highlighted the power of territorial identities. Finally, examples of class recomposition grounded in alternative territorial claims, as opposed to the class decomposition caused by ghettoisation within CABA, were discussed. It was shown that, in the *conurbano*, territorial identities can transcend other structures and identities in a way that benefits, not hinders, 'neighbouring migrants'.

As demonstrated, territorial identities carry significant weight (e.g. Keith and Pile, 1993; Martin, 2003; Cresswell, 2004; Taylor, 2010). However, without considering relationality (e.g. Massey, 1991; Paasi, 2009a, 2009b; Pierce et al., 2011) it is possible for place-based/territorial identity to become very narrow and restrictive, which can, for example, problematically reinscribe simplistic notions of national identity and other rigidly bounded identities (Grimson, 2010: cf. Anderson, 1983) – something that is particularly visible within CABA. A consequence of this can be the naturalisation of discriminatory discourses and behaviours, especially as supposedly 'cultural' traits can become portrayed as inevitably linked to a bounded neighbourhood identity. However, the relational and processual approach to territory explored in Chapter 2 and Section 7.3.2 can potentially avoid these problems. Because territorial identities affect everyday relationships, but can carry different importance in different settings, they should also be included in future iterations of intersectional analyses. While work has emphasised that intersectionality needs to engage seriously with ideas such as space and place (e.g. Valentine, 2007), it tends not to

include the role of territorial identities themselves. Territorial identities can mask, supersede, and reinforce other identities, which are themselves mediated by territorial concerns. The next chapter draws together issue raised here and in Chapter 6, further highlighting the multifarious connections between race, class, national identity, and territory.

CHAPTER 8

‘Uncontrolled immigration’ or ‘uncontrolled xenophobia’? Responses to the occupation of *Parque Indoamericano*

Territorial conflicts in Buenos Aires often play out in dramatic and symbolic ‘actions’. One such was the 2010 occupation of the *Parque Indoamericano*, CABA’s second largest park (around 130 hectares), by 13,000 people, many of whom were ‘neighbouring migrants’²⁰⁷. The occupation throws into sharp relief many of the issues discussed in earlier chapters and shows how they intersect. This chapter therefore provides an in-depth case study of reactions to the occupation, and further explores the levels of discrimination suffered by ‘neighbouring migrants’. It expands upon the ways territorial attitudes are not only grounded in the intersections that form them, but also reinforce and (re)produce those relationships. Further, it demonstrates how CABA is a ‘privileged territory’ (see Stratta and Barrera, 2009) compared to the othered *conurbano* (see Licitra, 2011), and the ways in which this is linked to different processes of migration. It also expands on the importance of the category *vecino*, and discusses the city government’s desire to control and securitise ‘public space’, both of which emphasise the connections between intersectional class and ideas of territory.

First the chapter focuses on the occupation’s context, explaining how gentrification (described in Chapters 5 and 7) has created a housing crisis in the south of the city, and then the occupation itself will be discussed. This is followed by an analysis of two dominant, migrant-related discourses that emerged in response to the occupation – ‘uncontrolled immigration’ and ‘*vecinos* against *okupas*’²⁰⁸ – both initiated by city mayor Mauricio Macri in a series of press conferences, and then perpetuated by members of the city government and sympathetic media. While extreme and not universally supported, the prevalence of these discourses reflects the lowly social standing of ‘neighbouring migrants’. The next section considers ideas of ‘public space’ and territory, building on ideas put forward in Chapter 7 about in place/out of place. It argues that the particular spatialities of the

²⁰⁷ As discussed below, a census of the occupiers showed around half the occupiers were Argentine, with the remainder predominantly immigrants from Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay.

²⁰⁸ *Okupa* is a colloquial, derogatory word for those who carry out land occupations.

occupation are important when considering its causes and responses to it, again emphasising the connections between territory and intersectional understandings of class. To conclude, some consequences of the occupation are discussed, demonstrating that, although certain tensions have subsided, problems remain.

What makes this case important is the strength of responses to it, and how these still resonate five years after the event. At the time the occupation led to serious friction and violence between local residents (this is discussed in detail below), but beyond this the occupation was also significant because of its unprecedented size and location. The fact that it took place within the 'privileged territory' of CABA caused concern for the city government, much of the media, as well as significant proportions of *porteños* (Caggiano et al., 2012) – although somewhat paradoxically *Indoamericano* was frequently classed, by those who did not use it, as an unwanted and abandoned 'no-man's [sic] land' (see Lederman, 2013; Vommaro and Cremona, 2012). In major newspapers such as *Clarín*, *La Nación*, and the *Buenos Aires Herald*, and on the main TV channels, the occupation was portrayed as the sudden and spontaneous actions of criminals and migrants (the two often seen as synonymous: Casullo, 2012; Ingridsdotter, 2011; Kaufman, 2012). As argued in Chapters 5 and 7, such behaviour has historically been 'out of place' within CABA, where various city and national governments have attempted to promote ideas of control, safety, and civilisation, intimately linked to ideas of whiteness and European migration – regarding both the population and the built environment. Therefore the occupation was in conflict with this desired image: a 'rupture' in CABA's civilised, everyday fabric (Grimson and Caggiano, 2012).

8.1: Background to the occupation

This section focuses on the socioeconomic status of *Comuna 8*, the administrative area where *Indoamericano* is situated (Figures 8.1 and 8.2). Chapters 5 and 7 have already described how gentrification is reshaping CABA, forcing 'neighbouring migrants' and the poor into the *villas* and *conurbano*. Rising rents and little investment in affordable housing (linked to privatisation of urban planning: Pírez, 2002; Whitson, 2007; Roitman and Phelps, 2011) have worsened a long-standing, well-documented housing crisis (Bombal, 1988; Merklen, 1997; Orueta et al., 2003; Thuillier, 2005; Vidal-Koppmann and Dietrich, 2005;

Table 8.1: Key socioeconomic indicators, *Comunas 8, 2*, and city average, 2010/2011

Indicator	<i>Comuna 8</i>	<i>Comuna 2</i>	City Average
Population ²⁰⁹	187,237	158,400	(City total) 2,890,151
Population growth 2001- 2010 (%)	15.8	-4.6	4.1
Birth rate (per thousand)	2.1	1.0	1.4
Infant mortality rate (per thousand)	10.2	7.6	7.9
Population below poverty line ²¹⁰ (%)	49.2	23.3	28.7
Average monthly salary ²¹¹ (US\$)	586	1369	969
Average rent (US\$/m ²)	48.2	90.8	72.1
Rent increase 2001- 2010 ²¹² (%)	176.8	459.7	368.5
Unemployment level (%)	9.3	2.7	5.9
Underemployment level (%)	12.7	5.8	8.8
Households without basic needs satisfied ²¹³ (%)	13.4	2.3	7.1
Inhabitants born in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru (% of total population)	21	2.8	6.5
Size of the 'informal' economy (% of working population working 'informally')	51.6	33.5	37
Number of families living in 'informal' settlements ²¹⁴	31,300	150	(City total) 73,300

Data adapted from: DGEyC, 2011; INDEC, 2010; UTPMP, 2013; CEDEM, 2014

²⁰⁹ These figures refer only to those in 'formal' housing, and thus overlook the homeless or those living in the *villas*. Therefore figures for *Comuna 8* and the city as a whole (as well as those for population growth) will be higher in reality, further emphasising issues of overcrowding.

²¹⁰ This definition reflects an inability to afford the basic 'food basket and household services' level calculated by the city government. Adjusted yearly to reflect changing cost of living, it is the absolute minimum required to live healthily in 'formal' housing with basic service provision; see http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/areas/hacienda/sis_estadistico/canastas_de_consumo1.pdf

²¹¹ Problematically the average salaries given here exclude many inhabitants of *Comuna 8* who are working 'informally' and/or are underemployed. While data exists on the self-employed in both areas (\$465 for 8 and \$1360 for 2) these figures still fail to reflect the 'informal' sector's low wages – which are typically less than half of 'formal' earnings (Esquivel, 2010).

²¹² Unfortunately reliable data on wage increases across the same period are not readily available, due to the questionable nature of the inflation statistics and the economic turmoil experienced at the end of 2001, when unpegging and devaluation make comparisons difficult. However, a recent report from INDEC showed that between 2001 and 2014 the rise in cost of living outstripped wages across the same period, and this is also reflected in continuing rises in rent, where between 2001 and 2014 the increase in *Comuna 8* has been 814.7%, *Comuna 2* 990.7%, and the city average 970%, demonstrating the continued nature of the problems spoken about here; see http://www.ieco.clarin.com/Inflacion-alimentos-salario_real_0_1250274993.html, http://www.indec.mecon.ar/nivel4_default.asp?id_tema_1=3&id_tema_2=38&id_tema_3=111 and http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/sites/gcaba/files/locales_julio_2014.pdf.

²¹³ 'Unsatisfied basic needs' is a method for measuring poverty used by the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. It includes analysis of access to housing, education, healthcare, as well economic capacity. Regarding housing, for instance, it refers to having more than three people per room and, in respect of education, that children between 6 and 12 lack schooling; see <http://www.cepal.org/deype/mecovi/docs/taller5/10.pdf>

²¹⁴ Beyond *Comuna 8*, remaining families are found in *Comunas 1* (10,000), *4* (14,000), *7* (14,100), *9* (2,200), *14* (50) and *15* (1,500), while the rest of the *Comunas* have no 'informal' settlements. The spatial distribution of the *villas* can be seen in Figure 5.2 and that of the *comunas* in Figure 8.2. When combined with these data, the extent to which 'informal' settlements are focused in particular areas becomes apparent, *Villas 31* and *31bis* in *Retiro* (*Comuna 1*) presenting the main exceptions to an otherwise very south-focused distribution.

A key issue is the relationship between wages and rent/house prices. As shown in Chapter 5, rents are typically increasing faster in the north of the city, but average salaries there are higher than in the south and have increased more quickly (DGEyC, 2011). So while in 2011 the citywide average for the proportion of wages spent on rent was around 65%; this was highest in the poorest *barrios* and *comunas* of the south of CABA (CDEM, 2014). However, as the data refer only to ‘formal’ employment and housing, they miss the impact of ‘informality’ in *Comuna 8*. As shown in Chapter 7, rents in the ‘informal’ sector can be much higher than the average for the *barrio* where they are located²¹⁵ (see Di Virgilio et al., 2012; Van Gelder et al., 2013), so this, combined with low incomes in *Comuna 8*, contributed to a housing crisis there. What is more, high rents disproportionately affected ‘neighbouring migrants’ who were overrepresented in the interrelated ‘informal’ economy and housing market (Caggiano and Segura, 2014; UTPMP, 2013). *Comuna 8* had the highest proportion of immigrants from ‘neighbouring countries’²¹⁶, contributing to the largest total for people living in ‘informal’ settlements of any *comuna* in 2010.²¹⁷ The housing crisis forced people into ‘informal’ settlements, leading to further overcrowding in already pressured areas, several families often sharing single accommodation – for example in 2010, 40% of homes in *Villas 1-11-14* and *20* housed over five people, compared to a city average of 9% (Sorín, 2012).

Further, *Comuna 8*’s population growth between 2001 and 2010 accounts for 22.4% of the city total over the same period (INDEC, 2010), emphasising the strain put on *Comuna 8*, which also had a comparatively high birth rate. These problems are especially serious given *Comuna 8*’s lack of basic services: it consistently had the worst provision in the city of electricity, gas, sewerage, and the lowest quality of housing (UTPMP, 2013). As rents increased in other parts of the city, areas such as *Comuna 8* – particularly its *villas* – were the only places within CABA many people could afford to live, yet these areas were least able to cope with increasing population, as illustrated by Table 8.1. Therefore, gentrification across the city squeezed displaced populations into a smaller and smaller area,²¹⁸ and

²¹⁵ Unfortunately precise and reliable data are hard to find.

²¹⁶ Nb., as explained in Chapters 1 and 4, this is not the same as ‘neighbouring migrants’, but instead migrants from Peru, Paraguay, and Bolivia.

²¹⁷ When considering solely the *villas* these numbers are much higher. While no official data exist, estimates place between 50 and 70% of the population living in *Villas 20* and *1-11-14* as non-Argentine (Wagner, 2012).

²¹⁸ New migration to Buenos Aires also contributes to this overcrowding.

consequently space became more at a premium, causing rents within the *villas* to increase as people (again, disproportionately ‘neighbouring migrants’) sought to remain living within kinship networks (Cravino, 2012; Wagner, 2012; see also Bastia, 2015). Exacerbating these problems was a lack of city government investment in housing in *Comuna 8*, and repeated renegeing on promises to build houses in *Villa 20* and give formal tenure to *villa* residents (Sorín, 2012). This is the context within which the occupation of *Indoamericano* took place, and although an in-depth analysis of the *Indoamericano* occupation’s causes is not this chapter’s focus (for much more complete backgrounds see Clichevsky, 2012; Di Virgilio and Gil, 2012; García, 2012; Mera and Vaccotti, 2013; Sorín, 2012; Wagner, 2012), these factors are important when considering the occupation and the reactions to it.

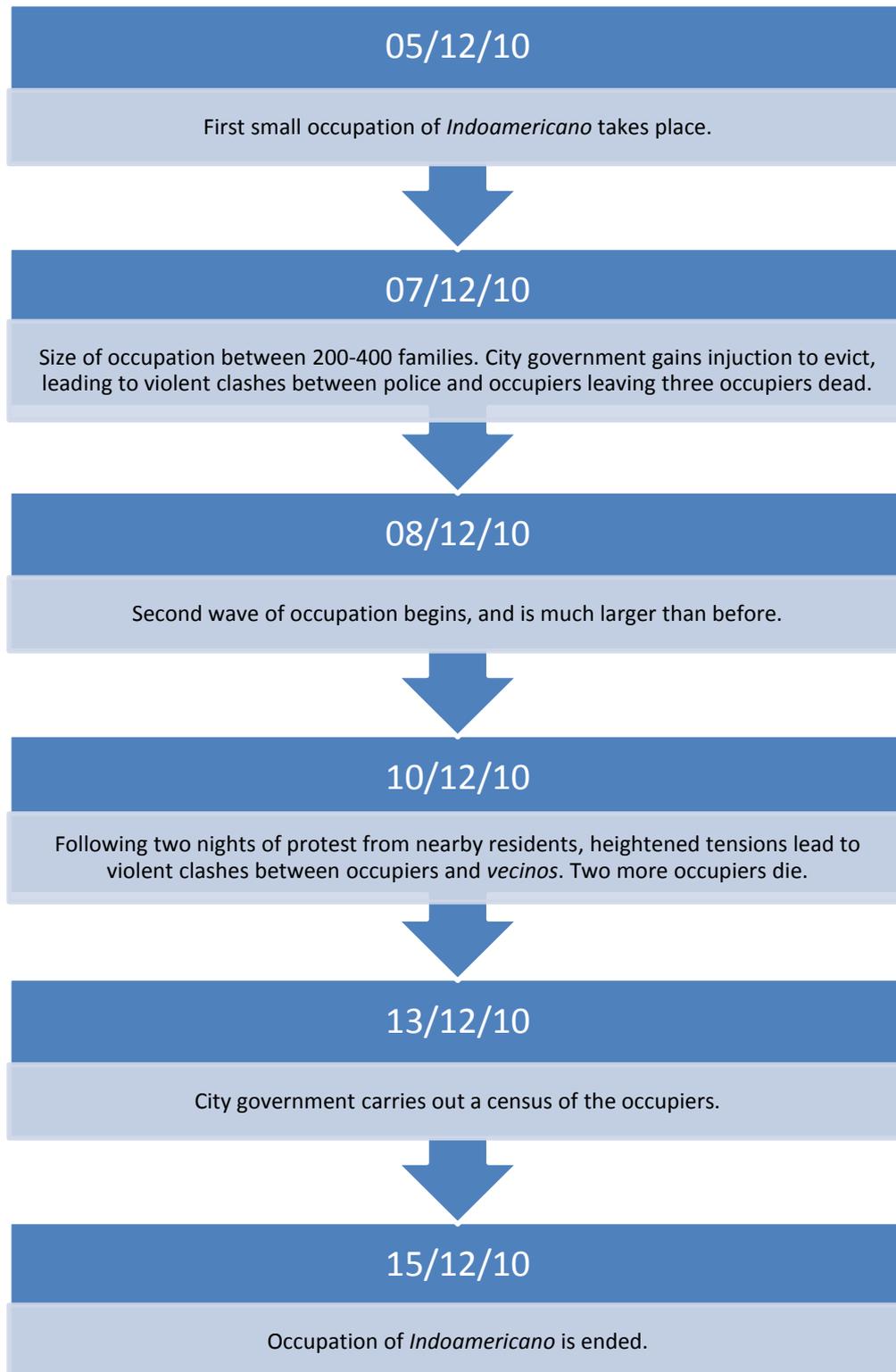
What is more, as argued elsewhere in this thesis, territorial and class struggles are interlinked: that is, the production of, and struggle over, space and territory should be understood through the lens of intersectional class struggle analysis. Immediately, the influence of gentrification on the occupation emphasises class’s role in shaping the conflict, given that these processes are themselves class-based (see Smith, 1996; Slater, 2006; Lees et al., 2008; Betancur, 2014; Janoschka et al., 2014). But as this chapter demonstrates, given the involvement of ‘neighbouring migrants’, race, nationality, and national identity were also central to the causes and responses to the occupation. Therefore, although other structures and identities played more prominent roles in shaping discourses after the occupation, class was far from absent: it played a crucial, albeit backgrounded, role.

8.2: The occupation

Events began on Sunday 5 December when families from *Villa 20* (Figure 5.2) occupied *Indoamericano* in the south west *barrio Villa Soldati* (Figure 8.1). By the following Tuesday around four hundred families had relocated to *Indoamericano*, setting up tents and makeshift structures. For many, the city government’s promise of housing and formal tenure in *Villa 20* had failed to materialise, leading to severe overcrowding and pressure on kinship networks (Sorín, 2012), while others had grown tired of extortionate rents (Ingridsdotter, 2011). In both cases the lack of state involvement and investment in the *villas* had led to an ‘informal’ housing market dominated by *punteros* taking advantage of

ethnic and national differences to exploit recent migrants unable to live in more 'formal' settings or unwilling to live away from friends and family (Cravino, 2012).

Figure 8.3: Timeline of the occupation



Mayra, a Bolivian migrant present in this first occupation, explained that her actions were linked to the housing crisis:

In the occupation there was...basically...a mix of people without resources, some of whom were immigrants and others not...The main cause was the serious housing problem in the city...It is very difficult to access housing. I don't mean buying but simply access to rented housing is very difficult, very expensive...and renting rooms in the *villas* is also very expensive. In fact, in many cases a room in a *villa* is as expensive as a proper room, but...it has fewer requirements to get one. Then, there are people who are very desperate...families with children in many places that don't have space [for] them, so there [was] a real conflict.

This view was shared by Patricia, a Paraguayan migrant and long-term resident of *Villa 1-11-14*. Though she was not directly involved with the occupation, her family and friends were:

It was the consequence of several things, but what started the ball rolling was that [we] in the *villas*...have no property title that can say "this house is mine". In the *villas* surrounding the area – *Villas 1-11-14* and *20* – the city government said they would give deeds to the people who lived there. It was a lie, and this started the ball rolling...Therefore many people hit the streets, not knowing what to do, and went to *Indoamericano*, where they started to occupy...saying things like "we live here". They took some land that was...seen as 'free', and then it snowballed and there were about 13,000 people. Then they built wooden shelters and stayed there saying "I live here", waiting for the government to come and tell them that they can get a house...or they can start building there. But as there were so many people together, the government wanted to remove them all, and gave the police the command...and three people died. The occupation also generated a violent response from people living in the *barrio*: in the *edificios*, not in the *villas*. It was a struggle of the poor against the poor, first the police against the poor and then the local people against the poor. It was a terrible week.

Responding to the initial small occupation, *Corporación Sur*, the city government body responsible for social and economic development in the south of CABA, gained an injunction against the occupiers, claiming their presence was illegal. Once granted, this gave the city the right to send in armed police to clear and secure the area. This led to violent clashes on the night of the 7th leaving three people dead at the hands of the police, who, despite

significant evidence to the contrary, denied any responsibility (see Fäldt, 2012; Vommaro and Cremona, 2012).

Patricia's and Mayra's accounts provide some information about the events that preceded the evictions, and these were echoed by Javier, who, at the time of the occupation, worked for the city representing disadvantaged families in housing cases. He spoke about the south being "the most disadvantaged and abandoned area of the city" due to a severe lack of resources and investment, which had led to the growth of the *villas* and a "housing crisis where, in many *villas*, there are three generations living in the same room, but paying a rent more or less the same as they would in an upper middle-class *barrio* like *Caballito*". For Javier this caused the occupation. He also made important reference to the first smaller occupation, which elicited the court order:

The court order was problematic, because it is up for debate if public space can be subject to eviction. Because if there is an eviction, there must be a private good, it needs to be from private land, and this was public space. But on the 7th...a joint operation between the metropolitan and federal police...evicted people from the park. But things went too far and there was a confrontation between the police and the people who were occupying. This confrontation led to deaths and social organisations began to intervene. So the people who were occupying started to receive support from social organisations and the main park occupation took place...People who had been evicted came back into the park...with...more people.

The final events that Javier speaks about took place on Wednesday 8 when thousands occupied the park, overwhelmed the police (Casullo, 2012), and set up a more permanent camp (Figure 8.4). This led to condemnation from Macri, who, in a press conference, blamed the occupation on "uncontrolled immigration".²¹⁹ It also heightened tensions among residents of the housing blocks surrounding *Indoamericano* in the *Villa Lugano* and *Villa Soldati barrios* (Figure 8.1), who felt 'hemmed in' by yet another *villa* (The Argentina Independent, 16/12/2010). Partly fuelled by what they saw as city government inaction, protests from these 'official residents' grew in size over the next days (Grimson and

²¹⁹ For a full transcript of the press conference: <http://es.paperblog.com/discurso-y-conferencia-de-prensa-ante-la-ocupacion-del-parque-indoamericano-de-mauricio-macri-jefe-de-gobierno-de-la-ciudad-de-buenos-aires-9122010-359147/>. It can also be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtoM2kcnfbM>

Caggiano, 2012), and by the 10th there was a second major clash. As Patricia put it, this time the clash was between “the local people and the poor” instead of between occupiers and police (see Simbiosis Cultural, 2011). That evening, large numbers of residents took matters into their own hands and attempted to evict the so-called *okupas* themselves (Kaufman, 2012; Lederman, 2013). With minimal police presence the standoff escalated rapidly, and it is claimed by those occupying the park that two more people (both of Bolivian descent) were killed by *vecinos* who were attempting to remove them. As will be explored later, many of the *vecinos* denied that they were involved with the violence, instead blaming it upon the infiltration of *barrabravas*²²⁰, but the situation meant that armed police moved back in, separated the various groups, and sealed off the park (Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012). This period was mentioned by Daniela, a researcher into immigrants’ use of *Indoamericano*:

There was a second confrontation, but this time not between the police and the occupants, but between occupants and *vecinos* from the surrounding areas. Not those from *villas*...but from the *barrios* [*Villa Soldati* and *Villa Lugano*]...One cause of these responses was...because the areas nearby are lower middle-class *barrios* [and] they did not want a *villa* in the park which bordered their *barrios*.

Following these violent clashes there was a period of relative calm (Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012), and the city government carried out a census of all the occupiers. This revealed that 95% of the 13,333 people originally lived within CABA, and only 5% had come from the *conurbano*, emphasising that this was very much a response to CABA’s housing crisis. Further, around 50% of the people were non-Argentine (Miradas al Sur, 2010).²²¹ While these figures are considerably higher than the 21% of people living within *Comuna 8* who were born in Bolivia, Peru, and Paraguay,²²² they match estimates for the proportion of migrants from those three countries living in the *villas* (UTPMP, 2013). The census therefore supports Mayra’s claim that the occupation “was a mix of people without resources, some of whom were immigrants and others not”, and not solely a problem of immigration.

²²⁰ The notoriously powerful, corrupt, and violent hooligans affiliated with a number of football clubs.

²²¹ Unfortunately it is not possible to get access to the census itself but some of its key findings can be seen here: <http://www.iprofesional.com/notas/108683-En-el-Parque-Indoamericano-hay-13333-ocupantes-ilegales>

²²² These were the main immigrant groups involved with the occupation, and by far the most numerous non-Argentines living in *Comuna 8* where the total immigrant population is 23%: see http://www.censo2010.indec.gov.ar/CuadrosDefinitivos/P6-D_2_8.pdf

Instead, as will be shown, this was a discourse promoted by the city government and much of the media (see Grimson and Caggiano, 2012).²²³

The occupation lasted until 15 December, when, as alluded to by Javier, a coalition between the national and city governments promised they would jointly fund a housing programme if people left the park voluntarily, which the occupiers did (Rinesi, 2012). Despite this peaceful end to the process, the occupation remained an important topic (see Caggiano et al., 2012; López, 2012b), and because of the promotion of xenophobic discourses, immigrants and immigration had become ‘hyper-visible’ once more (see Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; cf. Grimson, 2006).

Figure 8.4: Tents in *Indoamericano* on 09/12/10.



Source:

<http://www.urgente24.com/sites/default/files/notas/2014/09/28/indoamericano.jpg>

²²³ However, it does reiterate the mutability of the ‘neighbouring migrant’ category.

8.3: Responses to the occupation

This section focuses on two prominent examples of ‘discursive’ and ‘symbolic’ violence (see Bourdieu, 1989, 1991; Farmer, 2004; Wacquant, 2007) that emerged during and after the occupation.²²⁴ The first explores how the occupation came to be blamed on immigrants and immigration, masking the participation of Argentines and the housing crisis that triggered the occupation. The second builds on earlier arguments involving the category *vecino*, and shows how territorial and intersectional identities are related.

8.3.1: ‘Uncontrolled immigration’

During a press conference on 9 December Mauricio Macri blamed the occupation on ‘uncontrolled immigration’, claiming that this was inextricably linked to criminal activity and mafia groups, making explicit links between migration and drug dealing (Clarín, 10/12/10). These ideas were mirrored by public declarations from Horacio Rodríguez Laretta (head of the city government’s cabinet) who spoke of ‘invasion’ by immigrants, blaming the national government’s ‘anything goes’ immigration laws (Buenos Aires Herald, 09/12/10). This, he argued, had made the Argentine border into a ‘colander’, allowing people through indiscriminately – a reference to claims made in 2009 by Macri. The claims of both politicians, as will be expanded upon, appealed to what they described as ‘common sense’, arguing that they were just saying what average *porteños* were thinking: the occupation clearly demonstrated the need for stricter borders, because the current system was attracting ‘neighbouring migrants’ who were compromising the civilised nature of *porteño* society (Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; López, 2012b, 2012c).

This separation between CABA and the rest of Argentina was made most clearly when Laretta concluded that the city “cannot solve the housing problems of all the inhabitants of the greater Buenos Aires area and MERCOSUR” (Buenos Aires Herald, 09/12/10). These quotations should be understood as attempts to gain political capital, as they place the blame with the national government and its permissive policies which allow the entry of criminal migrants. However, they also reinforce ideas that CABA is a different

²²⁴ Though it is important not to separate completely physical and the discursive violence. Research has emphasised the rise in racist violence between the first and second evictions, arguing that this increase was exacerbated by the prevalence of discriminatory and alarmist discourses in the more right-wing media (e.g. Fäldt, 2012; Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; Ingridsdotter, 2011; López, 2012b, 2012c), something that was supported in my interviews and discussions with ‘neighbouring migrants’.

case to other parts of the country, including the *conurbano*. Laretta's proposition makes it clear that the housing problems are supposedly those of BAMA's, not CABA's, inhabitants, and his reference to MERCOSUR seemingly conflates migrants from Bolivia, Paraguay, and Peru with the whole bloc²²⁵. Thus what immediately emerges are unsurprising attempts by the city government to distance itself from any liability for the occupation: it was the actions of criminal immigrants, not a result of housing crises. This point was made by Natalia, a researcher who works with Paraguayan migrants in *Villas 20* and *21-24*:

The housing problem in Buenos Aires far exceeds the state of migration, and while this is what caused the occupation of *Indoamericano*, it was not talked about in the wake of the occupation...The media and city government...just spoke about the migration problem with real force.

By blaming the occupation on migrants the city government tried to deflect culpability, but also perpetuated the mutually reinforcing relationship between criminality and migration status (Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; Kaufman, 2012). It is also important to compare these discourses to the city government's own census.²²⁶ The idea that the 'housing problems' were those of *conurbano* inhabitants is not supported by the findings that only 5% of occupiers lived outside of CABA. This is not to say that the *conurbano* has no housing problems, simply that ideas of 'invasion' are wide of the mark, and especially problematic in the way that they play down CABA's housing crisis (Cravino, 2012).

Blaming the occupation on 'uncontrolled immigration' is also exaggerated, given that the census showed that around half of the occupiers were non-Argentine. As mentioned, while this figure is higher than the official statistics for *Comuna 8*, it is in keeping with estimates for the non-Argentine populations of nearby *villas*. This therefore supports the flexibility and power of the category 'neighbouring migrant', as racialised Argentines can often be excluded from their own nation (Joseph, 2000; see also Chapters 4 and 6). It has

²²⁵ This supports points made in earlier chapters about the ways in which for some *porteños* the link between Buenos Aires and Europe is so strong that its/their location in Latin America causes its own feeling of being 'out of place' (Garguín, 2007). It also speaks to the disconnection between the national government's pro-MERCOSUR discourses and the opinions of other groups. But it is important to recognise the way in which Laretta's reference to MERCOSUR is, given the nature of the immigration involved with the occupation, in reality a reference to Bolivia, Peru, Paraguay – when in fact the first two are only associate members – which seems to be hyper-extending the racialised depiction of migrants from neighbouring countries.

²²⁶ Although at the point of Macri's press conference the census had not yet been carried out.

therefore been argued that the occupation demonstrated the ways in which CABA's borders are, for some *porteños*, more important than the nation's, and the idea of the 'colander border' can also be seen to apply to CABA (see Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; López, 2012b, 2012c), supporting arguments made in Chapters 5 and 7. Therefore, Macri and Laretta's ideas that the problems were caused by those in BAMA emphasise the way in which identities associated with 'neighbouring migrants' have been repeatedly territorialised and manifested in the *conurbano* (see Licitra, 2011), while its negation – itself so fundamental in the type of *porteño* identity promoted by Macri's government (Laborde, 2011; López, 2012b) – is embodied by CABA (see Guano, 2004).

Despite their protestations to the contrary – especially after criticism from the national government (Buenos Aires Herald, 10/12/10) – there were obvious xenophobic and racist elements to Macri and Laretta's comments. Further, these ideas were consistently replicated in large portions of the media²²⁷ which focused on interviewing immigrants involved with the occupation (Bonilla, 2011; Lagrutta, 2012); making them disproportionately 'hyper-visible' (cf. Grimson, 2006). Many depictions of immigrants were also extremely racialised, emphasising the dark phenotype of the occupiers (see Fäldt, 2012), and research has shown that this was an important factor in the rise in racially-motivated violence that followed the occupation (Caggiano et al., 2012). Inverting Macri's declaration, Grimson and Caggiano (2012) argue that responses to *Indoamericano* reflected an 'uncontrolled xenophobia', where anti-immigrant language common in the 1990s became audible again (see also López, 2012b, 2012c). This was a view shared by many interviewees, and Patricia, for instance, told me:

The responses...were the height of xenophobia, and it was a bit like going back to the 90s with the stigma around migrants like it used to be for me then. But hey, it happens, and for me the issue of xenophobia and racism in the media is very obvious. But the responses from other parts of society were also very obvious but more

²²⁷ In particular the large section of anti-Kirchner media, headed by the *Clarín* group. However, it is important to mention the existence of more critical media – most prominently *Página 12* – who placed a much larger emphasis on the housing crisis as the cause of the occupation (for an overview see Fäldt, 2012). Nevertheless, even among this section of the media, while immigrants were not blamed in the same way, they were, in keeping with ideas discussed in 6.3, consistently stripped of agency and portrayed as passive victims (Symbiosis Cultural, 2011), doing little to challenge prominent and problematic stereotypes of 'neighbouring migrants'. What is more, the pro-Kirchner/Peronist position of *Página 12* should also be considered, as this has led to a very anti-Macri stance which inevitably shaped their coverage.

shocking, because these people often speak of a Latin American brotherhood and the *Patria Grande*, so the responses question how genuine these things really are.

Daniela said:

What really surprised people was the speed with which the city government blamed this conflict on 'uncontrolled immigration', a discourse that was very typical of the 1990s, and hadn't really been heard since then in such a public [situation]. Also this generated more conflict, because it described the people occupying the park as antagonists. This upset the people living around the park. The area around is a very complex area. It is very low class mixed with the lower middle class who are always looking at the other as their enemy. But there is also real resentment of people who come from other countries...It's like the speech from the government ignited a fire that was there but dormant.

The occupation of *Indoamericano* led to the (re)emergence of "dormant" discourses and attitudes, some neighbourhood (*vecino*) groups even arguing that they had a 'right to be racist' to prevent the criminal immigrants invading first their city and their public services, and now their 'public space' (López, 2012b, 2012c; Simbiosis Cultural, 2011).

It is important to recognise the very real ways these discourses affected the everyday lives of 'neighbouring migrants'. Similar to Patricia's comments above, Mayra told me about the days that followed the occupation:

That's when the things that were hidden 'sprang forth', [and] that [which] was half kept quiet was said...[And] it came out...because of...the [city] government...and then it started to come out in lots of places...Children and women were kicked off buses just for being 'Bolivian', we were not able to be on public transport. People were beaten up outside the park because they [were associated with occupiers] from *Indoamericano*. Things like that...What people felt at that moment was very raw.

Mayra then explained how divisions emerged within the Bolivian community between those who were involved with, or supported, the occupation, and those who were/did not. In particular this division came from people unable or unwilling to express their discontent with their housing situation as they felt so precarious, and did not want to make themselves more visible. The ideas expressed here therefore share similarities with the idea of the

‘visitor’s consciousness’ that was mentioned in Chapter 6 (see Simbiosis Cultural, 2011; Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011). These divisions were exaggerated when Bolivian president Evo Morales called on the “small group” of Bolivians in Buenos Aires to stop occupying land as it reflected badly on the majority of the “hardworking”, “dignified”, and “honest” community (Clarín, 14/12/10). He then went on to say that “if they want land, they can come [home]”, further reinforcing the idea that the occupation was predominantly ‘a Bolivian problem’ (Simbiosis Cultural, 2011). However, research has since shown that there was an even split between Paraguayan and Bolivian migrants among the non-Argentine occupiers, but that Bolivian migrants were simply more visible (Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012). Not only were they typically overrepresented in media reports and interviews (Wagner, 2012), but a number of interviewees (including Bolivian and Paraguayan migrants) involved with the occupation explained that Bolivian occupiers were less well organised when setting up shelter, and ended up in more prominent and precarious locations. This mis/overrepresentation also demonstrates how Bolivians are the archetypal ‘neighbouring migrant’, and conversely how those with darker skin and classed as ‘indigenous’ are dismissed as ‘Bolivian’, reiterating the intersections between class, race, and national identity that construct the ‘neighbouring migrant’ and its sub-categories.

8.3.2: Vecinos *against* okupas

The framing of the occupation as a battle between *vecinos* and *okupas* by two of Argentina’s main media sources – *La Nación* and *Clarín*, both pro-Macri – foregrounded the idea of the *vecino* discussed in Section 7.2 (Fäldt, 2012; Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012), crystallised its definition, and, as a consequence of the media and city government’s responses, perpetuated ‘*vecinocracia*’ (Simbiosis Cultural, 2011). This discourse worked in tandem with the aforementioned racialised and xenophobic language, and further marginalised ‘neighbouring migrants’ from aspects of the *porteño* identity (Lagrutta, 2012). It also demonstrates how intersectional identities can become spatialised and perpetuate certain social hierarchies.

Clarín (10/12/10) was the first major newspaper to define the occupation in terms of *vecinos* and *okupas*.²²⁸ Reporting on Kirchner's speech in response to Macri's claims of 'uncontrolled immigration', the article's first sentence mentions the "growing tensions between *vecinos* against *okupas* over the land of *Indoamericano*". Over the following weeks *Clarín* maintained this discursive framing in reports of, and comment pieces about, *Indoamericano*, emphasising this simplistic narrative.²²⁹ Although *Clarín* was first to frame the conflict like this, other broadly sympathetic papers such as *La Nación*, as well as a number of CABA's pro-Macri TV stations, adopted the discourse, consequently promoting restrictive definitions of *vecino* (Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012). *Vecinos* were portrayed across these media in various ways, but typically defined in opposition to racialised 'neighbouring migrant' *okupas* (Garguín, 2013). Depicted as the sole legitimate protagonists in desirable urban transformation (see Hernández, 2014a), *vecinos* were 'decent people' from 'nice *barrios*' and the only people interested in, and capable of, defending the heritage of *their* neighbourhoods (see Bracco, 2013, 2014) – all ideas that map on to the experiences I had, as described in Chapter 7. Other representations defined them as proper, hardworking, tax-paying, democracy-loving citizens, who care about their country/city, and the integrity of their territory (see López, 2012b, 2012c). These portrayals combined with Macri's utterances, discussed in Section 7.2.1, that the *vecino* is "a property owner, he [sic] that pays taxes, a citizen". Crucially these definitions reinforce each other, and perpetuate a comparatively narrow identity which is then proposed as the only proper political subjectivity. The discourse finds its (insidious) power by taking a seemingly neutral and broad word and using it in loaded and specific ways.

As stated, inextricably linked to the *vecino*, was the construction of its negation: the *okupa*. Much like the 'neighbouring migrant' – which, as argued, functions as a counterpoint to the *porteño* identity in a relationship of 'inverted alterity', a dialectic where the 'other' is realised through a negation of the dominant identity, 'us' (Laborde, 2011) – the *okupa* shaped the *vecino*. In contrast to the good, law-abiding, tax-paying, 'public space'-respecting *vecino*, media depictions of *okupas* framed them as: dangerous and violent criminals; *villeros*

²²⁸ The story can be found here: http://www.clarin.com/politica/menciones-Soldati-Cristina-Ministerio-Seguridad_0_387561477.html

²²⁹ For a list of articles containing the keywords '*vecino*', '*okupa*', and '*Indoamericano*' see: <http://buscador.clarin.com/vecinos%20okupas%20indoamericano?order=1and>;

from the *conurbano*; uncontrollable, uncivilised and unnatural; the lower classes; and, most commonly, heavily racialised ‘neighbouring migrants’ (see Fäldt, 2012; Ingridsdotter, 2011; Martín and López, 2013; Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012). Once more this conflation of multiple identities contributed to the criminalisation of ‘neighbouring migrants’, as well as to the related racialising of criminals. This criminalisation further distanced the city government from any responsibility, and undermined the legitimate demands of the occupiers. Again, the circular definitions of *vecino* and *okupa* shaped attitudes towards the occupation. Because the *okupas* were all criminals their activity must by definition be illegal, and by the same token, because the *vecinos* were ‘*buena gente*’ (good people) their responses must have been legitimate.

This is especially obvious when reflecting upon the violence following the occupation. Although the physical confrontations were initiated by the police and *vecinos* from adjacent neighbourhoods, these actions were warmly condoned by much of the media²³⁰ and the city government: they were classed not as ‘violence’ but instead as legitimate and necessary uses of force (see Fäldt, 2012; Kaufman, 2012; Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012). For instance, in his 9 December press conference, Macri said it was necessary “to be in solidarity” with the *vecinos* of *Lugano* and *Soldati* in all their attempts to “defend the law” in the face of the “uncontrolled immigration” that was causing “advancement of drug-dealing and delinquency”, statements which critics argued justified the actions of the *vecinos* (López, 2012b). Javier touched on this:

There is a divide between “good” people – in quotation marks – and people who want to usurp public space (who are normally said to come illegally from neighbouring countries, don’t pay taxes etc.). There was a...perception in society that there was a legitimate neighbourly violence, a situation of violence among people who improperly used public space versus the neighbours who in principle should deserve the use of public space. The conflict over this particular case received a lot of media coverage.

This quotation maps on to much of the media’s depiction of the occupation of land/‘public space’ as *the* violent act (see Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012), and Scribano (2014) notes

²³⁰ Prominent critics were *Página 12*, however, as already mentioned it is important to consider their pro-Kirchner stance when analysing their editorial position.

how the city government explicitly positioned itself as non-violent, claiming it “does not carry out repression”. Instead, it justified its actions through a discourse reliant on the above construction of the *okupa*, arguing that actions against violent criminals and the protection of ‘public space’ were necessary, helped control/defuse the situation, and in preserving the interests of *vecinos* were evidently non-violent.

Section 7.2 argued that being a *vecino* related to *barrio* identity. That is, the relationship between the term and class and race meant that self-defining *vecinos* were predominantly in CABA’s richer north, and were suspicious of those in the south, many of whom were thus unable to qualify for the identity. However, with *Indoamericano*, the *vecinos* were those living in the *Lugano* and *Soldati*, both of which are predominantly poor, working class *barrios* in the south. Nevertheless these people, often previously excluded and marginalised by the media and Macri’s discourses, became the representatives/custodians of *porteñidad*. In this sense it is worth noting once again that *vecino*, much like the idea of whiteness that is embedded within it (cf. Nayak, 2007), far from absolute, is relative and relational: people who in one instance may fail to be *vecinos* (the *cacerolazos* described in Section 6.2.3, for example), in other instances (when compared to the *okupas* in *Indoamericano*) certainly are. Like the category ‘neighbouring migrant’ (with which it is often contrasted), *vecino* is mutable, yet consistently reinforces and underpins intersectional relationships grounded in whiteness. Further, as the next sections show, these ideas were/are embedded in ideas of ‘public space’, its control, and its supposedly (il)legitimate use.

8.4: Spatialities of the occupation

This section focuses on key spatial/territorial elements of the *Indoamericano* occupation. The first part considers the idea of *Indoamericano* as ‘public space’, with a particular focus on the dominant discourses of ‘emptiness’ and ‘control’ which shaped much of the debate about the occupation. Following this is a discussion of the city’s hierarchies of space and territory, and the important differences between CABA and the *conurbano* discussed in earlier chapters. This section therefore extends the ideas of in place/out of place, and furthers the links between intersectionality and territory, demonstrating how these influence attitudes towards migrants.

8.4.1: Indoamericano as ‘public space’: discourses of emptiness and control

[We] will not back down, since public space is not negotiable. That park belongs to all residents and workers in the area (Cristian Ritondo, head of city legislature for the *Propuesta Republicana* party)²³¹.

Following the occupation it was notable that *Indoamericano* was referred to in major newspapers like *Clarín* and *La Nación* as a ‘no-man’s land’ (see Lederman, 2013; Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012).²³² The park was depicted as virtually ‘empty’ and unused (López, 2012b, 2012c) and a dumping ground for the city’s waste (Zapata, 2013), while those media reports that acknowledged people’s presence in the park emphasised that it was only ever used sporadically by ‘neighbouring migrants’ and *villeros* and was thus very dangerous (see Simbiosis Cultural, 2011). These ideas were reflected by affluent research participants who did not use the park. Describing it as “not very park-like...an empty space where there is just open rubbish”, calling it “abandoned”, and categorically demanding I not visit such a “horrible and dangerous place”.

What these reports and depictions failed to take seriously was the important role *Indoamericano* played in the lives of those living in the nearby *villas*, the people who, as one housing activist put it, “had no public space” (see Canelo, 2006, 2008, 2009). ‘Neighbouring migrants’ told me in conversations that although the park was frequented only really at weekends (and mostly just on Sundays), this was reflective of the extremely long hours they had to work. This weekend-specific use was something that Agustin, who works in the nearby *Villas 1-11-14* and *20*, stressed:

²³¹ The *Propuesta Republicana* or PRO is the centre-right party of which Macri is president. Though they have control of the city of Buenos Aires, they have minimal political impact elsewhere in the country.

²³² Examples of articles in *Clarín* explicitly adopting the phrase can be seen here (<http://buscador.clarin.com/%22tierra%20de%20nadie%22%20indoamericano>), while the equivalent search in *La Nación* demonstrates that these ideas were being suggested as far back as 1999 (<http://buscar.lanacion.com.ar/'tierra%20de%20nadie'%20indoamericano>). The popular online news source Infobae.com also ran an article on 10 December making very clear use of the phrase (<http://www.infobae.com/2010/12/10/551368-villa-soldati-tierra-nadie-el-juez-envia-la-federal-pacificar-el-indoamericano>). An article in *Página 12* exploring the history of the park following the occupation (<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/subnotas/158561-50854-2010-12-13.html>) claimed that the idea of *Indoamericano* being a ‘no-man’s land’ was perhaps first expressed clearly in 2006 by the then deputy ombudsman, the article going on to argue that the policies of the Macri administration have contributed to its abandoned nature.

It is a very big park, but it was always neglected, and the only thing that happened there was at the weekends when all the people from the *villas* went there. That was all that happened, on Saturdays and Sundays it was full of people, but during the week nobody.

So while 'neglected' by the city government, contributing to its poor reputation, *Indoamericano* was far from the completely 'empty space' it was often described as. For instance, 'neighbouring migrants' who live near the park told me that *Indoamericano* allowed them to socialise with their compatriots, play intra-community football tournaments, and buy and sell food and wares that "remind[ed] them of home".²³³ This point was made at length by Daniela, whose research has focused on migrants' use of 'public space', and particularly the central role *Indoamericano* had in the lives of migrant communities:

The park is a place that until it was occupied was seen as abandoned. But...it was [only] abandoned in recent years by the [city] government, but not by people who [used] it at weekends. It was amazing to me that no one from the mainstream...media referred to those previous uses of the park, because...many people use the park in their personal lives and in community life and everything else. This was all forgotten in the occupation, and interestingly before the occupation no one really knew where it was, [even though] it is the second largest park in the city. So until then no one was paying attention, but at the time when so many eyes were on the park occupation nobody bothered to find out what was happening until then. The discourse was 'an abandoned place'.

Supporting ideas expressed to me by people involved with the occupation, Daniela then explained how this idea of *Indoamericano's* being abandoned actually shaped the decision to occupy, the occupiers reckoning, erroneously, that reactions to their presence would be lessened:

This was related to the decision to occupy, as...it was perceived as a location with low visibility in a very marginal area of the city. Also surrounding the park, many of the neighbourhoods were formed many years ago in the same way, that is, people put their house there and slowly the *villas* that are around there were built. So the

²³³ Interestingly migrant groups were said to remain separate with their usage of the park, the consequences of which are discussed below.

occupation is part of a whole logic and has its own story. If you look around many of the *villas* there are people without enough money to buy a piece of land, people living in very poor conditions, and in front of them they saw a space of 130 hectares hardly...visible to most people, and throughout the week virtually unused. Well, people thought “go to that place”.

The second part of the quotation emphasises a tension revolving around how the occupation of a supposedly unwanted no-person’s land elicited such a strong response (see Lederman, 2013), but before turning to that it is important to consider the implications of the ‘emptiness’ discourse. Focusing on Mexican ‘informal’ settlements, Lombard (2014) has shown how discourses of ‘emptiness’ and ‘nothingness’ are used to delegitimise the place-making claims of marginalised groups and by association the groups themselves. Therefore, by deriding an important place for ‘neighbouring migrants’, the media and city government perpetuated the lowly social status of its users. This can be seen in Ritondo’s quotation at the start of the section, where he says the park belonged to “all the residents and workers in the area” – who in fact were exactly the people who occupied *Indoamericano*, and, as argued, were those using it at weekends. But, much as with the *vecino* discourse, the seemingly inclusive language belies discriminatory opinions. The place-making claims of ‘neighbouring migrants’ do not count, and therefore their use of *Indoamericano* – either before or during the occupation – is thus almost by definition problematic and illegitimate. The understandings and definitions of ‘public space’ therefore need more exploration.

A further tension, or in Lederman’s (2013) words a ‘paradox’, surrounds the occupation. As Ritondo emphasised, the park being ‘public space’ made the city government’s stance on the occupation ‘not negotiable’. Therefore, while the strength of the repression and response was framed in universalistic terms, the reality was more narrow and ‘particularistic’. That is, the appropriate ‘public’ who were entitled to the space referred only to a particular subset of society. Importantly, to ensure that the non-negotiable ‘public space’ is accessible, appropriate, and safe for this desired ‘public’ it needed to be controlled (Chronopoulos, 2006; Kanai, 2010). Chapters 5 explored the ways in which discourses of ‘insecurity’ have been used by various city governments to eject unwanted (typically ‘neighbouring migrant’) populations from parts of CABA, as well as to justify the ‘improvement’ (read: demolition) of *villas* and ‘informal’ settlements. The gentrification that

these chapters mentioned has also contributed to the securitisation – and regarding gated communities and shopping centres, the privatisation (e.g. Carman, 2006; Miller 2012, 2014; Pírez, 2002) – of ‘public space’ (see Betancur, 2014; Janoschka, 2014). This has happened in various ways, including increased police presence in specific ‘undesirable neighbourhoods’ (Caggiano and Segura, 2014; Chapter 7) and the construction of physical boundaries around and within public spaces such as parks (Cavaliere et al., 2013).

The latter was an important issue throughout my fieldwork, when I was involved with campaigns against the building of railings around two parks: *Parque Centenario* in *Caballito*, and *Parque Lezama* in *San Telmo* (see Figure 8.1). Both parks are in *barrios* experiencing gentrification, and the city government viewed the parks’ ‘improvement’ as important. *Centenario* received investment in new play and leisure facilities, landscaping, and the renovation of a ‘public’ amphitheatre. But while these were well-received by local residents, the erection of large fences and lockable gates around the perimeter and within the park was met with resistance, as they would restrict access, a process which the city government deemed necessary to make ‘public space’ ‘safe’. This was opposed by locals, as the park is the location for a number of community events and a popular spot for musicians and artists (La Nación, 01/02/13). The newly ‘improved’ and securitised park would restrict and even prevent many of these activities. In response a group of self-proclaimed *vecinxs*²³⁴ organised protests and weekly *asambleas* within the park. These demanded that ‘public space’ be free and for everyone, arguing that the city government’s changes discriminated against certain people’s use of the space (predominantly those who were less affluent and non-white - ‘neighbouring migrants’) and prevented free association. The conflict came to a head when protestors attempted to pull down the railings and were met with violent police repression (Clarín, 29/01/13). This led to more security, barriers to protect the railings, and police officers every 100 metres around the park’s perimeter. Ultimately, despite the local campaign’s best efforts, *Parque Centenario*, described by the city government’s minister for public spaces as newly “beautiful, well-lit, [and] with security” (Buenos Aires Herald, 22/02/13), became the archetype of the city government’s idealised ‘public space’: enclosed, securitised, and inaccessible to undesirable groups (Colectivo Situaciones, 2002; Stratta and

²³⁴ The use of the gender-inclusive ‘x’ instead of the usual masculine ‘o’ was a particular hallmark of the campaign, which sought to reclaim the idea of the *vecinx*.

Barrera, 2009; Whitson, 2007, 2011). This example demonstrates Lederman's (2013) paradox of simultaneously universalistic and particularistic understandings of 'public space', which rests on a narrow conception of the 'public'.

The *Parque Lezama* case shares similarities. It is located in a neighbourhood undergoing gentrification, and the city government also deemed the erection of railings within and around the park to be necessary for a safe 'public space'. The park's location is important as it borders *San Telmo* and the less gentrified and (supposedly) more dangerous *La Boca*. Its position at the frontier between the affluent north and the poor south²³⁵ made its securitisation a priority for the city government following the *Indoamericano* occupation. It was a park where many homeless people slept, and it was claimed by certain local residents over a hundred people had made it their home, but the 'type' – not number – of people was important as the park was where *cartoneros* would meet and rest. The nearby residents' discourses were very similar to those surrounding *Indoamericano*: lazy, scrounging 'bums' accused of delinquency, crime, and drug-dealing were improperly occupying 'public space' (La Nación, 28/01/11). Similarly, the lack of state and police involvement meant *Lezama* had become an abandoned, unsafe space. But again, despite this supposed 'abandonment', it was still deemed important 'public space' given its location. The city government therefore 'improved' the park, with works which – beyond mild cosmetic changes – mostly consisted of increasing CCTV and police presence and evicting unwanted people; the railings are currently on hold (Clarín, 18/06/14).

Again the conflation of control and security of 'public space' emerges. In all three parks 'public space' is seen as unsafe and uncontrolled when the wrong type of people use it in the wrong way. While in some situations people's presence is overlooked and ignored, as with *Indoamericano* being dismissed as 'empty', the other cases demonstrate 'hyper-visibility', representing the presence of relatively few 'neighbouring migrants' as intolerably transgressive (see Grimson and Caggiano, 2012; cf. Grimson, 2006). Ideas of in place/out of place are useful here. It is not necessarily the existence of 'neighbouring migrants' that is problematic, instead their presence in 'public space', given that the appropriate 'public' for the space are *vecinos*. Accordingly control of 'public space' is necessary as it prevents these

²³⁵ Though of course this boundary is relative and shifting, as discussed in Chapter 7.

infractions, and consequently reinforces the idea of a narrow 'public', and further marginalises 'neighbouring migrants'. The relationship is a vicious cycle. If 'public space' is for 'the public', and only certain people are allowed to use 'public space', then only those allowed to use it could possibly be 'the public'. Therefore this control and securitisation of 'public space' perpetuates the 'Argentine myth', and accordingly researchers have argued that it is better described as a 'whitening' of 'public space' (Bonilla, 2011; Guano, 2004; Scribano, 2014; Simbiosis Cultural, 2011; cf. Shaw, 2011). Similarly it is part of what Gordillo (forthcoming: xx) sees as the geographical nature of racism in Argentina, where "few things affect White Argentina more profoundly than the appearance in public space of spatially expansive multitude of "negros". But, more generally it is also part a "territorial moment", where urban governance is increasingly focused on transforming and 'improving' urban 'public space' in a way that promotes (often insidiously) elite ideologies (Schindler, 2014), emphasising the power of territory and territorial identities.

Returning specifically to *Indoamericano*, the area was certainly described by the city government as 'public space'. Before the occupation the area was seen as empty and abandoned, but afterwards the idea of 'public space' was invoked as above in order to legitimise repressions and eviction – even though the desired 'public' ("workers and citizens") did not use the space. Further, these ideas of reclaiming 'public space' were not proposed just by the city government and media, but also by the nearby *vecinos* so vehemently against the occupation (Lederman, 2013). However, as argued, 'public space' in Buenos Aires is increasingly linked to (state) control and 'security', both lacking in *Indoamericano*, and the discourses describing 'invasion' by 'uncontrolled immigration' threatened *Indoamericano's* status as 'public space'. This not only criminalised migrants, but maintained the idea that such behaviour was an aberration, and out of place because CABA is normally the domain of *vecinos* behaving appropriately in *their* properly secured 'public space'. This discursive distancing was also complemented by 'improvement' to *Indoamericano* to turn it properly from abandoned space into safe, desirable 'public space'. The city government drew up elaborate plans for the park following the clearance of the occupation, but these were never fully realised. Instead only small changes were made to sections of the park nearest the surrounding housing, in order to placate *vecinos* (Lederman, 2013). These 'improvements' can be seen in Figures 8.5 and 8.6.



Figure 8.5: Children playing in the improved *Indoamericano* in 2013.

Source: http://www.buenosaires.gov.ar/sites/gcaba/files/field/image/indo2013_juegos_10.jpg



Figure 8.6: Mauricio Macri admiring his work.

Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/buenosairesprensa/8471735796/>

This was mentioned in a number of interviews with people involved with the occupation, but perhaps best expressed by Daniela:

After the occupation the Ministry of Public Space fenced it off and undertook works on the park. These took a long time, but they only made a little bit of difference, and they only put a couple of modern play things in the park. But also they closed certain areas, and only allowed entry at certain times of day. It became much more controlled, and the vendors²³⁶ couldn't use it anymore and the [immigrant] football tournaments could not happen. These were all [for] the *vecinos* who didn't like how it was used at weekends, but didn't really use it themselves – the whole thing is just about appearance, and the government looking like it is doing something.

As a consequence *Indoamericano* went from a well-used 'empty space' to an underused 'public space'.

This section has explored how ideas of 'public space' are invoked by different groups to very different ends. Ultimately the city government's ability to control and 'improve' 'public space' (as well as the interrelated process of defining 'the public') in its desired image has perpetuated intersectional hierarchies bound up in the confluences of whiteness, Europeaness, control, and civilisation, typically framed and perpetuated in dialectical contradistinction to their negations, which come to be embodied in 'neighbouring migrants' and their activities (Bonilla, 2011). The next section expands on these ideas, and explores how the territorial identities and hierarchies explored in Chapter 7 were important in determining attitudes towards the occupation.

8.4.2: Territorial hierarchies

As this thesis argues BAMA is an extremely divided city, and even the 'privileged territory' of CABA (Stratta and Barrera, 2009) is heterogeneous. These multi-scalar territorial identities form a hierarchy reflecting and (re)producing the intersectional production of space. This section focuses on how this hierarchy underpins the idea of *Indoamericano* as 'empty space' and the strength of reaction to its occupation. It also considers how comments from the city government reiterated the ranking of *barrios* explored in Chapter 7, in ways that

²³⁶ This refers to the migrants, predominantly Bolivian, who used the park as a place to sell food and wares, and were central to the maintenance of cultural identity (see Canelo, 2006)

territorialised whiteness while confirming its supposed superiority (cf. Shaw, 2011), and ultimately contributed to class *decomposition*.

First, media and city government reactions to the occupation of *Indoamericano* were so strong because it took place within CABA. Prosaically, this meant that it fell under Macri's jurisdiction and his more right-wing, anti-immigration stance (compared to the national government) was demonstrated by his reaction to the occupation. However, while an important factor, this only tells part of the story. The divide between CABA and BAMA has been discussed in Chapters 5 and 7: the othering of the *conurbano* has long meant that certain behaviours and bodies are far less transgressive when out of sight and mind (Licitra, 2011). Historically, unwanted groups have been ejected from CABA by a succession of city and national governments, with these expulsions exacerbated by processes of gentrification and 'territorial purification' (Carman, 2006) that have 'whitened' the city (Bonilla, 2011; Guano, 2003b). But as argued, these processes are incomplete, and are occurring simultaneously with an opposing yet related process: the rise of 'informal' settlements (Benwell et al., 2013). What is more, these settlements and their inhabitants remain tolerated and (relatively) unproblematic when bounded and *in place*. Far from resulting from a steady build-up of housing problems, the occupation of *Indoamericano* was depicted as a sudden spilling-over of bodies that were now markedly *out of place*.

The story is very different in the *conurbano*. The increase in gated communities (see Roitman and Phelps, 2011; Thuillier, 2005) has still failed to combat the long-standing view that the *conurbano* is an 'ocean of poverty' with occasional 'islands of wealth' (e.g. Coy and Pöhler, 2002; Tella et al., 2007; Borsdorf and Hidalgo, 2010). Historically there have also been many occupations in the *conurbano*, to the point that this sort of behaviour/political activity became commonplace, and if not overlooked by the state, at least tolerated (see Bombal, 1988; Merklen, 1997; Licitra, 2011). This meant that, after the *Indoamericano* occupation, a common discourse was that such events were expected in the *conurbano* but not in CABA (see Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012). Across interviews with key informants and those involved with the occupation, I was repeatedly told that the media overplayed the occupation because of its location, focusing less on the causes of the incident – and to some extent even its size – than the fact it was within CABA. Land occupation is not seen as universally illegal and problematic, only particularly within CABA, where 'uncontrolled

immigration' led to such a large number of 'neighbouring migrants' becoming so firmly out of place. Occupations, like 'neighbouring migrants', can also be in place/out of place. As Javier said, while also making reference to the city government's desire to 'control' 'public space':

In the *conurbano* these kinds of things happen all the time, but they do not receive the same level of repression. They happen in *Lomas de Zamora*, in *La Matanza*, and not much attention is given. They happen in *Florencio Varela*²³⁷ regularly, and it is a common strategy for people to solve their housing problems. First they claim plots, and then they start to organise for official recognition. This strategy exists in the *conurbano*, but in the federal capital it is another thing entirely...In the city public space is much more controlled and they [the city government] try to limit these sorts of occupations.

Agustin, who works with children and families involved with the *Indoamericano* occupation, made a similar point, touching upon how the different territorial pressures on CABA and the *conurbano* shaped reactions towards the occupation:

There is a big difference because *Indoamericano* is in the federal capital not the *conurbano*. In the *conurbano* [occupying land] is not a problem. There are more spaces, and if there is an occupation nothing happens. But then even in the capital there is also a big difference between *Indoamericano* and the *Bosques de Palermo*.

The final point he makes above, however, is particularly important, and it speaks of the relevance of *Indoamericano's* location *within* CABA.

The *Bosques de Palermo* is CABA's largest park (400 hectares), and is situated in affluent *Palermo*. It has a number of ornamental gardens, the city planetarium, and a boating lake. While it is a busy park, those using it tend to be from the more affluent sections of *porteño* society²³⁸. In this respect, it is a very different park/'public space' to *Indoamericano*, and its occupation would have been much more problematic. *Indoamericano* was seen as 'empty space' only because of its location in the south of the city. This contributed to its use by 'neighbouring migrants', and the fact that, as Javier and

²³⁷ These three are districts in the *conurbano*, whose locations can be seen in Figure 5.3.

²³⁸ In fact Figure 7.1 was created to depict the common sight of a runner in the *Bosques*.

Daniela put it, many *porteños* did not know where the park was before the occupation. So while the reaction to the occupation of 'empty space' was strong because it was within CABA, had the park been elsewhere it would not have been seen as 'empty space' at all, but 'public space' from the off. So Agustin makes the point that an occupation of the *Bosques de Palermo* is much more transgressive, an idea reflected in the media (see Kaufman, 2012; Simbiosis Cultural, 2011; Vommaro and Cremonte, 2012) and comments from Ritondo and Macri:

If we allow them to stay there, then tomorrow it's going to be *Parque Las Heras*, *Parque Pereyra*, the *Parque Centenario* or *Parque Chacabuco*. The Buenos Aires residents support us in this (Cristian Ritondo on Twitter).²³⁹

We are here to defend them [the *vecinos* in *Villa Lugano* and *Villa Soldati*]...we must feel that this is happening in the *Parque Rivadavia*, happening in *Plaza Francia*, happening in the *Bosques de Palermo*...we cannot allow it, we cannot allow it...All this increase in occupations is about insecurity in the City of Buenos Aires; we have to stop it; we must reverse it (Mauricio Macri, press conference, 09/12/10).²⁴⁰

Both examples make extremely emotive claims, playing on *vecinos'* worst fears that properly *porteño* 'public space' (for the parks' locations see Figure 8.1) could be occupied by 'neighbouring migrants' unless a sufficiently robust response to the migrant threat were offered. This is a straw person argument, as both parties knew occupations would be unlikely, given a) the parks' policing and securitisation, and b) the lack of adjacent 'neighbouring migrant' population. But by invoking such shocking yet unlikely ideas they fuelled unfair concern, while also delegitimising the occupation and drawing attention away from its causes. Parks such as the *Bosques de Palermo*, *Plaza Francia*, and *Las Heras* are located in the centre of *Palermo* and *Recoleta*, some of CABA's most exclusive *barrios*, areas where even large portions of the middle classes are out of place and looked down upon (Grimson, 2008). As the examples of 'public space' they give get increasingly exclusive and

²³⁹ <http://www.infobae.com/2010/12/09/551191-hoy-es-soldati-pero-manana-sera-el-parque-centenario-o-el-parque-chacabuco> It is also interesting to note that Ritondo makes reference to *Parque Pereyra*, which, while in the *conurbano*, is a UNESCO 'Biosphere Reserve' and therefore anything but 'empty space'. Also, while there were protests in *Parque Centenario*, these were very different to an occupation by 'neighbouring migrants', to which Ritondo is referring.

²⁴⁰ For a transcript of the entire press conference: <http://es.paperblog.com/discurso-y-conferencia-de-prensa-ante-la-ocupacion-del-parque-indoamericano-de-mauricio-macri-jefe-de-gobierno-de-la-ciudad-de-buenos-aires-9122010-359147/>

rarefied the prospect of occupations becomes more worrying and transgressive.²⁴¹ Occupations would be so out of place in the locations given because the areas are so strongly associated with the ideas of order, civilisation, and Europeanness that are embodied in whiteness and *porteñidad*, and then reified territorially in certain *barrios* (Bonilla, 2011; Guano, 2003a, 2003b, 2004; Wilson, 2000). These parks and *barrios* represent everything the occupation of *Indoamericano*, and by extension ‘neighbouring migrants’, was/are not. Further, the examples given map neatly on to the territorial hierarchies and related *barrio* identities that I encountered consistently (see Section 7.1) and are invoked as if their occupation were almost self-evidently shocking. This therefore again supports the idea that territorial identities can reinforce, (re)produce, yet obfuscate the intersectional processes that go into the production of space.

The spatialities of the occupation also affected class composition at two levels – between *vecinos* and *okupas*, but also within the occupying groups. Regarding the former, examples in this chapter (and others) have demonstrated the important differences associated with living in an *edificio* (a ‘proper building’) and a *villa*. These territorial differences both reflect and reify important intersectional differences: place attachment and territorial identities were important in drawing the occupation’s lines of division. However, given the low economic status of *Comuna 8* this division created, as interviewees mentioned, “a struggle of the poor against the poor”. Territorial divisions contributed to intra-class conflict and class *decomposition*, not solidarity and united struggle against the causes of the housing crisis. A similar situation can be seen among the occupiers. Chapter 7 discussed the internal, ethno-national divisions of the *villas* and their consequences. Migrants’ use of *Indoamericano* before the occupation mirrored these divides, as different migrant groups used specific areas of the park (Canelo, 2006, 2008). This was something supported by Daniela when reflecting on her own research in *Indoamericano*:

Before the occupation the park was used by different groups of people, but there was a particular coexistence according to certain terms. All of [the park’s users] knew the divisions, even though they could not be seen. There was especially no mixing with the Bolivians. So they had certain boundaries – symbolic boundaries – so that

²⁴¹ Although arguably they also become less likely, given the factors related to securitisation and proximity to ‘neighbouring migrant’ populations and ‘informal’ settlements.

everyone knew where they could go. The *vecinos* from the *monoblocs*²⁴², who were mostly not immigrants, they stated that they felt uncomfortable coming in the park, they said it was a place that you couldn't go, so called for the state to do some work to modify those divisions of space...Generally, cohabitation [between immigrant groups] was not common. People were just going to the park to spend their weekends in and tried to turn every part into their own home, and people always returned to the places that they knew. Even within communities there were differences. Most people think the Bolivian community, for example, is undifferentiated, but every group was bounded by one region in the park, and Bolivians from one area didn't go to another one.

Daniela touches on the split between *vecinos* and park users discussed above, but also supports the way in which territorial divisions within the park reflected and reinforced differences among migrant communities (see Martín and López, 2013). Again the idea is invoked of well-known and powerful 'symbolic boundaries', much like those found within the *villas*. And while divisions between migrants from different countries were reinforced by these boundaries, so were those *within* particular migrant communities, aligning with arguments from Chapter 6. Further, these fractures affected the occupation itself; territorial divisions were maintained when tents were erected, which ties in with the points discussed above about the particular vulnerability Bolivian occupiers faced at the time. Accordingly the ability of the occupation to defend itself was frustrated by these internal divisions (Symbiosis Cultural, 2011), and therefore the territorial pressure facing inhabitants of CABA once more contributes to ghettoisation and ultimately class *decomposition*, as argued in Chapter 7.

8.5: Consequences of the occupation

This penultimate section highlights some consequences and legacies of the occupation, demonstrating that the levels of anti-'neighbouring migrant' sentiment and the housing crisis have not improved since. Unfortunately the coalition between the city and national governments which promised to resolve the housing problems of those occupying the park (on the condition that they left) fragmented very quickly (Zapata, 2013). At best, very basic improvements to key services were implemented within *Villas 1-11-14* and *20*, but typically

²⁴² Large concrete social housing blocks. While these are often portrayed as very dangerous, their 'formality' is enough to trump those living in the *villas*.

these changes were little more than cosmetic, and in fact talk of ‘upgrade’ and ‘formalisation’ often became *villa* clearance (see Benwell et al., 2013; Cravino and González Carvajal, 2012). Key housing issues were thus not dealt with, and the hyper-inflated ‘informal’ property market has continued apace, causing real problems for those living in the *villas* (Sorín, 2012; Wagner, 2012). As discussed significant improvements to the park failed to materialise, and the proposed grand plans amounted to little more than the landscaping and new play areas that can be seen in Figures 8.4 and 8.5.

There have since been further occupations within CABA, but these have all been much smaller and have not happened in parks or comparable ‘public space’. Nevertheless, reaction to them has shared similarities with the *Indoamericano* case, ideas of ‘no-man’s [sic] land’ being invoked, and the housing crisis being overlooked due to a focus on immigration (Rodríguez, 2014; Zapata, 2013). I spoke with occupiers and ‘evictors’ involved with some of these occupations, and was told that they almost all followed a similar pattern. The help and improvements promised by the city government never appeared, *punteros* took their control of the property market too far, and overcrowding became too severe. This led to the occupation of nearby land and/or visible and disruptive methods of protest (typically mimicking the road blocks used by the *piqueteros*), drawing a predictably violent response from the city government. A standoff would occur where the city government would eventually promise subsidies and improvements if, and only if, the occupiers/protestors stood down, which they normally did. After this relative normality (i.e. terrible housing conditions) would return, and a few comparatively tokenistic efforts would be made by the city government. At some point it would become clear to those living in the ‘informal’ settlements that the city government had reneged on its part of the deal, and the whole process would start again, but typically in a slightly different part of the city given that ‘improvements’ had often since securitised the location of the previous occupation.

Most recently, similar events led to the creation, and then violent destruction, of *Villa Papa Francisco* – named after Pope Francisco who has been vocal in his support of Buenos Aires’ urban poor. The occupation, once more in *Villa Lugano*, started on 24 February 2014, and by the time it was bulldozed on 23 August, it had grown to around seven hundred families, mostly from *Villa 20* (The Argentina Independent, 01/10/14). Responses resembled *Indoamericano* as occupiers were criminalised and the occupation was blamed on

immigrants. The whole affair followed an almost identical pattern to that described above, and individual subsidies of 3,000 pesos were offered to families willing to be 'rehoused' by another city-national coalition (Buenos Aires Herald, 24/08/14). However, those who agreed to this were separated from their possessions and ended up in government-run shelters, while those who refused witnessed the razing of their homes in the name of the 'Villa 20 urbanisation plan'. Although this particular occupation was bigger than almost all of the previous ones, the ubiquity of such events is testament to the continued housing problem within CABA.

The persistence of these occupations has increased tensions, and animosity towards 'neighbouring migrants' – particularly in nearby areas. Javier explained that there are still daily examples of anti-immigrant violence in the south of the city, something confirmed to me by all the 'neighbouring migrants' I spoke to about the topic. Regarding *Indoamericano*, Agustin explained how, within the schools where he teaches, the occupation and responses are still "like an open wound". He told me that the occupation and its aftermath were brought up daily, and both were often a source of bullying and division among groups of children and their extended families. Discursively, ideas of 'invasion' and 'uncontrolled immigration' are still depressingly common in much of the media, as is the consistent criminalisation of 'neighbouring migrants' (Caggiano and Segura, 2014b). For instance, at the end of October 2014 the Security Secretary for the national government, Sergio Berni, described foreign criminals as "a virus that has infected" Argentina (Buenos Aires Herald, 29/10/14). While the head of the National Migration office responded saying focusing on criminals' nationalities is a mistake, Berni's comments were widely reported, and even though frequently debunked, supposedly well received by many *porteños* (Clarín, 02/11/14). Therefore, far from *Indoamericano*-specific, the discourses that were supposedly 'from the 90s' remain present.

8.6: Conclusions

By focusing on the *Indoamericano* occupation this chapter has expanded on arguments made in this thesis. It has been argued that, contrary the commonly-expressed idea that it happened spontaneously (see Kaufman, 2012), the occupation was a response to a long-term housing crisis (Sorín, 2012; Wagner, 2012). Responses contributed to the

criminalisation of 'neighbouring migrants' as well as to the related racialisation of the urban poor. Casting the occupation as a migrant problem consequently enabled the successful perpetuation of discourses that conflate *porteñidad* with whiteness, Europeaness, and civilisation, thus further distancing 'neighbouring migrants' from these identities. These ideas were grounded in narrow understandings of 'public space', which by defining the 'public' in very specific and 'particularistic' terms contributed to, and reinforced, the ways in which non-desirable groups are 'denied citizenship' (Guano, 2004) and inevitably cast outside of the city and nation. This territorialisation of discrimination is compounded by discourses of *vecinos* and *okupas* which mask xenophobia and racism. Territorial hierarchies were also demonstrated by responses to the occupation; hierarchies which emphasised the way in which they relate to intersectional identities and processes typically framed around whiteness (and its related constituent parts, such as order, civilisation, and wealth) as an organising principle. However, despite the clear importance of these racial discourses, it is necessary not to remove class from the picture entirely. While it may not have been so foregrounded in responses to the occupation of *Indoamericano*, the impact the class-driven process of gentrification had on events is crucial, as is the role of class in the construction of the 'neighbouring migrant', the *vecino*, and the *okupa*. The links between a class-inflected intersectionality and territory are therefore well demonstrated by this case: it unpacks the former, shows how these produce the latter, and demonstrates the links between territory and class composition.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusions

In this thesis I have explored the experiences of, and attitudes towards, ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires. Although different chapters have individually focused on the intersections between class, race, and national identity on the one hand, and ideas of territory on the other, I ultimately demonstrate the need for these two strands to be understood together. This combination provides a rich, deep understanding of migrants’ lives, their political activity, and the discrimination they face. In order to reflect productively on this multifaceted situation, this final chapter therefore draws together the findings from, and ideas that underpin, the thesis. I begin by recapping the main findings of the thesis, and then outline the thesis’s theoretical and methodological contributions, demonstrating how the frameworks developed in Chapters 2 and 3 can be usefully applied beyond this thesis. Finally I propose some avenues for future research that could expand on the arguments developed here, and reflect on the political significance of the research topic.

9.1: Recapping the thesis: empirical findings

This section will provide a review of the thesis’s key findings. Although there is a particular focus on ideas discussed in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, these are situated within the context provided by Chapters 4 and 5, and the conclusions are therefore presented thematically. Their relationships to the research questions are also made explicit. However, as has been argued in the thesis, these findings should not be seen as discrete but as intersecting and co-constitutive. Nevertheless, given the aforementioned difficulties associated with writing intersectionally, although reflections will be offered individually, the many connections between conclusions will be highlighted throughout.

9.1.1: Intersectionality and immigrant (class) struggles

The particular ways in which class intersects with race, nationality, and national identity, and how these structures/identities remake each other was explored. The ‘power of whiteness’ was emphasised, whereby perceived levels of whiteness shape a nationally-bound, (social) class position, distancing ‘neighbouring migrants’ from the Argentine

national identity. Relatedly it was argued that class position can ‘buy whiteness’, and that accordingly some immigrants can become part of the nation. However, this was not universal, which explains how and why Bolivian immigrants suffer such a high level of discrimination.²⁴³ This contributed to a discussion about how Peronism in its various guises draws together class and national identity. While *Kirchnerismo* was seen to be regionally focused and to have a certain appeal to ‘neighbouring migrants’, a more ‘traditional’ Peronism remains strong within the trade unions, further alienating migrants from dominant forms of class politics – often for racialised reasons. Further, this disconnection between interpretations of Peronism created divisions and ultimately contributed to class decomposition. Consideration of the middle and upper classes provided a counterpoint to discussion about ‘neighbouring migrants’. Focusing on three *cacerolazos* that took place during my fieldwork (each bigger than the last), expressions of *porteñidad* were shown to be bound up with whiteness in a way that further discriminated against and marginalised ‘neighbouring migrants’. The size of the protests demonstrated that the idea of a ‘white’ city and nation is not a thing of the past, and how the *porteño* and ‘neighbouring migrant’ identities are dialectically intertwined – all issues relating to **RQ1** and **2**.

Central to the thesis was the animosity towards class and class politics I witnessed from many migrants, for whom thinking in terms of class was described as ‘old-fashioned’ and ‘counterproductive’ in terms of building links and initiating political struggle. The idea of class failed to speak meaningfully to many migrants’ everyday experiences of (predominantly racial) discrimination, an issue that was exacerbated by migrant involvement with elements of the labour movement. Mainstream unions were seen as occupying a position of hegemony over the sphere of ‘class politics’. But the unions’ strained relationship with migrants – typically ranging from indifference to animosity – consequently increased migrant groups’ suspicion of the idea of class. But, as argued in Chapter 2, it is important not to overlook social (re)production and the circulation of capital as sites of class politics and struggle, something illustrated by the rise of an ‘autonomous labour subjectivity’ removed from traditional unions (Dinerstein, 2013). I therefore demonstrated that a non-intersectional, over-narrow reading of class is not only problematic, but also a key reason for the lack of migrant involvement with class politics more generally, conclusions that talk

²⁴³ It is also a contributing factor to the problematic internal homogenisation of the Bolivian community.

to **RQ2**, and help to combat the shortage of empirical work looking at the relationship between immigrations and social/labour movements.

Furthermore, immigrant stereotypes were explored, demonstrating that these featured supposedly 'cultural' elements that framed – and ultimately fixed – racial tropes in national terms, but were inextricably linked to class position. However, these stereotypes were extremely reductive, grounded solely in the technical composition of migrants, and overlooking their political composition entirely. These stereotypes were so strong that they effectively homogenised immigrant groups, which often led to the obfuscation and denial of class differences *within* migrant collectives. This was particularly the case within the Bolivian community, where certain leaders actually promote stereotypes in order to perpetuate and facilitate the exploitation of Bolivian workers in textile workshops. As with Peronism, this has led to the class line being supposedly redrawn in such a way that it can ultimately contribute to class decomposition: the 'working class' is fractured and combined with employers.

The consequences of the perpetuation of immigrant stereotypes – from both within and outside immigrant communities – simultaneously demonstrates the limitations, yet pervasive strength, of the narrow understandings of class that so determine migrants' lives and political activity. In order to understand and ultimately combat these issues, examples of 'militant collective-*autoethnography*' were given, which demonstrated not only the heterogeneity of class and its intersecting structures/identities, but also some possibilities for resistance given the political compositions immanent to migrants' respective technical compositions. A debate surrounding Bolivian 'slave labour' expanded upon these ideas further. While media-friendly, the discourse features an absolute denial of political composition, contributes to Bolivian migrants' subalternity, and has exacerbated divisions between communities – both Bolivian and non-Bolivian.

The thesis – in particular Chapters 4 and 6 – has therefore demonstrated the ways in which class, race, and national identity intersect to influence the everyday lives of immigrants and attitudes towards them, concluding that potential class recomposition is reliant on intersectional class composition analyses that appreciate the heterogeneity of 'neighbouring migrants'. It has also looked at migrants' everyday lived experiences of racism,

as well as the affective and performative nature of race relations in Buenos Aires. Answers to **RQ1** and **2** are thus provided, and in doing so the links between the two questions are emphasised.

9.1.2: Territorial politics, identities, and subjectivities

The second main theme of the thesis has been territory, territorial identities/subjectivities, and territorial politics, all issues raised in **RQ3**. Particular attention has been placed on *barrios*, their formation, and the ways in which their territorial identities influence attitudes towards – and between – migrants. Grounded in ideas developed in Chapter 2 about the intersectional production of urban spaces/territories, the consequences of gentrification and ‘ethno-national’ ghettoisation have been explored, and these processes were shown to be remaking the city in a way that marginalises ‘neighbouring migrants’, while demonstrating the geographical nature of racism. These striations were such that while they often led to unity *within* immigrant communities, they fostered division, and at times animosity, *between* them – likewise between migrant and Argentine groups – leading to class *decomposition*.

To conceptualise this better, it was argued that *barrios* should be understood as ‘multiterritories’. These *barrios* have identities that are shaped not only by intersectional processes; once formed, *barrio* identity can go on to influence political behaviour and subjectivity. *Barrio* identities were shown to be multiple and contested, yet reflective of the social hierarchy discussed in Chapters 4 and 6: an intersectional hierarchy dominated by whiteness. This *barrio* hierarchy not only normalised the supposed superiority of certain structures/identities, but affected the everyday life of ‘neighbouring migrants’ by dictating where and when they were in and out of place. Various examples of inter-/intra-*barrial* relationships, interactions, and activities were provided, which demonstrated the different weight territorial claims carry within multiterritorial *barrios*. Ultimately, this demonstrated that ideas of territory play an important role in the everyday life of ‘neighbouring migrants’, and how pressures within CABA can lead to ‘neighbouring migrant’ territorial activities that reinforce their subalternity.

Ideas of territorial and *barrio* identity were deepened through a discussion of the changing face of the *vecino* and the rise of *vecinocracia*. This territorial subjectivity was

shown to be increasingly and insidiously racialised and classed in such a way that it contributed to the marginalisation of ‘neighbouring migrants’ through a dialectical relationship of inverted alterity. By demonstrating the prevalence and importance of the *vecino* identity/subjectivity, the section highlighted the role territorial politics play in Buenos Aires, and how the forms of politics and subjectivities associated with *vecinos* and ‘neighbouring migrants’ need to be situated within the intersectional processes that formed them.

Emphasis has been placed on the *conurbano*, demonstrating the way in which it is being reshaped by CABA’s gentrification. The differences between CABA and BAMA were explored, emphasising the way in which CABA has become a ‘privileged territory’, something which dictates what is classed as *in place* within its boundaries. Much like the shrinking ‘south’ of the city, BAMA was shown to be territorially stigmatised, and this was brought into focus by a discussion about the liminal, border *barrio* of *Liniers* in order to tease out the consequence of this stigmatisation. Despite emphasising the heterogeneity of the *conurbano*, in the chapter I argued that it functioned as a territorial analogue to the ‘neighbouring migrant’ in a dialectical relationship with CABA (which represent and embodies the *vecino*), and this was demonstrated through a discussion of in place/out of place. These differences between the *conurbano* and CABA underpinned a discussion about the potential for territorially-driven class recomposition in the former. Instead of class decomposition driven by ghettoisation in CABA, the alternative territorial claims made by groups in the *conurbano* were shown to have the potential to overcome, not exacerbate, intersectional class differences.

Territory has therefore been shown to have a ‘morphogenetic’ relationship with the intersectional structures and identities, discussed in Chapters 4 and 6, that it shapes and is shaped by. For ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires territorial identities very much ‘count’, and the way in which these are constructed – and some of their consequences – have been unpacked, providing answers to **RQ3**. Throughout the thesis explicit links between class, race, national identity, and territory have been drawn; these connections were made most explicit through a focus on the occupation of *Parque Indoamericano*.

9.1.3: Indoamericano: *causes, consequences, and conclusions*

Bringing together arguments made in the thesis, the occupation was situated within the context of a housing crisis in the south of the city, the brunt of which was disproportionately felt by 'neighbouring migrants'. After describing the events of the occupation, in the chapter I explored responses to it in order to demonstrate what these revealed about attitudes towards 'neighbouring migrants'.

Although, as demonstrated, the occupation was a reaction to a housing crisis and around 50% of the occupiers were Argentine, it was most commonly and forcefully depicted by the city government and much of the media as a result of 'uncontrolled immigration'. Beyond criminalising migrants and migration, this discourse showed the racialisation inherent in the construction of the category 'neighbouring migrant'. Further, it also contributed to a rise in physical violence towards 'neighbouring migrants' – in particular Bolivians. A second prominent discourse framed the occupation as a battle between *vecinos* and *okupas*, and therefore ideas expressed in Chapter 7 were expanded upon. It showed that being categorised as *okupas* further marginalised 'neighbouring migrants' and their territorial claims, while legitimising the violent acts of supposed *vecinos*. In this sense it once more demonstrated not only the importance of territorial identities, but also the ways in which they can insidiously promote racist, xenophobic, and classist discrimination.

The spatialities of the occupation were also discussed. Despite its being an important space for 'neighbouring migrants', the park was commonly depicted as an empty, abandoned no-man's [sic] land, and this consequently delegitimised migrants and their 'place making' claims. Paradoxically, central to the violent eviction of the park's occupiers was the city government's claim that *Indoamericano* was 'public space' in need of reclamation and securitisation. Struggles over 'public space' were mentioned in order to provide examples of the way in which 'neighbouring migrants' are othered from a territorialised *porteño* identity, thus combining a number of previous arguments, and once more touching on the geographical/territorial nature of racism. Although the park's location contributed to the strength of the reactions to its occupation, *Comuna 8's* liminality also limited the vehemence of the response. This seemingly contradictory conclusion was supported by statements from the city government which reiterated the territorial

hierarchy explored in Chapter 7, and shed further light on the CABA/*conurbano* relationship. Territorial fractures within the occupation were also traced, and it was shown that these reflected the ‘ethno-national’ divides of the *villas* and the ghettoisation that certain migrant communities face.

Consequences of the occupation were also discussed – as were a number of smaller occupations that have happened since. These demonstrated that, while unprecedented in the size and violence of the reaction it evoked, the occupation of *Parque Indoamericano* reflected longer-standing trends and issues. The case study therefore brought together debates about class, race, national identity, and territory, illustrating how these all intertwine to influence the lives of, and attitudes towards, ‘neighbouring migrants’; it therefore helps to flesh out responses to **RQ1** and **3**.

9.2: Research implications

By drawing on, and contributing to, a range of literatures this thesis has made a number of original contributions – both theoretical and methodological. With reference to the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, these are made explicit below.

9.2.1: Migrants not migration

Underpinning the thesis has been a focus on migrants, but as discussed it is not about migration. Instead, it looks at migrants *in situ* and understands them as important actors and agents in a range of processes. The thesis therefore contributes to the growing literature on migrants’ lives in Buenos Aires (e.g. Bastia, 2007, 2015; Gavazzo, 2012; Magliano, 2013; Punch, 2007), and helps combat the serious lack of work surrounding migrants’ involvement with social and labour movements.

In particular I have developed the concept of the ‘neighbouring migrant’ (see Grimson, 2006; Magliano, 2009), unpacking its intersectional construction and dialectical relationship with the dominant *porteño* identity (see Laborde, 2011). Although much of the analysis is grounded in the testimonies and experiences of ‘neighbouring migrants’, by also considering previously underexplored attitudes *towards* ‘neighbouring migrants’ I have provided an important original contribution that complements current work on migrants in

Buenos Aires – as well as contemporary Argentine politics and identity construction more generally.

Related to this, the focus on whiteness and its structuring role in the lives of, and attitudes, towards ‘neighbouring migrants’ is crucial: it not only further expands on the above discussions, but it also locates the thesis within an underdeveloped area. Although critical studies of whiteness are becoming more widespread, they remain rare in an Argentine context – where most of the work is historical, exploring the role of whiteness in nation/city-building (e.g. Geler, 2014; Joseph, 2000; Kaminsky, 2009). Grounded in these works, the thesis has therefore made a valuable contribution to understanding the contemporary role of whiteness on migrants’ lives (see also Bastia and vom Hau, 2014; Ko, 2013), and the way it intersects with other structures and identities.

However, despite this penetrating focus on Buenos Aires, the thesis’s conclusions and contributions are much broader. The specificities of Argentina’s migration history are extremely important, and, as has been demonstrated, Buenos Aires’s territorialities play a crucial role in the conclusions reached; but the project resonates beyond this. Regarding respective attitudes towards ‘European’ migrants and indigenous groups, parallels can be drawn not only with other Latin American countries (e.g. Arocena, 2009; Drinot, 2011; Goebel, 2010) but also worldwide (e.g. Cook-Martín and Reynolds, 2010; Reynolds, 2006). Similarly global issues are also found with the racialised nature of ‘desirable’ and ‘problematic’ *types* of migrants.

Conceptually, the focus on migrants and not migration is also important, as it has allowed a grounded point of entry into a number of key debates. By embodying a range of – often transgressive – social identities and structures, migrants’ very presence and behaviour can spark reflections on race, national identity, and class. The thesis has therefore contributed to literatures on migrants and intersectionality (e.g. Bastia, 2014; Bastia et al., 2011; McDowell, 2008b; Wills, 2008a), and in so doing has also helped fill the lacuna highlighted in Chapter 2: the lack of critical engagement between studies of migrant (political) activity and radical conceptions of class – discussed below in more detail. In this respect the thesis locates itself conceptually within the growing body of work on migrants as radical political actors (e.g. Mezzadra, 2004, 2005; Papadopoulos et al., 2008; Alberti et al.,

2013; Papadopoulos and Tsianos, 2013), extending this work's empirical remit through the focus on Buenos Aires.

9.2.2: *Reanimating class analysis*

Instead of adopting a 'sociological' approach to class as a location, in the thesis class has been understood as an antagonistic and dialectical relationship. The thesis has therefore emphasised the need to reanimate forms of class analysis in order to understand and combat the gross inequalities caused by capitalism. However, while the unique role of class has been demonstrated – and with it the need for appropriate forms of analysis – the thesis has confronted the weaknesses and limitation of much class analysis, radical or otherwise.

Most clearly it has demonstrated the way in which class is processual and always co-exists with other structures and identities, and must therefore be understood as an intersectional 'historical formation' (see Camfield, 2004). Drawing explicitly on anarcha-feminist, queer anarchist, and heterodox Marxist ideas, it has developed the idea of 'intersectional class struggle analysis', which brings a range of literatures surrounding both class and intersectionality into contact.

The limitations of more traditional understandings of class were also brought into relief through the exposition of a broader conception of class, which helped to frame the relationship between class and non-class identities/structures. This understanding has been combined with the autonomist Marxist idea of class composition to produce a powerful synthesis of ideas, and therefore provides a rigorous framework with which to analyse the presence and absence of class struggles beyond the workplace and typical organs of class politics. Original contributions are therefore made to the newly-invigorated fields of anarchist and autonomist Marxist geography (e.g. Clough and Blumberg, 2012; Ince, 2014; Springer et al., 2012) as well as the intersections between anarchism and autonomist Marxism themselves (e.g. Gautney, 2009; Purcell, 2012), ideas I have explored elsewhere (Clare and Habermehl, 2016). However, while these exciting literatures are expanding, as yet their engagement with migrants' everyday lives and struggles remains undeveloped, and therefore this focus on class and migrants has multiple impacts: not only does it extend work in anarchist and autonomist Marxist geographies, but it also provides an original and

much-needed (intersectional) class framework which can complement work on migrants (both internal and external) more broadly.

Furthermore, the adoption of a class composition analysis – and its adaption to dovetail with a broader intersectional conception of class – can effectively contribute to debates surrounding the conceptualisation and analysis of ‘informal’ labour’s role in capital accumulation and class struggles (e.g. Barnes, 2013; Gidwani, 2008). Its heterodox, non-dogmatic approach centres on analyses of labour’s strengths and weaknesses, and therefore serves as a corrective to ‘capitalocentric’ work (see Gibson-Graham, 2006: 6), and helps develop a radical labour geography. However, the ability of class composition analysis to situate and understand seemingly disparate class struggles is only just being recognised in geographical work (e.g. Cumbers et al., 2010; Marks, 2012), and this thesis has helped develop these ideas further. It has also applied ideas of class composition to debates about unfree/‘slave’ labour and the potential for resistance, highlighting the important relationship between political and technical compositions.

Beyond the specific case of Buenos Aires, the thesis has contributed to debates about the role of class in contemporary Latin American society, social movements, and struggles (e.g. Hirsch, 2011; Webber and Carr, 2012). And by speaking to the politics of an ‘autonomous labour subjectivity’ (Dinerstein, 2013, 2014b), it aims to reinvigorate and rework forms of class analysis by taking ideas of class composition outside their comfort zones (cf. Shukaitis, 2009). But as the next section demonstrates, central to these developments is a critical reading of territory that can help combat a problematic aterritoriality in much work on class composition.

9.2.3: In-against-and-beyond the territorial (re)turn

In Section 2.5.2 it was noted that geography has seen a territorial (re)turn over the last few years, something that this thesis is simultaneously located within and against. Theoretically, the thesis has contributed to debates surrounding the relational and processual nature of territory, while problematising the hegemony and Eurocentrism of certain key works (e.g. Elden, 2013b). Likewise, through expanding the idea of territory as a ‘political technology’ (see Bryan, 2012; Roy, 2013), the thesis has revealed a normativity underlying much territorial work which can delegitimise counter-hegemonic territories and struggles (cf.

Springer, 2013). Therefore, it has developed the idea of 'subaltern territory' through an engagement with literature on Latin American territories and territorial movements (e.g. Porto Gonçalves, 2001; Stratta and Barrera, 2009; Zibechi, 2012). Under such a reading territory is still understood as a 'bounded political space' and a form of political technology, but emphasis has been put on the types of power immanent to different territories. Further, the relational, multiterritorial nature of the concept can therefore help shed light on multiple territorial contestations. Through its critical engagement in-against-and-beyond the territorial (re)turn, the thesis has therefore contributed to live debates in contemporary spatial/territorial theory, and by grounding the work in Latin American and Argentine literatures and concepts – including those from 'beyond the academy' – it is explicitly engaged with attempts to decolonise work on territory (e.g. Walia, 2013).

However, the thesis has also shown how ideas of territory permeate everyday life, with a particular focus on territorial identities (see e.g. Antonsich, 2009; Murphy, 2010) – especially regarding the way in which territorial identities can variously supersede, normalise, and obfuscate other structures and identities. The idea that spaces and territories are 'intersectionally produced and (re)produced' has been developed, in order to understand and unpack these territorial identities. Multiple identities and structures shape spaces/territories, and the way these interact and intersect is crucial. The thesis has demonstrated how these processes should be understood in the same intersectional class framework mentioned above. This original contribution also extends work on intersectionality by demonstrating the need for the concept's inherent spatialities/territorialities to be teased out. Identities are affected and shaped by territory, and similarly they play out/are received differently in a variety of arenas. It has therefore been shown that territorial identities need to be considered in intersectional analyses, just as much as the intersectional processes that create these identities need to be deconstructed, and the thesis has therefore engaged critically and productively with geographical work on intersectionality (e.g. Hopkins and Noble, 2009; Rodó-de-Zárate, 2013; Schroeder, 2014; Valentine, 2007).

These ideas also raise a further important conclusion from the thesis: the morphogenetic relationship between territory, identities, and political activities more generally. This is most obvious with regard to class composition, as the thesis has

demonstrated how territory and territorial attachment can lead to both the re- and decomposition of class. Territory therefore affects the political composition of the working class, and in this sense the understanding of territory developed in this thesis demonstrates an important geographical development of class composition theory (see also Shukaitis and Figiel, 2013) and radical labour geographies more generally.

What is more, although the political nature of territory is well flagged up across much literature, the original work on power and territory in this thesis helps to show how different types of territory and territorial movements both require and produce different forms of politics, and vice versa – an idea I have developed elsewhere (see Clare and Habermehl, 2016). Therefore the thesis is involved with discussions about the territorial/spatial element of social movements (e.g. Cumbers and Routledge, 2012; Nicholls et al., 2013) as well as contributing to work on the rise of Latin American and Argentine ‘territorial movements’ (Mason-Deese, forthcoming; Sitrin, 2012; Sitrin and Azzellini, 2014; Zibechi, 2012), which too often overlooks the role of migrants.

A common thread in this thesis has been the idea of in place/out of place. Through an engagement with Creswell’s (1996) work, the links between territory and intersectional class have been made clear. However, beyond simply being used as a heuristic, the ideas of in place/out of place themselves have been problematised and developed in the thesis: it has combated issues associated with a static, atemporal analysis and shown the importance of properly engaging with intersectional class. Further, it has been shown how, once adapted, the ideas can help shed light on the migrant experience. This not only helps enrich work on migrants, but in expanding the reach of in place/out of place also demonstrates how the ideas can have a more wide-reaching impact, and why they deserves further critical engagement.

9.2.4: Methodological innovations

Finally this short section will reflect on the thesis’s methodological contributions and innovations developed through the idea of ‘radical research *from above*’. As demonstrated, my initial methodological plans failed, in part because of my positionality – both perceived and performed. However, my commitment to ‘*militancia de investigación*’ led me to realise the potential in (ab)using my own whiteness. Not only does this emphasise the importance

of reflexive research design and critical engagement with holistic understandings of positionality, but it also makes a contribution to debates about ‘scholar activism’ (e.g. Chatterton, 2008; Chatterton et al., 2010; Taylor, 2014).

Unlike the expanding body of work conceptualising forms of radical research *from below*, my methodological approach had more in common with elements of ‘oppositional research’ (see Thiem and Robertson, 2010). Practically this enabled me to avoid problems of research participant fatigue and prevented me from covering the same ground as many other pieces of research, but methodologically it also opens up new avenues for militant research: by confronting and attempting to subvert researcher privilege, this thesis has demonstrated further potential for academics to produce research that is useful for groups in struggle.

As discussed below, these ideas need to be expanded and further conceptualised, and the ‘militancy’ of this thesis remains frustrated by factors covered in Chapter 3. But nevertheless the thesis acts as a contribution to an important methodological field, and emphasises the role *autoethnography* can and should play in *militancia de investigación*.

9.3: Avenues for future research

Inevitably this thesis has only gestured towards some of the theoretical developments and contributions, and almost certainly poses more questions than it has answered. At best it hopes to be a point of departure for future discussion and research. While it has provided a rich and deep exposition of attitudes towards, and the lives and subjectivities of ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires, the theoretical ramifications are (as discussed above) much broader. Therefore it would be interesting and worthwhile to carry out some comparative research in order to situate the findings better – both theoretical and empirical. Retaining the focus on migrants and their political and territorial roles, research could be carried out with Latin American migrants in London who are currently involved in struggles, through non-traditional unions, for better pay and conditions in the hospitality sector (see Alberti, 2014a, 2014b). Not only would this complement some recently emerging work, but as many of the migrants are Bolivians and Peruvians who migrated first to Buenos Aires before coming to London, the potential for insightful comparative analysis is apparent. What is more, given that the theoretical framework – in particular the ideas about territory

– has been intentionally developed using Latin American and at times ‘non-academic’ literatures, its application in the UK could help further contribute to the decolonisation and problematisation of hegemonic, Anglophone literature.

I intend to develop the important idea of the ‘intersectional production of space/territory’ – again through the lens of migrants and their engagement with urban spaces and territories. While the concept has been extremely illuminating in this thesis, through further engagement with critical studies of intersectionality, and more research, I believe it could be expanded and pushed further. In particular my desire is to adapt the ideas of technical and political composition of class, and apply them to territory in order to explore territory’s effect on political (in)activity. This would help to make the connections between territory and class clearer, while remaining situated within an intersectional framework.

Methodologically I plan to continue with the idea of ‘radical research *from above*’, and explore how its potential for militancy can be increased through processes of co-production with groups in struggle. This would be run in tandem with more traditional activist methods in order to upset further the division between the scholar/activist and researcher/participant identities. Work on the ‘intersectional production of space/territory’ could also be expanded through participatory counter cartography (see Counter Cartographies Collective et al., 2012).

Ultimately I also intend to return to Buenos Aires and extend and complement this research, exploring how the changing political and migratory climate has affected ‘neighbouring migrants’ and the attitudes towards them – especially given the recent victory for Mauricio Macri in the presidential elections. While this would involve a number of repeat interviews and the continuation of the elements of this thesis’s methodological approach, I would also endeavour to carry out more interviews with ‘neighbouring migrants’ themselves. Having maintained a number of contacts from my fieldwork, this should be possible as I would not be starting from scratch in the same way as this thesis was. Such research would help provide an important extension to this work, which, as explained, adjusted its focus to deal with the lack of such migrant testimony. This further work would also look to engage explicitly with the gendered nature of migrant life, and expand on the

relationship between migrants and social movements. I therefore hope that, far from being the culmination of my research, this thesis is just the beginning.

9.4: Coda

In this thesis I have explored the experiences of, and the attitudes towards, ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires. I have shown how discrimination and solidarity are grounded not just in intersectional relationships between class, race, and national identity, but also in territorial attachments and identities. But most crucially the inextricable links between these two strands have been demonstrated: the intersectional is territorial, just as the territorial is intersectional. Beyond presenting the extensive empirical findings discussed above, in the thesis I have also developed a conceptual framework that seeks to do more than just understand and uncover – it is explicitly radical, and aims to provide tools for multidimensional resistance.

While ambitious, such a task is necessary. With the recent deaths of two more Bolivian children in yet another fire in a clandestine textile workshops (The Argentina Independent, 28/04/15), ‘neighbouring migrants’ and their status and forms of political activity remain an important topic in Buenos Aires. However, the conflicting reactions to this tragedy once more show the fractures and divides within the working class. Underpinned again by the ‘slave labour’ discourse, responses from civil society groups and much of the mainstream media have deplored the events but fail to engage properly with its causes, and ultimately perpetuate Bolivian subalternity. Bolivian *punteros* have again closed ranks, pitting textile workers against the groups that ostensibly want to help combat exploitation. And while radical, dissenting voices exist within the Bolivian community, they are drowned out all too often. Although comparisons with the 2006 tragedy – which saw six Bolivians (including four children) dead – have been made, tellingly the scale of the reaction is linked to their locations, not just to the number of deaths. Then, outcry was exacerbated by the fact that it happened in typically middle-class *Caballito*, but now, migrants’ presence and horrible deaths in an immigrant *barrio* like *Flores* were less transgressive – they were in place.

Although this is just one, extreme example of the issues facing ‘neighbouring migrants’ in Buenos Aires, unfortunately it joins an ever-expanding list of difficulties and

discrimination. Exacerbated by the territorial pressures within CABA, the simultaneous expansion of the *porteño* middle classes and networks of 'neighbouring migrants' means these tensions will continue to play out. However, I intentionally concluded Chapters 6 and 7 with a focus on the pockets of hope and resistance that I encountered. The key is to unite these and aid the circulation of intersectional, territorial struggles.

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