Between Maps and Typologies: Distribution of International Migrants in Urban Environments of Buenos Aires (2010)

Entre mapas y tipologías: distribución de migrantes internacionales en entornos urbanos de Buenos Aires (2010)

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the territorial dimension of the residential settlement of international migrants in the Greater Buenos Aires Agglomerate from a geo-demographic perspective that focuses on their spatial distribution while incorporating the characteristics of the residential environment. For this purpose, a typology is applied to classify city areas based on the period of urbanization and the forms of residential space production. Using the 2010 census as a source, the study examines migration from Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, China, Korea, Italy, and Spain. It is found that these groups settle in diverse urban environments, including informal neighborhoods, socio-economically disadvantaged peripheral areas, and established central areas of the city. From a macro perspective encompassing multiple national origins, the study explores an urban territorial classification that is expected to contribute to analyses of the relationship between migration and socio-urban inequalities.

Keywords: 1. migration, 2. urban environments, 3. territory, 4. housing, 5. Buenos Aires.

RESUMEN

El artículo indaga en la dimensión territorial del asentamiento residencial de los migrantes internacionales en el Aglomerado Gran Buenos Aires desde una perspectiva geo-demográfica que pone el foco en su distribución espacial, pero incorpora las características del entorno de residencia. Para ello recupera una tipología que clasifica las áreas de la ciudad en función del período de urbanización y las formas de producción del espacio habitacional. Tomando como fuente al censo 2010, se estudia la migración de Paraguay, Bolivia, Perú, Colombia, China, Corea, Italia y España. Se constata que estos colectivos se insertan en entornos urbanos diversos, entre los que se destacan barrios informales, zonas periféricas de nivel socioeconómico bajo y áreas centrales consolidadas de la ciudad. Desde una perspectiva macro que abarca múltiples orígenes nacionales, se explora así una clasificación del territorio urbano que se espera contribuya a los análisis sobre la relación entre migraciones y desigualdades socio-urbanas.

Palabras clave: 1. migración, 2. entornos urbanos, 3. territorio, 4. vivienda, 5. Buenos Aires.

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INTRODUCTION

Between the multiple dimensions that the insertion of migrant populations goes through, the residential matter is particularly challenging. Being the right to housing a central axis of every settlement process, it is especially complex due to two factors. On the one hand, given that, although housing is a *right* —acknowledged as such by national and international legislation— in modern capitalist cities it is merchandise fully integrated into the mercantile logic of production, exchange, and consumption, with expelling dynamics to a great deal of the population (Abramo, 2013). On the other hand, because even though housing is a *physical infrastructure* —from which its material characteristics are essential for well-being—, it cannot be separated from *the (social) action of occupation.* In the residential reality, the *physical-material dimension* of the housing is articulated with the *social dimension* of the practices that shape the logic of inhabiting in every society, where the needs, interests, resources, and conditions are combined into concrete residential strategies (Bonvalet & Dureau, 2002).

Finally, because, although housing has its own *singularity* —as it is explained in the definition of private housing on the classic sociodemographic sources—, it is placed in an urban *socio-spatial configuration*, that puts in the spotlight its relative location, placing it in close relation with the urbanization process, and as a condition of access to the city (Yujnovsky, 1984).

These (seeming) dichotomies that go through the residential matter, and housing in particular— its trait of right and of merchandise; its physical-material and sociocultural component; its condition of singular object but positioned within an urban structure—, acquire specificities on migrant population's matters. In the first instance, the commercial trait of housing makes migrants into a collective particularly vulnerable in their *housing rights,* where the demands of the housing market are incompatible with the inequalities that several migration processes go through, such as informal work trajectories, precarious forms of citizenship, mayor difficulties to move resources, racism, and xenophobia (Algaba, 2003).

Secondly, the *social processes of occupation* of the migrants housing are particularly complex, resulting from family reconfigurations, temporal agreements, translational families, and regrouping processes (Glick et al., 1997), settlements attached in networks, socio-economical restrictions (Bueno & Valk, 2016), cultural differences regarding family and coexistence (Giuliano, 2007) and inequalities derived from the own migration process (Van Hook & Glick, 2007).

Lastly, given that migrants tend to display differentiated housing localization patterns linked with uneven conditions of access to the soil, the search for proximities regarding job sources and other externalities, and the action of cohesive ethno-community mechanisms that can derive into mechanisms of spatial concentration and conformation of neighborhoods (Bayona, 2007; Margarit Segura & Bijit Abde, 2014); something that some authors consider a horizontal segregation, since they are not necessarily expression of vertical inequality, but of the coexistence of the differences that constitute identities and communities (Harding & Blokland, 2014).

This last aspect of the housing issue is of especial interest to address here: its *territorial dimension*. In this framework, the article sets out to study the spatial distribution patterns of international migrants in the diverse *urban environments* that shape the Greater Buenos Aires Agglomerate (AGBA, for its acronym in Spanish). To this end, a heterogeneous population universe composed of the two largest bordering communities of historical presence in the country (Bolivian and Paraguayan); two groups originating from other Latin American countries of recent nature (Peruvian and Colombian); the two main Asian communities with a diasporic profile (Chinese and Korean), and two historical aged collectives (Italian and Spaniard), in their majority survivors of former fluxes, currently with a very low renewal.

For its part, the *urban environments* —also known as *population types*— (Centro Operacional de Vivienda y Poblamiento [COPEVI, for its acronym in Spanish], 1978; Connolly, 2005; Duhau & Giglia, 2008) or *habitat types* (Marcos et al., 2015; Di Virgilio et al*.,* 2015; Marcos, 2021; Marcos & Del Río, 2022)— refer to the areas that form the city, determined based on the period of urbanization and the forms of production of the housing space.

This typology identifies nine urban environments within the AGBA: the *colonial city* of 1800; *its first expansion* by the end of the 19th century; the *urban cores* composed between the early and mid-20th century separated from the continuous urbanized area and subsequently absorbed by its expansion; *the large social housing complexes* publicly founded; the *gated communities* promoted by urban developers for high income sectors; *popular urbanizations of informal origin* or habitat auto-production forms in the working-class sectors, and residential areas originated from the process of *authorized subdivision and sale of lots* for housing use according to the socio-economical level of their residents in areas of high, middle, and low socio-economical levels.

In methodological terms, it is conducted on a quantitative design based on secondary sources fundamentally the National Population, Households, and Dwellings Census 2010. This approach has great analytical potential, linked to the possibility of reaching multiple migrant collectives in a wide spatial universe (the metropolis in its whole) capturing its deep internal territorial heterogeneities. Nonetheless, some limitations cannot be left unmentioned. On the one hand, because being cross-sectional data, the census brings a static image of what it is a deeply dynamic phenomenon. Itcreates a "photograph" of the moment of the processes of settlement that vary both over time (historical) and throughout people's biographies, full with inter and intra-urban mobilities, and reconfigurations that, under a static perspective, remain unseen.

On the other hand, because when defining the groups only by their country of birth, it creates the illusion of homogeneous collectives within them, with specific settlement patterns for having the same country of origin, and it does not capture the specificities that the individuals imprint into the settlement dynamics —linked to genre, age, social class, and generation—, and can only be captured from an intersectional perspective. Putting the spatial distribution (as a result of a settlement process both historic and dynamic) of defined collectives according to their migratory condition (as a relevant factor, but not exclusive to the building of social differences and

inequalities) on the spotlight, constitutes an analytical except that in a way, does not exhaust the issue, but highlights central aspects of the relation between migration and urban territory, opening dialog channels with other approaches that contributes specific problematics.

Migration, Housing, and Territory:
Background and Theoretical Coordinates

The interest for the territorial dimension of migrant settlement in the cities has led to an interesting field of research within the last century. From the early works developed by representatives of the Chicago School in the early 20th century —who conceived the residential patterns of migrants as a linked process (in a more or less problematic way) to their progressive assimilation of the recipient society (Burgess, 1925; Park, 1926)—, the outcome of the debates has been complex.

From analytical perspectives in constant expansion, numerous studies have proven that migrants tend to develop differential spatial distribution patterns. And from this phenomenon an intense conceptual debate has risen. In one regard, an important line of works has addressed these processes from the notion of *spatial segregation*. This is a category with multiple meanings, that has been used both from a physical-geographical meaning —as an uneven distribution within the urban space (Brun, 1994)—, as from more sociological approaches, that embody the (absence of) interaction within groups (White, 1983) and aspects of everyday living, like practices, conflicts, discriminations and forms of territorial appropriation (Grafmeyer, 1994; Capron & González Arellano, 2006).

Parting from the concept of segregation —generally from its physical-geographical meaning—, numerous studies have observed that the migrant settlement tends to give rise to the spatial differentiation, product of restrictions that operate in the housing market, its relation to the labor market, the differential of migrants and discriminatory practices that affect their access to housing (Algaba, 2003; Bayona, 2007; Özüekren & Van Kempen, 2003), and segregate many collectives to marginal areas or precarious residential complexes.

In another regard, from perspectives that grasp the role performed by cultural factors in the settlement processes, other studies have parted from concepts like ethnic *neighborhood or immigrant neighborhood*. These concepts remark the processes of territorial building, the ethno-community cohesion mechanisms —that are linked not only with the housing concentration, but with the specialization processes that turn this neighborhoods into community amusement and consumption centers—, the forms of cultural branding, sociability, and identity practices that form the articulation between the physical and symbolical (Aguilar, 2015; Bertone de Daguerre, 2003; Redondo, 1988; Sassone & Mera, 2007; Mera, 2008).

Through these concepts, the academic field has contributed to the questioning of many the meanings, constrictions, and consequences that the migrant spatial distribution processes go through, which account for specific modes of access to the land and dialogs with the inhabited space. The aim of is paper is to contribute with these debates parting from a geodemographic

perspective —that focuses in the spatial distribution in physical-geographical terms—, but that focuses not (only) on the housing location, but in the *urban environment* of housing. It parts from understanding, as Kemeny (1992) points out, that residence not only includes the home and housing, but it also includes location —which includes the peridomicile and neighborhood—, and that the multiple (micro)spaces that constitute the city are spaces filled with meanings, stigmas, potential and restrictions, that determine diverse (frequently uneven) horizons of possibilities.

For this, an analytical proposal originated from Mexican literature is recovered. This proposal classifies the urban territory into a mosaic of population types, based on two major criteria: the historical moment in which urbanization of different areas of the city were developed and the way the housing space was produced, considering the original legal condition of the settlement and the main agents involved in the housing production (Connolly, 2005). This analytical proposal, that dates from the late 70's (COPEVI, 1978), lay the way to interesting works about the Mexican metropolis in recent years (Connolly, 2005; Duhau & Giglia, 2008), and led into a series of applications to the Buenos Aires case, now from the category of *habitat types*, to put emphasis not on the city production as a process but to remark the space-product.

Within this framework, a first series of literature about the City of Buenos Aires was produced (Di Virgilio et al., 2015; Marcos et al*.,* 2015; Mera et al*.,* 2015;) and, more recently, a review and expansion of this typology for the whole of the urban sprawl (Marcos, 2021; Marcos & Del Río, 2022). The present work sets to recover this last classificatory proposal to analyze the settlement patterns of international migrants and the specificities that different collectives go through.

In Argentina, the matter of territorial dimension of the residential settlement by migrant groups has been addressed from different analytical excerpts. On the one side with the works that address it from qualitative perspectives of settlement dynamics, urbanization, and formation of migrant neighborhoods, both in Buenos Aires (Bertone de Daguerre, 2003; Benítez, 2022; Bialogorski, 2016; Sassone & Mera, 2007; Mera, 2008; Sassone & Cortés, 2014; García, 2016;) and other cities in Argentina (Baeza, 2015; Granero, 2017; Matossian, 2010; Magliano et al., 2014), these works contributed to visualize the role of these actors in the modes of city production and the diverse ways of appropriation and organization of the space they deploy.

On the other side, with these quantitative excerpt studies that appeal to statistical tools and the elaboration of maps to identify territorial patterns that the residential insertion of migrants: from works on a national scale (Sassone & De Marco, 1994), to studies on specific cities (Mera, 2017; 2018; Perren, 2010; Marcos & Mera, 2015; Molinatti & Peláez, 2017; Gómez & Sanchez Soria, 2017; Rueda Nanterne, 2022), most of them placed on the category of spatial segregation and with a concern for inequalities regarding housing conditions.

And finally, more direct records, are the works that part from the matter of spatial distribution to incorporate the characteristics of areas of residence for migrants, based on the aforementioned habitat types in the City of Buenos Aires (Mera et al., 2015), or from typologies of residential areas linked to urban informality and incidence of deficient housing conditions (Mera, 2020).

This work seeks to advance in the line that has been opened by the previously mentioned works, recovering a classificatory proposal that has proven to be "a potent instrument to analyze the urban inequalities that are structured in the relation between housing conditions, population distribution, and added effects of the social inscription to certain urban contexts" (Marcos & Del Río, 2022, p. 891), reaching to the Greater Buenos Aires Agglomerate in its whole and to an vast population universe, that allows to establish dialogs with the spatial distribution maps and with micro-spatial studies focused on specific environments or neighborhoods.

METHODOLOGY

The work comes from a methodological quantitative design of micro-spatial perspective based on secondary sources, with the National Population, Households, and Dwellings Census 2010 —the most recent Argentine census survey available at the micro-data level—, being the main one, both the alphanumeric base and the cartographic base.

The spatial universe is the Greater Buenos Aires Agglomerate (AGBA, for its acronym in Spanish), defined in physical terms as the population envelope or "urban sprawl" that has the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (CABA, for its acronym in Spanish) as its core, and it spans over other 32 municipalities of the Buenos Aires providence —the so called *conurbano bonaerense*—, whose tentacle-like shape matches the train tracks that stimulated the city's growth during the mid-20th century (see Map 1).

Map 1. Greater Buenos Aires Agglomerate, 2010
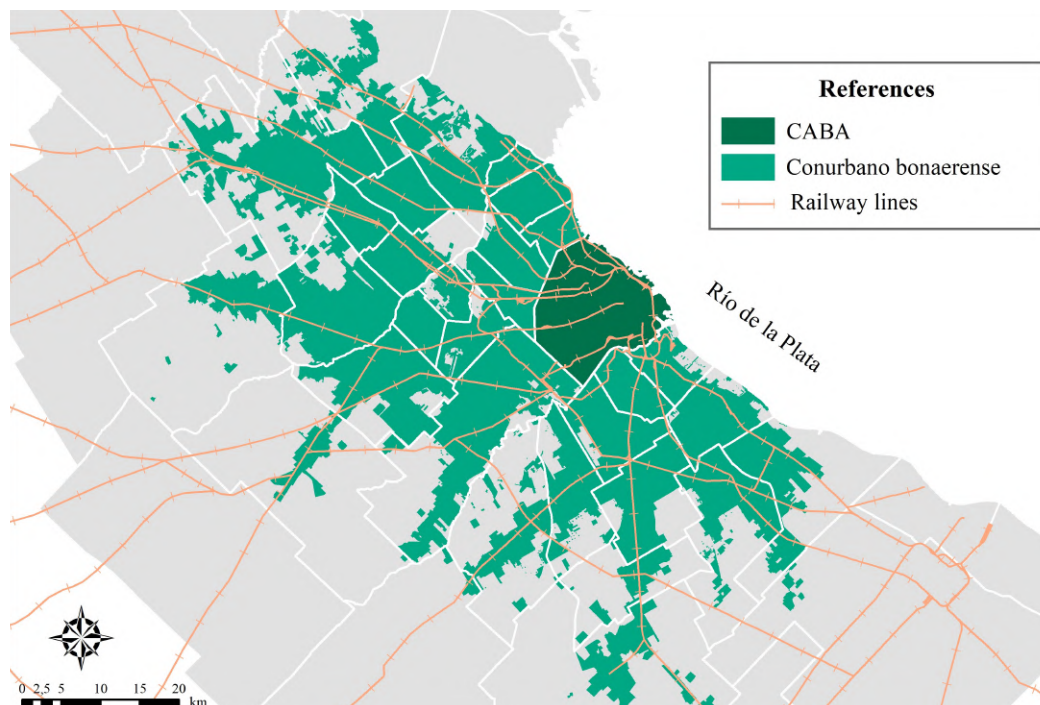
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010).

For the identification of urban environments that constitute the Greater Buenos Aires agglomeration (AGBA), the work of Marcos (2021) is recovered, who carried out an extensive classification of the smallest census geostatistical units to which the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC, for its acronym in Spanish) publishes data, according with nine urban environments or habitat types.

On one side, following the period in which settlement was produced, distinguishes three environments: a) the colonial city, corresponding to the surface that encompassed Buenos Aires by the end of the colonial period (1800); b) its expansion by the end of the 19th century (1895); and c) the conurbated cores, formed in the first half of the 20th century, initially separated from the continuous urbanized area and subsequently absorbed due to its expansion. In order to classify these three environments, Marcos took as source the cartography from Vapñarsky (2000), digitalized by Rodriguez and Kosak (2014), and completed by the author.

On the other side, considering the mode of production that originated each area –a criteria that considers the initial regularity of possession and the main agents that were the protagonists of the settlement– differentiates six more environments: d) social housing complexes, produced within the framework of housing programs publicly financed; e) gated communities, promoted by big urban developers for high income sectors; f) informal urbanizations, developed by habitat auto-production mechanisms of popular sectors; and the rest of the AGBA, corresponding to residential areas originated by formal lotting, sorted based on the socioeconomic level of its residents, in g)

high socioeconomic level areas; h) middle socioeconomic level areas; and i) low socioeconomic level areas.

To classify the first three environments (housing complexes, gated communities, and informal urbanizations). Marcos used surveys from specialized organizations and satellite images from Google Earth as sources. Whereas to classify the areas originated by formal lotting according to the socioeconomic level of their residents, he made a battery of indicators linked to the availability of piped water and gas, ownership of a computer and educational level. The battery was then grouped with techniques of factorial analysis of main components and hierarchical clusters.[2]

For the identification of migrants, the variable "country of birth" is used, but the universe is restricted to the population in private dwellings. This is associated with a limitation in the data source, since the Argentine census 2010 was a factual survey —meaning that it registered the participants in the place where they stayed the night during the survey—, hence the need for the migrant identification to add the information of birthplace with the habitual place of residence. This to be able to differentiate the migrants themselves from other temporal residents. However, the question of habitual place of residence was only included in an expanded questionnaire surveyed from a population sample, whose data are not available to small geostatistical units. To deal with this challenge, the universe was restricted to the population in private dwellings, excluding the population in collective housing, that encompass typologies that can accommodate population for limited periods of time, like touristic hotels, and that are concentrated in environments like the colonial city and its expansion.

Based on this, on one side, the migrant composition of the urban environments that shape the AGBA are studied. On the other side, thematic maps[3] at a census tract level are made through the ArcGIS software, that account for the spatial distribution of the groups and allow to generate a more complete picture of the urban installation logics of different collectives.

MIGRANTS IN BUENOS AIRES: A BRIEF CHARACTERIZATION

Throughout the 20th century, Argentina is consolidated as destination of numerous migratory currents, originating both from the region and from other places around the globe. From this process, the AGBA in particular became a privileged receiving space for successive flows.

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[2] It is worth mentioning that the categories that shape this typology are not mutually exclusive and the areas defined under these criteria can overlap in the territory. In light of these situations, the final classification was the result of particular methodological decisions. For a detailed description, see Marcos (2021).

[3] Choroplethic maps were elaborated, where the relative weight of each collective in the geostatistical units is represented as a gradient of color intensity. As a criterion for the division of the class intervals, natural excerpts were used: a classification method based on the structure formed by the data, and looks for jumps in the distribution value sequence to establish the interval limits.

By the year 2010, Bolivian and Paraguayan migration constitute the main collectives of the AGBA, conjunctively representing over more than 50% of foreigners in private dwellings (see Table 1). Both are long-standing currents with intense renewal. And, during the 20th century, they go from being a temporal, border-related, flow of rural-rural nature like with the seasonal harvest demand in the Argentine North, to a migratory pattern of urban destination and of permanent nature.

In the Paraguayan case, although there are flows that remain in the Northeast, in the last decades Buenos Aires has become a privileged receiver of this collective (79.8%). As for the Bolivian case, instead, this redirecting is produced with a logic of diffusion on a national scale, making it the most disperse migrant group (with only 57.6% living in the AGBA), with a presence in all the urban hierarchy, including the intensive agricultural valleys, with a rural type of residence (Sassone & Cortés, 2014). In this process, both groups become the largest groups in numbers of the AGBA, in whose intense renovation long-established and recent migrants coexist, therefore the median age is around 35 years. In terms of the gender ratio, the Paraguayan flow is highly feminized —which links to the pioneer role of that these women are starting to acquire these last years, and their work insertion channels facilitated by migrant networks in domestic service and caregiving tasks (Bruno, 2011)—, meanwhile the Bolivian flows have a greater balance between genders, making it a migration of a more family-oriented nature.

The third most numerous collective, the Peruvian, constitutes 10% of the foreigners in the AGBA, with a relatively young and feminized profile (see Table 1). By the year 2010, it is a relatively recent presence, as its greatest dynamism occurred in the 1990s, driven by labor issues, but composed by people coming from urban areas, with a high educational level (Cerruti, 2005; Pacecca, 2000; Rosas, 2010). A second Latin American collective that stands out here is Colombian migration, even more recently (it had a relative growth of 356.4% in the 2000s), integrated in its majority by young people from big and intermediate cities, motivated by educational and labor reasons (Hernández, 2010), often not looking for a permanent residence (Melella, 2014). It is a very young and feminized group (see Table 1).

The two main collectives from Asia —Chinese and Korean migration— barely makes for 1% of the foreigners (see Table 1). Both have a long history in the country: in the Chinese case, the first arrivals date to the late 19th century and the mid-20th century, being a minority flow, masculinized, and mostly motivated by political reasons; another milestone occurred in the 1980s with family migrations where the political motives coexist with the search for better economic opportunities; and finally, in the 1990s with the arrival of new flows with capital of their own, facilitating the insertion and social progress, and the consolidation of the local Chinese community (Bogado Bordazar, 2002). As for the Korean case, the first arrivals occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, initially to establish in agricultural colonies, but in time they moved into the cities, especially Buenos Aires, being today the most concentrated collective within the metropolis (90.4%). By the end of the 1980s, the community is consolidated with the arrival of more numerous flows (Mera, 2008), with the economic ability to invest in small and medium-sized industries;

these reaches its maximum point in the decade of 1990 when the highest population of Koreans in the country is observed (Mera, 2016).

These migrants are characterized by a greater balance between genders and for being more aged populations, especially the Korean population (see Table 1). This is linked with various factors, like the more family-oriented nature of the flows —including generations of parents and grandparents (Mera, 2016)—, and that these are flows that have been around for several decades, but with less renewal that the Latin American flows. Both the Chinese and Korean migration, as Mera (2016) points, are diasporic-type migrations, that articulate in physical and symbolic transnational spaces, in which framework the develop a strong identity belonging and relations with the origin articulated by ethnic networks that are constituted as places of sociability and memory, with a community organization anchored in families, associative traditions, and a strong group solidarity.

Finally, the Italian and Spaniard migration constitutes a little less than 15% of the foreigners. And in its majority "survivors of old migratory cohorts corresponding to the pattern of overseas immigration, which has not been renewed in more than half a century" (Calvelo, 2012, p. 140). Both had negative relative growths in the last period between census, consolidating as highly aged flows (median age of 70), with feminization that tends to accompany the population aging processes (see Table 1). And although many came from the impoverished rural context, the majority walked the path towards social ascension "that would create one of the differential aspects of Buenos Aires in the Latin American context: its widespread middle-class" (Gorelik, 1998, p. 272), both within them and their children.

Table 1. Foreigner Population Living in Private Dwellings by Country of Birth Quantity, Percentage, Relative Growth, Median Age, and Masculinity Ratio AGBA, 2010

Country of birth	Quantity	%	Relative growth 2001-2010	% in AGBA /total in country	Median age	Masculinity ratio
Paraguay	435 817	38.0	77.4	79.8	36.9	78.1
Bolivia	197 283	17.2	59.6	57.6	34.2	96.2
Peru	115 943	10.1	83.2	74.8	33.6	78.6
Colombia	11 496	1.0	356.4	71.1	30.2	86.6
China	8 539	0.7	32.2	73.8	37.9	108.8
Korea	6 552	0.6	-8.3	90.4	46.1	99.6
Italy	101 761	5.3	-32.3	70.9	69.0	72.1
Spain	61 334	8.9	-33.9	68.9	70.7	77.2
Total foreigners	1 147 961	100.0	23.6	65.2	42.8	82.0

[1] Including China and Taiwan.
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010).

RESULTS

The city as a Mosaic: Urban Environments
of the AGBA

During the 20th century and the early 21th century, the AGBA formed a privileged reception space for (in)migration, given its concentration within the Argentine settlement system. But it is a complex metropolis, in whose structure dense and verticalized centralities and sub-centralities are condensed, a broad continuous growth with a tentacle-like shaped matrix, and a diffuse and low-density expansion towards the suburbs (Baer et al., 2015), shaping a mosaic of diverse environments, whose land production logics involve multiple actors, and generate highly uneven access conditions to the city.

First of all, it is worth distinguishing three urban environments that correspond to *temporarily inhabited areas*, highly consolidated, and linked to the main centralities of the AGBA. On the one hand, the *colonial city*, located around the old port. In its historical development this historic core concentrated diverse land uses (residential, commercial, administrative, touristic) although it experiences a significant socio-housing deterioration.

The second environment dates to the *expansion of the colonial city* by the end of the 19th century encompassing the vicinities of the historic core, the coastal strip, and a west expansion axis, without reaching the current limits of the CABA. It is also a heterogeneous area regarding edifications, land usage, and socioeconomic profile, consolidated, well-connected by public transport —including the main subway lines that span across it—, dense and highly verticalized.

And finally, a third early populated environment is linked with the *urban cores*: towns formed during the first half of the 20th century, that currently form dense urban fabrics, verticalized, well connected, and tend to match with the municipal capitals or sub-centralities of the AGBA. These three typologies constitute rated areas as a residential space, particularly within the early adulthood years due to the opportunities they offer in terms of employment and access to goods and services.

The following environments are linked to the housing space production logics: a) *social housing complexes*, product of programs funded by the public sector as housing solutions for low-income families, the majority of them located in peripheral and interstitial areas; b) *gated communities*, private urban development projects promoted by big urban developers, destined to high-income homes, located in the urban peripherals, next to highways and rapid transit routes; and c) *working-class urbanizations of informal origin*, modes of self-made habitats that are characterized by the initial irregularity in land usage, little or no urban infrastructure and prominent self-made housing; although very heterogeneous in terms of layouts, densities, and levels of consolidation.

Finally, the rest of the urban sprawl, originated by the subdivision and formal sale of lots for housing, and differentiated within this typology based on the socioeconomic level of its residents. On one side, the high socioeconomic level formal areas, some in the center and west of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, that span to the north axis of the conurbation and in some

points near the municipal capitals; on the other side, middle socioeconomic level formal areas that encompass the rest of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the first ring of neighboring municipalities and the railway lines that fueled the city's growth; lastly the, low socioeconomic level formal areas, that grow towards the periphery and interstices of the urban sprawl, in late-settled areas, and of greater precarious conditions in terms of materials, services, and accessibility (see Map 2).

Map 2. Urban Environment in the Greater Buenos Aires Agglomerate, 2010
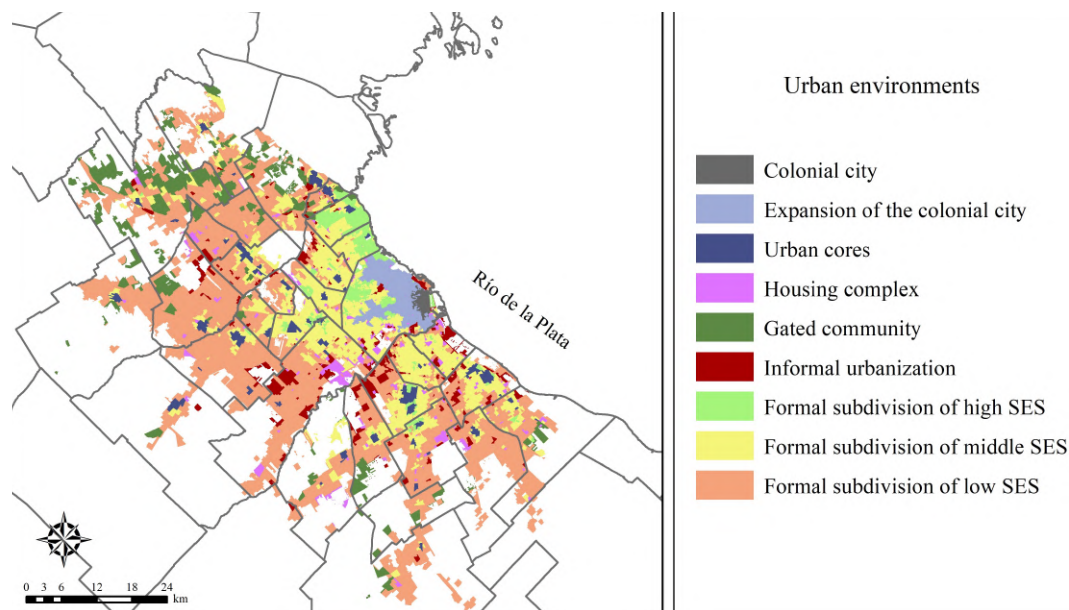
Source: Own elaboration with data from Marcos (2023).

These urban environments are very dispersed in sociodemographic terms (see Table 2). The early-settled areas associated to the historic centralities —the colonial city, its first expansion and the urban cores— are aged environments, with a very educated population and a consolidated housing complex. However, they have their shortcomings, like the high incidence of unmet basic needs within the colonial city (11%), an environment that has suffered significant deterioration over the last decades, or the relative high deficit of basic needs in the urban cores (14.3%) located outside of the capital city, where the coverage of services begins to lessen.

Table 2. Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Population and Dwellings
in Urban Environments. AGBA, 2010

Urban environments	Population (thousands)	%	Age in large groups (%)			Population with high educational level (%)[1]	Homes with unmet basic needs (%)	Homes in housing with (%)		Born abroad (%)[4]
			0-14	15-64	65 +			Insufficient construction quality[2]	Insufficient access to services	
Colonial city	203.1	1.5	12.4	70.4	17.3	39.2	11.1	5.4	2.0	13.6
Expansion of the colonial city	1 556.4	11.5	14.6	67.8	17.7	44.5	5.1	2.4	1.0	10.3
Urban cores	425.2	3.1	17.8	65.9	16.3	31.4	2.5	3.3	14.3	5.0
Informal urbanization	906.9	6.7	33.1	63.7	3.2	2.0	24.9	48.4	59.9	22.7
Gated communities	146.7	1.1	32.3	62.4	5.3	50.9	4.1	7.8	39.1	7.0
Housing complex	565.9	4.2	25.9	64.3	9.8	11.2	5.5	6.8	13.0	7.0
Subdivision by formal lotting										
of high socioeconomic level	674.1	5.0	15.8	66.4	17.8	47.7	1.1	0.7	1.2	6.4
of middle socioeconomic level	3 371.7	24,8	18,9	65,7	15.3	20.7	3.3	3.2	14.3	7.3
of low socioeconomic level	5 738.1	42,2	28,4	64,6	7.0	5.6	13.7	28.5	71,2	6.9
AGBA total	13 588.1	100.0	23.5	65.4	11.1	18.4	8.6	14.8	33.4	8.4

[1]Population from 25 to 64 who does not attend an education establishment with a complete university.

[2]Lacking solid materials/proper insulation in floors, ceilings, and roofs.

[3] Lacking the connection to the public water supply and sewage system/septic tank.

[4]Population in private dwellings.

Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Within the environments linked to the ends of the social structure —gated communities and informal urbanizations— great sociodemographic and housing inequalities prevail. The first ones, with young age structures, representative of spaces that attract families during the expansion stage. They are environments with a high education level population and a low incidence in poverty or construction deficits; although they do have deficits (almost 40%) in terms of services, due to its

localization on the boundary of the AGBA. The second ones, with similarly young age structures, concentrating the majority of deficits in terms of education, structural poverty and construction quality. Finally, the rest of the AGBA, originated by formal lotting, the indicators show a gradient of conditions associated to the socioeconomic level: from the high-level areas, with aged, educated, and low deficit levels population, to the low socioeconomic level areas under the peripherals, which tend to concentrate poverty and deficits in materials and services.

These environments also tend to play very diverse roles in areas of migrant reception. In global terms, the foreign population has tended to concentrate in two particular locations: the centralities of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires —the colonial city (13.6%) and its first expansion (10.3%)— and the informal environments (22.7%) (see Table 2).

These two migrant settlement patterns have been observed in other Latin American metropolises: on one side, the search of locations centralized and near to labor sources and urban infrastructure; although to many migrants the access to these areas is achieved by appealing to deficient housing alternatives, like old slum residences (Contreras et al., 2015), or through renting rooms in hotels and guest houses that do not require a high income, but precarious in housing terms (Fossatti & Uriarte, 2018). On the other hand, the occupation of lots in informal urbanizations, as a result of the inability to comply with the formal market demands within the framework of inequalities that reach to the migration experiences (López-Morales et al., 2018). And although these two environments are the main migrant receptors in its whole, the collectives display heterogeneous patterns of settlement

Between Informalities and Urban
Peripheries: Paraguayans and Bolivians

Starting with the two largest bordering groups (those born in Paraguay and Bolivia), these settle mainly at informal urbanizations (around 30%) and formal areas of low socioeconomic level, especially the Paraguayans (almost 50%) (see Graph 1). Meaning that both groups have developed ways of settlement traditionally linked to the working-class sectors: in the first instance, with those excluded but the commercial logic of land access, that have to turn to the self-making of housing under which Pedro Abramo (2013) denominates as the necessity logic; and, in the second instance, with those who turn to peripheries, both in informal neighborhoods and in environments that make possible the access to formal land at the price of a worse location and high infrastructure and services deficits.

In summary, both Paraguayans and Bolivians display territorial patterns associated with socioeconomic and socio-urban inequalities. This settlement pattern has been observed in other cities in Argentina: the tendency of this collectives to reside in areas where the access to housing is less expensive and the life conditions are more disadvantageous, with a high incidence of unmet basic needs, formality, and environmental risks (Mignone, 2010; Molinatti & Peláez, 2017). This trend has been even found in the capitals of bordering providences, where the migrants have

historic integration ties. Putting into evidence that even in these contexts urban space hierarchical processes based on economic and social capital are reproduced (Rueda Nanterne, 2022).

Graph 1. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Paraguay and Bolivia According to Urban Environments. AGBA, 2010
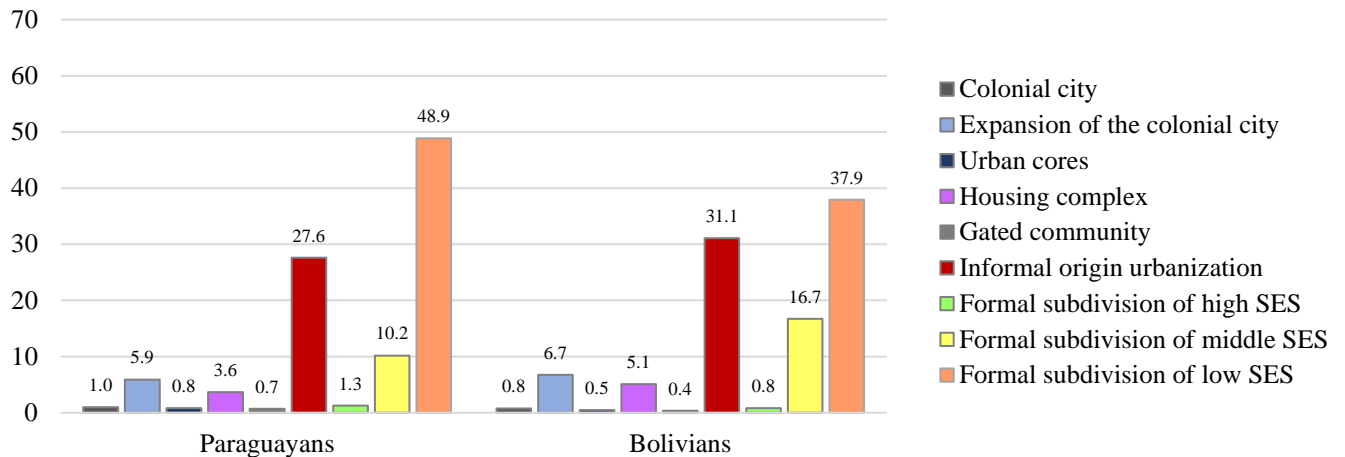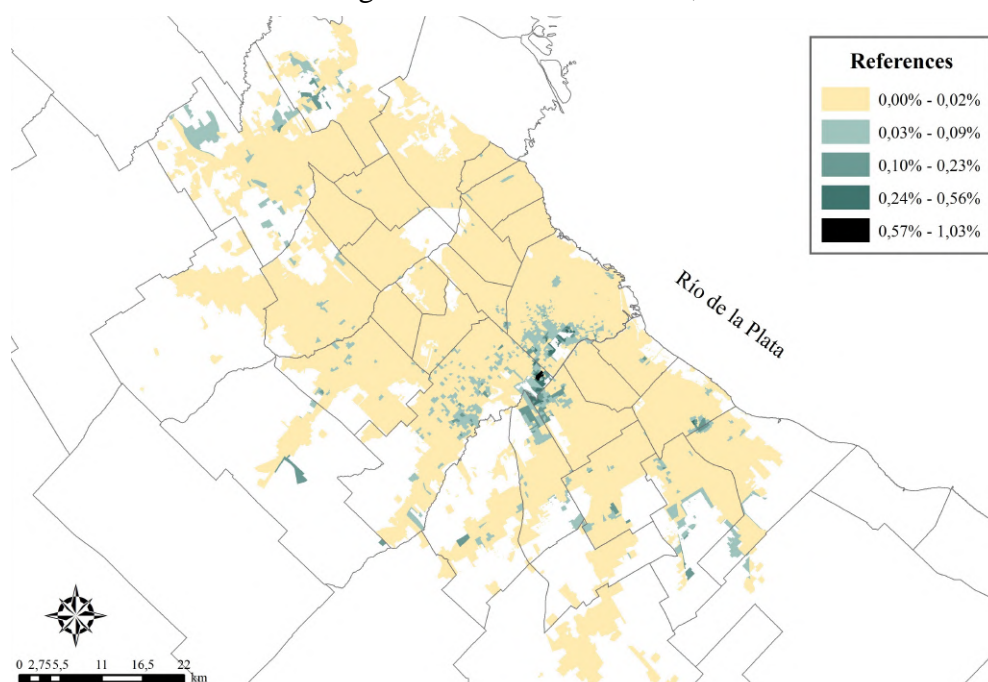

Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 3. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Paraguay According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
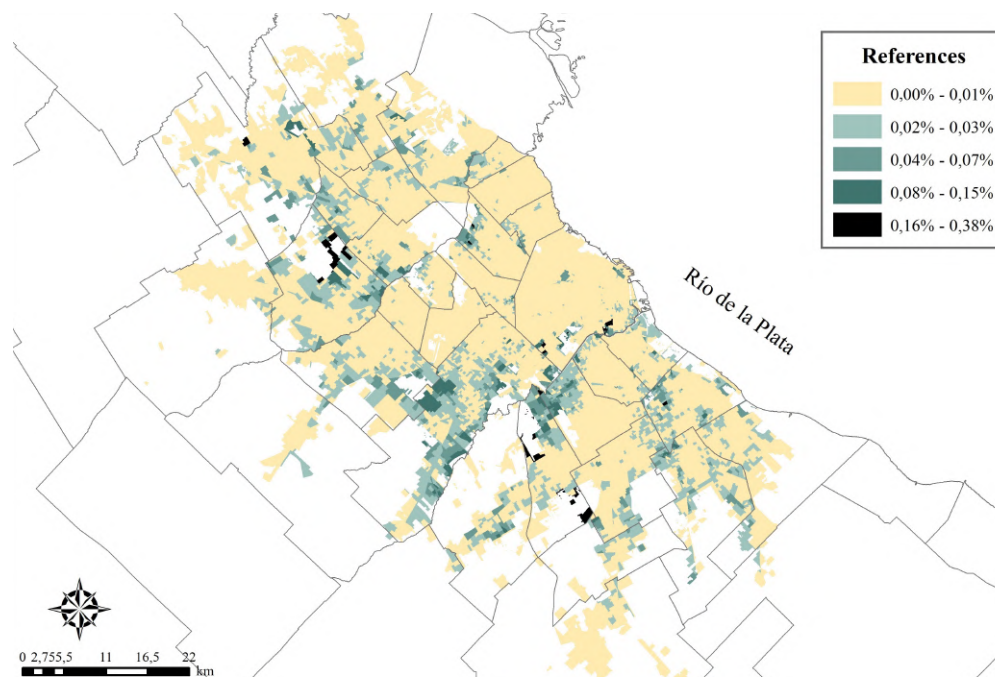
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 4. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Bolivia
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010

Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

But if the data is analyzed together with maps 3 and 4, important specificities that go through land access strategies from both groups begin to emerge.

On the Paraguayan case, it is observed that informal neighborhoods become the main access resource of this population to the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, core of the agglomerate and historically restrictive area regarding land access. Here, the main recipient areas agree with almost exclusively informal urbanizations (marked in dark red on Map 2), as a result of the inability to meet the requirements (economic, labor, documentary, and symbolic) that the housing market demands (Mera, 2018). While in the AGBA the informal neighborhood settlement coexists with the possibilities of formal land access —fading away the relationship between migration and informality that prevails within the capital—, it means a restricted access to peripheral areas, that tent to group a lack of infrastructure, environmental issues, and the worst connectivity.

Previous research done in other Argentine cities have registered similar patterns, and from qualitative approaches it is evidenced that these settlement processes on the urban peripheral are often accompanied by dynamics of stigmatization, foreignization, and racialization of its inhabitants, that strengthen the existing physical and social separations (Kaminker, 2011; Granero, 2017).

As for the Bolivian case, the access to the city through these two environments (informal urbanizations and low socioeconomic level areas) is not polarized between the Autonomous City

of Buenos Aires and the AGBA, but rather they are overlapped within a typical phenomenon of the collective, which is its high spatial concentration. This search for proximity is linked with mechanisms of ethno-cultural cohesion and fellow countryman networks, which are especially intense in this group (Benencia & Karasik, 1994; Sassone & Cortés, 2014). But through the prism of urban environments, it is clear that these are groups deeply affected by socio-urban inequalities, as Bolivians are concentrated in the south of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, historically relegated in an axis spilled towards the AGBA, encompassing critical and informal areas.

And, within these housing patterns, formality and informality are entangled not only by their physical closeness between both environments, but also by their complex historical processes. For example, an area of significant concentration of Bolivians is the neighborhood Gral. San Martin or Charrua in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, that originally was a slum, but currently is part of an ethnic neighborhood of the Bolivian community. The concentration of this collective in a certain area of the AGBA —that unites informal neighborhoods, but also formal areas of low socioeconomic level— in great measure is linked with the forced relocation of inhabitants of the slums of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires formed in the mid-1970s, where the compatriot networks guided the (re)settlement, reproducing the spatial concentration pattern (Sassone & Cortés, 2014).

Adding to the Bolivian case, these concentration patterns among fellow nationals —that some refer to as ethno-culturally based segregation processes— are not exclusive of the AGBA, but are reproduced in various Argentine urban contexts, which siting in areas of infrastructure deficit and limited access to proper housing puts into evidence their correlation to urban socio-spatial inequalities (Hughes & Sassone, 2021; Rueda Nanterne, 2022).

Centrality(ies) as Value:
*Peruvians and Colombians*

Those born in Peru and Colombia have developed very different patterns from the previous. Both groups have turned to the central areas of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (the historic center and its first expansion), meaning, towards the consolidated areas, well connected and valued as housing space. This centralized localization is well pronounced in the Colombian case (almost 70%), while in the Peruvian a broader spectrum appears, with over-representation also in informal environments (see Graph 2).

Graph 2. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Peru and Colombia According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
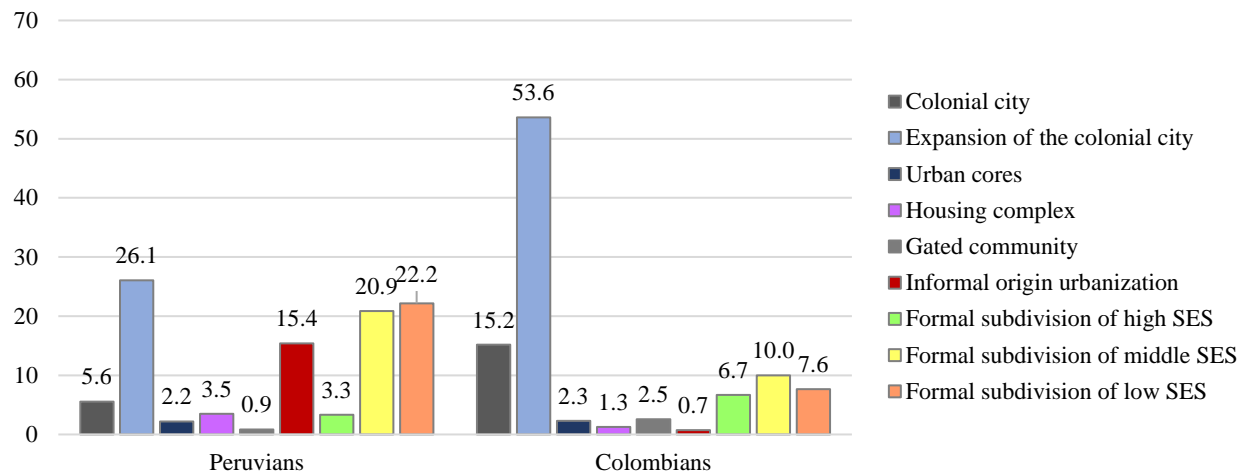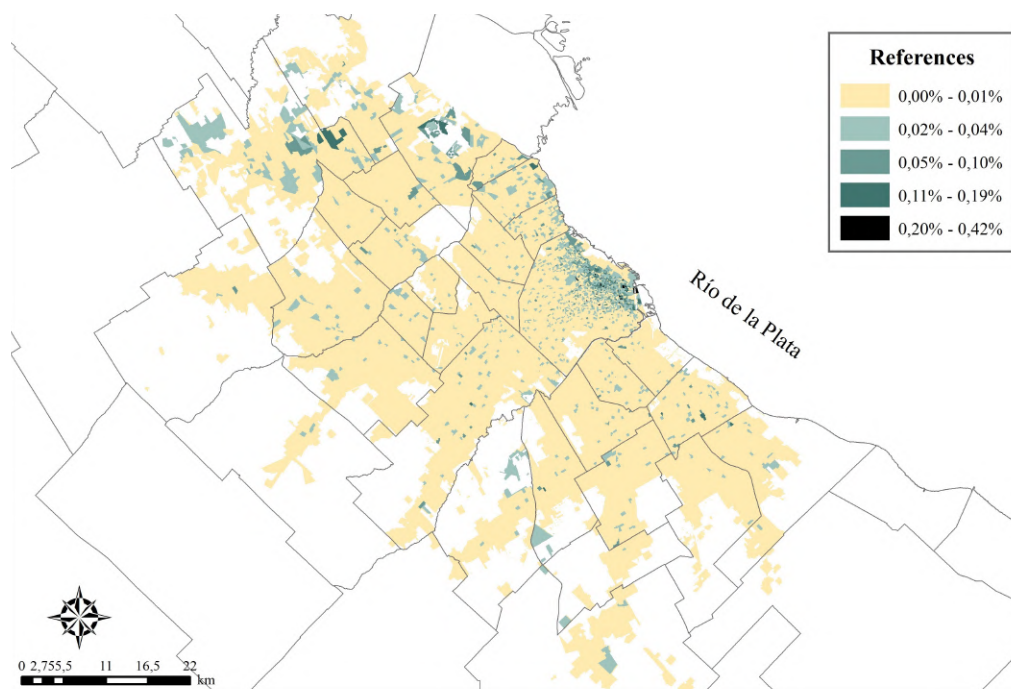

Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 5. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Peru According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
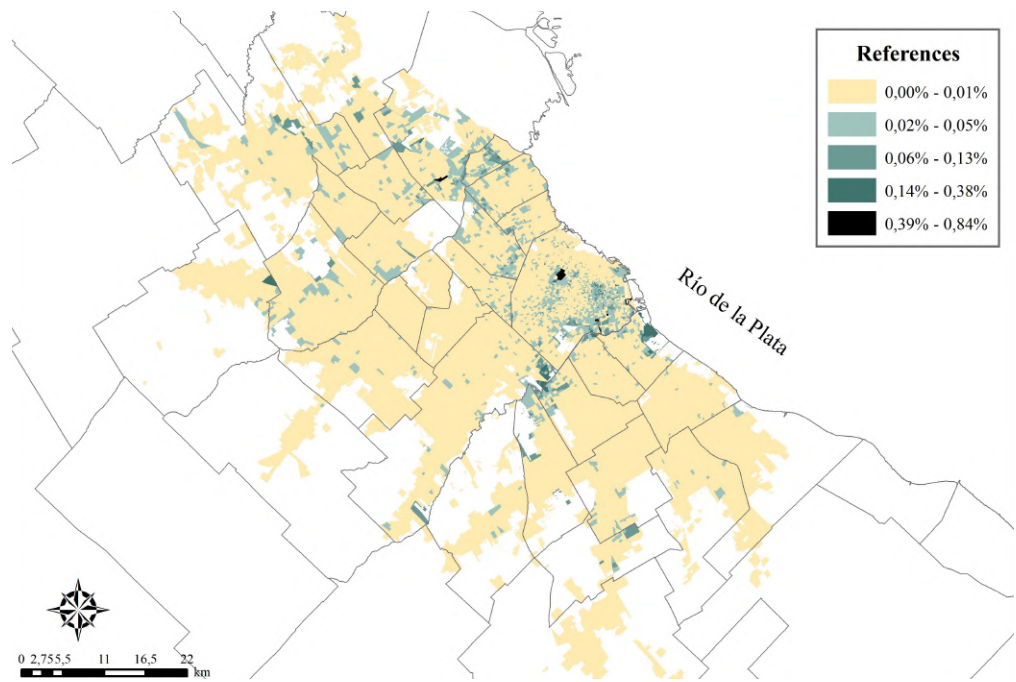
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 6. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Colombia
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010

Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

These are, of course, flows with different profiles: the Colombian migration has a clear educational and professional profile, while the Peruvian migration is closer to the profile of classic economic migration. And even though both share settlement patterns regarding the centralities of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, in a micro-spatial level significant specificities emerge.

In the Peruvian case, Map 5 shows that their centralized localization is not related to the north axis of the expansion of the colonial city —historically associated with population of high purchasing power—, but to the vicinities of the historic center, that corresponds to the most degraded areas in terms of housing. Previous studies have shown that this centralized localization often involves resorting to boardinghouses and guesthouses, with deficits regarding materials, sanitation, privacy, and security of tenure (Mera, 2018). Even so, for many Peruvians to reside in central environments constitutes a strategy linked with their socio-labor insertion in commerce and services, betting on nearby neighborhoods for potential sources (and providers) of employment (Cerruti, 2005; Pacecca, 2000). This strategy coexists with the betting for informal environments —with certain relatively recent slums (Mera, 2018)— well located within the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires.

In other Argentine cities, like Córdoba, this trend of the Peruvian population of concentrating in central areas (Molinatti & Peláez, 2017) has been present in recent years with evidence that certain segments of this population have dispersed towards peripheral areas, under the housing

market pressure and other urban conditionings (Gómez & Sanchez Soria, 2017), raising questions for the case of the AGBA for the next census.

As for the Colombian case (see Map 6), its central localization is linked with the northern border of the city, historically recipient of high purchasing power population. Outside of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, a low percentage of Colombians is registered, with the exception of specific areas of the north and south end, that coincide with gated communities (where 2.5% of Colombians reside, a low percentage but doubles the entire population). Meaning that Colombian migration tends to show own housing strategies within the middle and high sectors, privileging central areas, well-connected, and having the resources to achieve it.

Of Concentrations and Dispersions in Consolidated
Areas: Korean and Chinese

Within the two main Asian collectives housing strategies linked to the central areas of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires —the area of expansion of its historic core—, are found, especially in the Korean case (60.8%), but also among the Chinese population (41.6%) (see Graph 3). However, these values show very different housing strategies. As observed in Maps 7 and 8, the Chinese and Korean represent two urban insertion models in the ends of the *continuum* between concentration and territorial dispersion. On one end, is the Korean population with a (very strong) tendency to concentrate in the space. An area in the south center of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, corresponding to the neighborhoods inhabited by the middle-low and working-class sectors, but that corresponds to the west axis of the central expansion, therefore making it a consolidated area within the city. And on the other end, the Chinese population inserts itself with a territorial dispersion logic across all the neighborhoods of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and its conurbation.

These patterns are related to the work insertion of these populations: in the Korean case, its urban concentration is connected to the concentration of these migrants in the textile economic activity that takes place in the area, and in a process in which said neighborhoods —particularly the named Korean neighborhood or Baek-ku— became constructed urban spaces (and suitable) from the daily practice of this collective (Mera, 2008; 2016; Sassone & Mera, 2007; Benítez, 2022). In the Chinese case, its housing insertion is related to their work insertion in the food sector —restaurants, convenience stores and supermarket— that are scattered all over the city. And being an occupation that requires long working hours, the place of residence usually matches the working place (within the same establishments, rooms upstairs or next to them), which favors the image of the Chinese community as a group that is "everywhere" (Denardi, 2015; Mera, 2016).

Graph 3. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in China and Korea
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
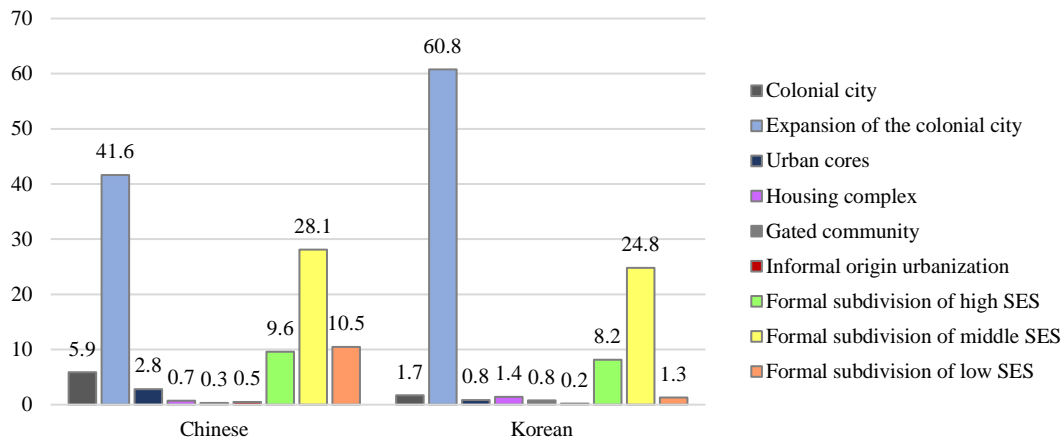
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 7. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in China
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
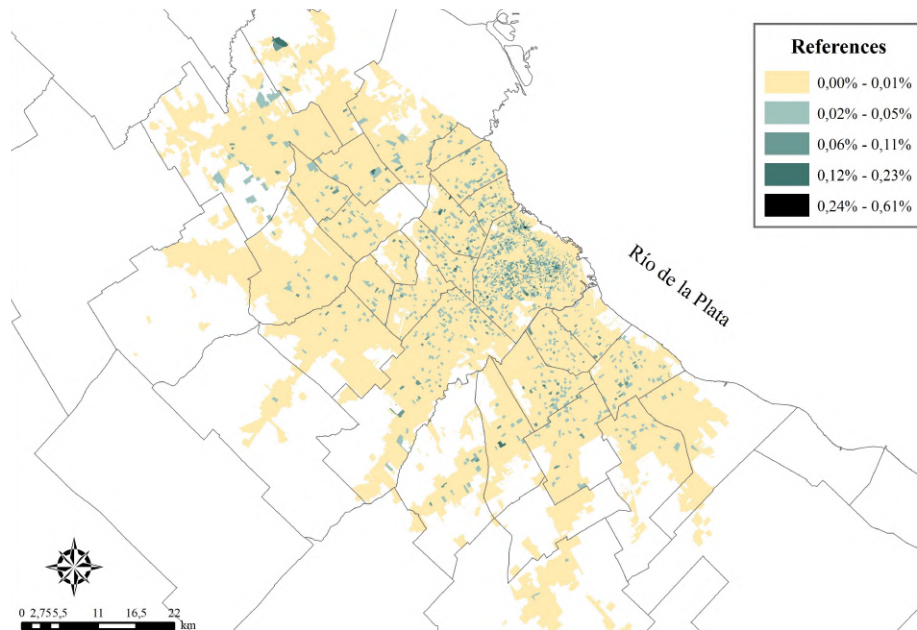
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 8. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Korea
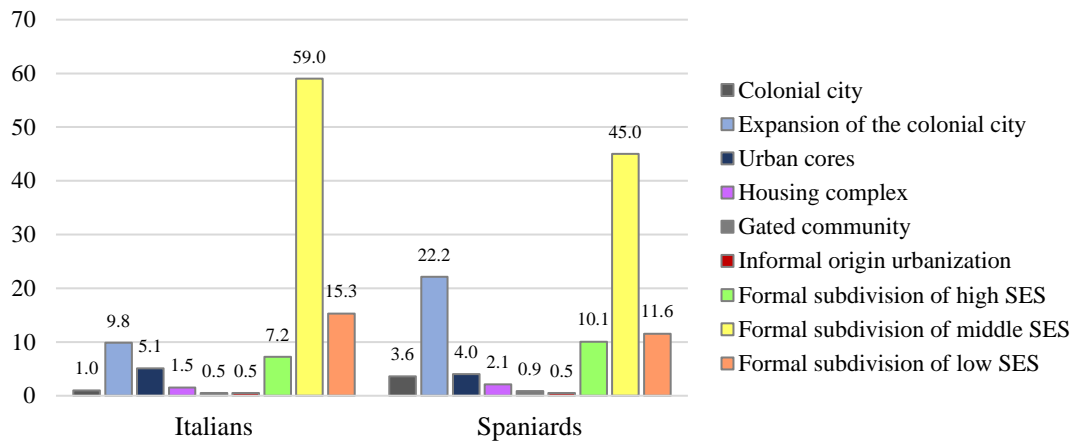According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
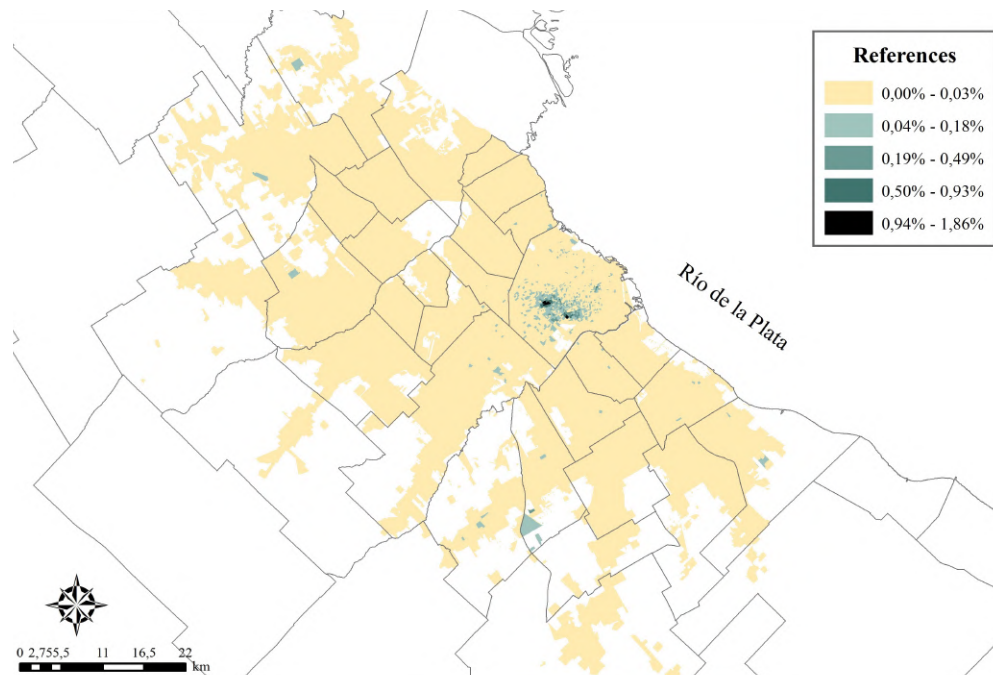
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

*Among the Settlement Pioneers:*
Italian and Spaniards

Finally, the Italian and Spaniard migrants —that constitute aged and low renewal collectives—, fundamentally reside in formal environments linked to middle level sectors (almost 60% Italians, and 45% Spaniards) (see Graph 4), areas that correspond to the west of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, the first ring of municipalities bordering the capital, and following the railroads that fueled the urban growth, particularly around the sub-centers that were developed on these axes (see Maps 9 and 10) Being populations that migrated and settled in the city a decade before, within these patterns evidence can be seen of processes of urban insertion affected both from historical time (from other conditions of land access, typical of an earlier context of expansion of the metropolis, that many of these migrants followed and even took the lead in), and from the biographical time, since it mainly involves residential conditions product of unfolded trajectories over the course of a lifetime.

Graph 4. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Italy and Spain
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010

Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 9. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Italy
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
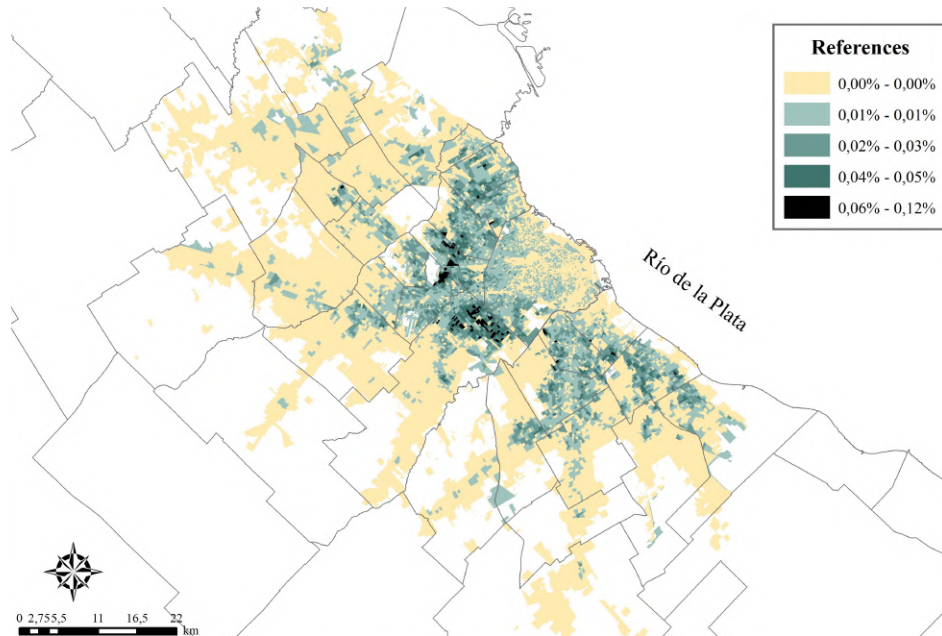
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

Map 10. Percentage of the Population Living in Private Housing Born in Spain
According to Census Tract. AGBA, 2010
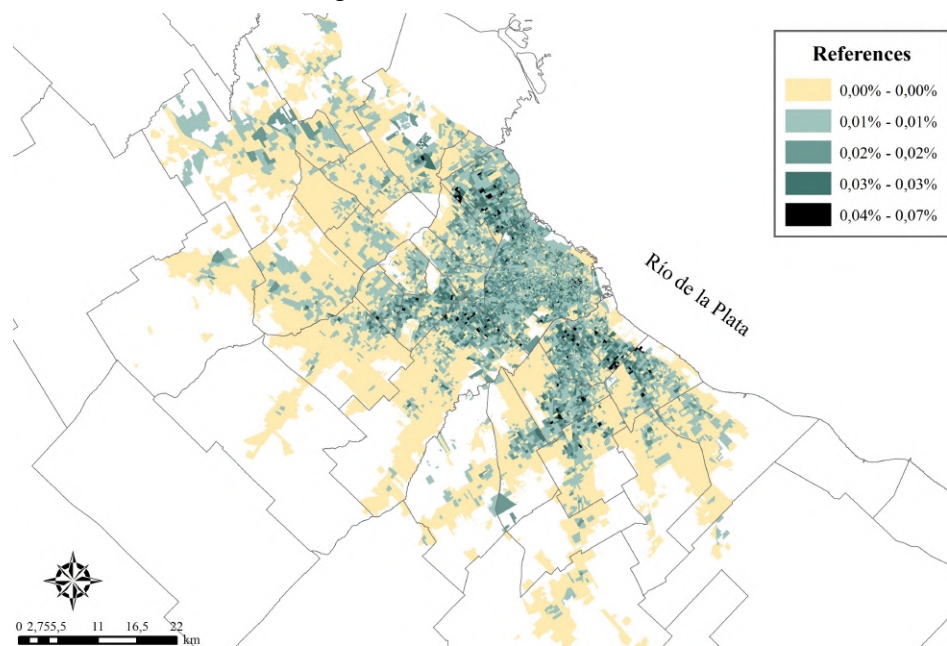
Source: Own elaboration with data from INDEC (2010) and Marcos (2023).

FINAL REMARKS

The territorial dimension of urban settlement is not reduced to the simple geolocation of housing in specific coordinates of the geographical space. The matter of *where* —in quantitative terms is translated in maps with (more or less) saturated tones of the chromatic scale, and in (more or less) elevated percentages from certain social groups in certain areas— is a question full of meanings, constraints, and effects in the lives of the populations. The cities are a mosaic of the territories that transcend every dichotomy (central-peripheral, formal-informal, rich-poor), to form an array of multiple, relative, and relational diversities, that allow for urban installation forms equally multiple, relative, and relational.

Furthermore, concentrating on migrant populations ins not simply a demographic division. Within the migrant condition differences, inequalities, encounters and tensions intertwine, where the ethnic-national condition becomes a structuring element —as an exclusion and discrimination factor, but also as a means of cohesion and resource to be mobilized— of the city access modes.

In this framework, regional collectives with profiles distinctive of classical economic migrations like the Bolivians and Paraguayans are concentrated within environments traditionally linked with working-class sectors: informal neighborhoods and of low socioeconomic level. Within migratory groups of higher education level and/or work insertions linked to commerce and services, like the Peruvians and Colombians, an appreciation of the central areas as residential

spaces is found. In diasporic Asian migrations, like the Chinese and Koreans, settlement strategies linked to central and consolidated areas are also found, with logics deeply anchored within the work insertion dynamics. Finally, historic and aged collectives, like the Italians and Spaniards, today are settled in formal environments of middle sectors of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and its first conurbation.

This image of migrant groups dispersed in urban environments comes from the statistical compilation of (multiple) individual residential positions, that a source such as the census registers in a (single) point of time. Hidden behind them are trajectories deeply anchored in concrete socio-historical conditions —of the city as a recipient space and the different collectives as transformation flows— and mobilities embedded in the life courses of their protagonists.

In the case of recent collectives, like the Peruvians and Colombians, their localization in central areas of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, should be also understood as a typical situation of the early stages of migratory projects, evidencing environments that function as "gateways" to the city. But they are gateways with divisions based on socioeconomic terms. They are very different when it comes to a flow with an educational and professional profile like the Colombian, with aspirations and resources to enter consolidated central environments, that to a classic working flow like the Peruvian which gateway to the city (and centralization) is limited to more degraded and informal environments.

When referring to collectives of historic presence but with high renewal —hence, both long-standing and recent members coexist— like the Bolivians and Peruvians, the concentration in selected environments is the result of embedded trajectories in a wide temporal network. Here, those who have been living for decades now and laid out their housing trajectories in changing socio-urban contexts and those who just arrived converge, but (unlike recent collectives) have historic social networks that reinforce settlement patterns indicated by spatial concentration logics.

Finally, in the case of aged collectives like the Italians and Spaniards, every present image is the result of long-term urban insertion processes, of urban trajectories laid out throughout their life courses and constrained by changing socio-historic and socio-urban contexts. Its current presence in areas of the city that were populated towards the mid-20th century should be understood in that context, putting into evidence that many of them have played a key role in this expansion.

Every cartographic representation of current settlement patterns is: a static representation of (the state of) a temporal and dynamic process that, to grasp its complexity, it would take incorporating the generational variable and a longitudinal perspective that surpass the possibilities of a census data source. The generational differences do not exhaust the similarities that affect this phenomenon, since its protagonists are not only defined by having a migratory origin in common, but for multiple intersectionalities —associated to gender, age, and social status— that shape the unique aspects of their urban integration process. The complexity of the question about the housing settlement conditions demands to intensify the commitment to dialog between these type of macro studies, capable of identifying the great trends that characterize the different collectives in the

whole metropolis, with specific studies (of certain collectives and/or urban environments in particular) that allow to uncover the multiple layers of meanings, differences, social inequalities that permeate territorial processes.

Translation: Fernando Solano Liddiard.

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