


Sociocultural construction of San Salvador de Jujuy, the symbolic border between Argentina and Bolivia

Construcción sociocultural de San Salvador de Jujuy, frontera simbólica de Argentina con Bolivia

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Abstract

The city of San Salvador de Jujuy is analyzed both as a border space and as a city space. Through the systematization of local studies, the aim is to consider the historical, political, socioeconomic, migratory and symbolic elements that create the urban border experience. This contribution focuses on reconstructing the city as a network of senses. It deepens our understanding of migratory flows, the recent political situation, the impact of economic inequality on urbanisms, and the relevance of media and ritual acts in the configuration of dominant senses in cities. In addition, the factors that demarcate the difference and local inequality and the process of peripheralization and impoverishment of the soil are examined. Both the recent political conflicts that affect regional disarticulation and the symbolic disputes that cause tension in national belonging against a strong Andean influence are outlined.

Keywords: border spaces, city spaces, senses of a city.

Resumen

Se analiza la ciudad de San Salvador de Jujuy como espacio fronterizo y espacio de ciudad. Mediante la sistematización de estudios locales se busca considerar los elementos históricos, políticos, socioeconómicos, migratorios y simbólicos que crean la experiencia urbana de frontera. Este aporte se acota a reconstruir a la ciudad como una red de sentidos. Se profundiza en los flujos migratorios, la situación política reciente, la impresión en la urbanidad de las desigualdades económicas y, la relevancia de lo mediático y lo ritual en la configuración de los sentidos de ciudad dominantes; se consignan los factores que territorializan la diferencia y la desigualdad local y el proceso de periferización y pauperización del suelo. Por otro lado, se

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determinan los conflictos políticos recientes que inciden en la desarticulación regional y las disputas simbólicas que tensionan la pertenencia nacional frente a la alta incidencia andina.

Palabras clave: espacios de frontera, espacios de ciudad, sentidos de ciudad.

Introduction and construction of a theoretical framework for analysis

The aim of this article is to construct the city of San Salvador de Jujuy analytically in its historical and more contemporary dimensions to consider the migratory, socioeconomic, and political factors that materially affect the current structure of the symbolic construction of the capital city of the Argentinean province of Jujuy, which borders Bolivia and Chile. Being the northernmost point of the nation of Argentina and having a population with a high percentage of ethnic Andeans and Bolivian migrants places Jujuy in constant cultural tension in the claim to national belonging.

The article is developed within the framework of research that analyzes the political-cultural derivatives of the construction of a specific city-space such as San Salvador de Jujuy. Specifically, we divide this article into the following sections: *a)* introduction, in which the key concepts on which we base our research are developed; *b)* the configuration of border and periphery spaces in the nation, *b1)* the population make-up based on migratory processes, and *b2)* recent sociopolitical factors and their effect on citizens; *c)* the social construction of the city, *c1)* the configuration of the urban habitat, and *c2)* the development of the popular expansion in Alto Comedero as a process of peripheralization of the city; and *d)* the dominant senses of the city, *d1)* the discourses about the city in the media space; and *d2)* articulations of hegemonic identity, especially those based on “ahistorical” discourses and the rituals of traditionalization. Finally, this paper provides a systematization of its concepts and discusses its conclusions.

Beyond the specific characteristics of the chosen case, in the city of San Salvador de Jujuy, processes of sociocultural borders, peripheralization, non-state-planned urban expansion, governmentality¹ and social conflicts are similar to those in different latitudes at both a national level and at a Latin American level.

To think about the city requires to think of its historical networks, the materialities on which it cements itself, the traces through which both its past and its present are narrated, its voices, visibilities, identities, media discourses, celebrations, etc.

Thus, San Salvador de Jujuy is understood as a “social space” in Massey’s (2005) sense, that is, constituted from interrelations, an enabler of multiplicity and plurality in coexistence with each other, and in permanent construction, therefore, never closed and eminently political.

From this conception of social space we derive three other definitions that help interpret the urban territory as a development of the disputes, materializations and subjectivities proposed: the border space, city spaces, and the senses of a city. Each of these concepts converges, and they work as theoretical starting points to understand the city.

¹ Foucault (2006) defines the concept as the institutions, procedures, and tactics that allow for a specific exercise of power over the population; the tendency towards the preeminence of this power over others through the formula called “government”; and the same process of “governmentalization” of the State.

We incorporate the concept of border space from a theoretical tradition that considers the border, the nation, and the State from perspectives that are not limited by the judicial construction of borders but instead are based on all of the effects and subjectifications of historical operations of nationality. Thus, the border space is presented as the cultural and symbolic elaboration of this borderization (Benedetti, 2014). For this, it is necessary to look to the contingent character of borders, subject to time and to human action (Grimson, 2000).

However, by analyzing an urban territory we use a productive definition such as “city spaces,” and subsumed within this, the idea of the “senses of a city.” The production of city space does not happen linearly, nor once and for all; instead, the city is interwoven in a constant dispute conditioned by power relations, production and consumption and the visibilization of actors, all permeated with and contributing to the meanings attributed to each place. As a city space, it responds to the internal dynamics in which different instances of power relationships are expressed and translated into spaces, and it constitutes itself in dialogue with elements of figuration regarding the outside, as part of the map that places the imagined city within a horizon of expectations, values, and desires about the relationship with its constitutive exterior.

Senses of a city are “socially and historically constructed” (García, 2010a, p. 18) simultaneously on various scales, and they are connected to a set of specific power relationships. These senses are configured not only from the most daily experience of proximity but also from the most closely held meanings in the collective memory and in the social imaginary that circulate and are sustained, especially through the mediatization of discourses (Burgos & García, 2008), cartographic representations (García, 2003), and rituals (Gaona, 2015).²

Within each city there is a dispute between the hegemonic senses both of what it represents and of the actors within it, attempting to homogenize and unify it, and similarly there are a series of heterogeneities that make it both one and many cities at the same time. The diversity of actors, experiences of the city, transits, accesses and living conditions make it unique for each person (García, 2010a).

The distinct modalities of the construction of senses of the city presented have to do with the intent to narrate the city and the hegemonic processes that occur within as a “network of historical simultaneities” with the aim of unfurling it as a temporally successive discourse (Bolle, 2008, p. 30). This entire series of materials allows us to outline a local sociocultural cartography.

These theoretical ideas are part of the cognitive precursor for an analysis of urbanity from a perspective that aims to keep this set of circumstances in mind³. To do so, we should pay attention to the materiality of the conditions and the specific historical determination and provision of power relationships, which promises to place us analytically within the permanent negotiations and rearticulations between powers (Grimson, 2009). The definition and localization of the situation to be theorized requires us to track how the images that create contextual meanings of the territory are tied together.

By analyzing an urbanity such as that of San Salvador de Jujuy, we should therefore think of each local image as a scene in a spiral, which in this case moves through the global, Latin America, and the Andean region; the nation of Argentina, the northwest,

² The bibliographic references in this paragraph specifically correspond to studies carried out in San Salvador de Jujuy and create an interpretive map of the hegemonic processes of the formation of the city.

³ When we talk about this set of circumstances, we do it in the sense of Hall (2010b) and Grossberg (2006), which other authors have incorporated in the field of Latin American cultural studies.

and the border; the province and the valley region, among which also circulates a historical experience in each of these cases. Nevertheless, imagining the city as a local space in a context of crossings as specific as in the San Salvador de Jujuy case requires assuming the agency of the local over and above the path of the global, the national, or even the regional (Massey, 2005). Here, we refer to the common difficulties of observing specific situations in the context of analysis, when the terrains being analyzed are not those most commonly seen in the academic, political or media context. Many studies on cities refer to context in which notions such as metropolises,⁴ megacities (Bolle, 2008), or megalopolises (Freitag, 2012) or the role of periphery cities as a function of global cities (Sassen, 1999) are at the forefront. Allusions to Latin American, Argentina, and Northwest Argentina features are common, as if it was possible to amalgamate a whole series of differentiated historical process and specific cultural frameworks in one metalepsis. Beyond this, there has been a tradition that considers the foundational factors of Latin American urbanities as revolving around the colony and the configuration of nation-states (Martínez, 1997; Rama, 1998; Romero, 2010). All of these warnings are taken into account when constructing a problematization that focuses on San Salvador de Jujuy, a medium-sized city and capital of a border province (See Figure 1).

Figure 1: Map of South America



Source: Created by the author.

⁴ A concept, however, is strongly sustained by the ideas of Simmel (2004) and Benjamin (2005).

For this article, we summarize a systematization of data and results from other local studies and from national and international organizations to contrast with data we generate ourselves. This information was collected in a way that is productive for sustaining the initial problematization. Similarly, this partial synthesis of knowledge about the city of San Salvador de Jujuy is taken as one element among other senses of the city. The fundamental objective in establishing a tour of the academic agenda on this topic is to situate this systematization as a basis for possible future lines of inquiry and analysis.

The peripheral configuration of the border

Migratory process and population configuration

Below, we introduce an analytical construction specific to the city of San Salvador de Jujuy. First, we should situate it as the capital city of a province (Jujuy) located in the department of Manuel Belgrano, in the South Andean Valley in Argentina's northeastern region.⁵

The most marked growth of the city of San Salvador de Jujuy occurred mainly during the first half of the 20th century. Greater Buenos Aires grew more than 200% during that period; San Salvador de Jujuy grew 579% (García, 2010). This marked growth is not tied to the phenomenon of massive immigration from overseas, the migratory process habitually alluded to when considering how the Argentine nation "was populated." Indeed, the interruption of the greatest surge in European immigration (until the 1930s) coincides with the moment of greatest demographic expansion in the northern city, primarily caused by Bolivian immigration (Caggiano, 2005; García, 2010) related to sugarcane and mining.

Bolivian immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was maintained by the migrant workers in the sugarcane harvest, who settled most heavily in the area of Ramal (Jerez & Rabey, 2006). In addition to this activity, which had the characteristics of migrant work, other farming activities were added beginning in 1930, most notably tobacco production. Because this type of production took advantage of the (unpaid) labor of women and children, entire families were permanently established in the province (Sassone, 2009). This whole period lasted from 1870 to the late 1960s. This demographic concentration would later morph into a marked drainage (1960-1985) from the Andean and border region, the Puna and the Quebrada, towards the lower regions, closer to the administrative heart of the province (Stumpo, 1992). By the 1990s, the population native to the bordering country (according to the census) signaled a noted aging and feminization (Sala, 2012), which was concentrated in more densely populated regions. Even though Bolivian immigration has markedly decreased, it has remained constant until the present.⁶

⁵ Four large regions of this province are recognized: the Puna (Santa Catalina, Yavi, Rinconada, Cochinoca and Susques), the Quebrada (Humahuaca, Tumbaya and Tilcara), the Yungas and the Ramal (Valle Grande, Ledesma, San Pedro and Santa Bárbara), and the Valles (Manuel Belgrano (with San Salvador de Jujuy, Reyes and Yala), San Antonio, Palpalá and El Carmen).

⁶ For the 2001 and 2010 census of the total population, 4.86% and 4.42%, respectively, corresponded to the migrant population, of which 4.56% and 4.11%, respectively, were born in Bolivia. For a greater contrast between the character of Bolivian and Chilean migratory flows, we can point out that in both censuses, Bolivians represented almost 94% of the total population in Jujuy, whereas only 1.8% were Chilean immigrants (Indec, 2012).

Of the current population of the provincial capital, 3.28% comes from Bolivia; the share of Bolivians as a percentage of the entire province is 4.1%, showing a still-high rate of border-country migration. This number is higher than that found at other national latitudes such as the also-border province of Salta (1.85%), the city of Buenos Aires (2.65%)⁷ or the greater metropolitan area of Buenos Aires (1.15%) (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos [Indec], 2012).

This process, sustained for almost a century, operates articulating local identifications, ascriptions, tensions and internal rejections regarding the claim to national belonging (Caggiano, 2005).

According to the 2010 census (Indec, 2012), the capital city has 265 249 inhabitants, which means that almost 40% of the provincial population lives in an area corresponding to only 3% of the provincial territory. This first sample of population concentration in an urban sector in the province of Jujuy can be confirmed by noting that another 37% of the population lives in only three cities (El Carmen, Ledesma and San Pedro).⁸ If we consider that San Salvador de Jujuy, Palpalá and El Carmen (with the towns of Perico and El Carmen), all contiguous cities on the provincial map, house 2 of every 3 inhabitants in Jujuy, we can confirm the argument about the urban agglomeration in which the Jujuyan population is concentrated.

This accumulative population phenomenon generates strong disarticulation between the different sectors of the province, between historical drainage from the higher areas (Karasik, 2005) and marked urban growth in the most dynamic productive regions (especially that based on the centralization of public administration) and in the private sector, beginning with tobacco and sugar cane.

Recent sociopolitical factors

Towards the end of the 20th century, in addition to the historical asymmetry generated by the regional economic slump and a halt in local industrial growth, there was an economic, productive, and social strike to the whole province by President Carlos Menem's neoliberal model and conservative ideology as the path for development in the country's interior. The experiment of deregulating the market, eliminating protectionism, engaging in State intervention in tax pressure and transferring assets to the highest economic sectors, cutting funding to social security and breaking up public companies for sale to private capital coordinated all of the elements for a social metamorphosis that brought about an increase in levels of inequality that had begun decades earlier in the provinces, fostering extremely high levels of unemployment, exclusion, and marginalization (Lagos & Gutiérrez, 2009). As Lagos and Gutiérrez (2009) explain, these policies most deeply affected the peripheral regions of the country, as they did not have a clear entry point into the new model.

⁷ Whereas the number of migrants in the working-aged segment of the population in the city of Buenos Aires approaches 90%, inhabitants older than 65 are only 3% of the Bolivians in the city. Meanwhile, the number of Bolivian migrants over the age of 65 in the province of Jujuy is approaching 30%. This speaks to variations in the destinations of Bolivian migratory flows in the various decades of the last century.

⁸ The department of Palpalá, which adjoins the department of Manuel Belgrano, has another 7.81% of the provincial population (Provincial Office of Statistics and Census [Dirección Provincial de Estadísticas y Censos-DiPEC], 2012).

Palpalá, a city adjacent to San Salvador de Jujuy and the cradle of the metallurgy Altos Hornos Zapla, is a paradigmatic territory to consider what the transfer of public companies to the private business sector meant, especially in a province with low industrial employment levels (Jerez, 2015). The sharpening of the lack of employment began with the reduction in labor caused by provincial privatizations at the beginning of the 1990s as part of the process that was used as an economic prescription at the national level. It meant an uncertain future for the labor sector, confusion in the unskilled-labor sectors and a generalized crisis among the families of unemployed workers. A large part of the population involved in this sector of production was obligated to turn to self-employment, microbusinesses and dependence on social plans (Bergesio, Golovanevsky & Marcoleri, 2009b). This and similar employment suppression processes generated a rise in urban conflicts in the province, chronic struggles throughout the decade in the form of road closures by protesters (*piquetes*), marches, strikes, squatting and sit-ins.

At the national level, the perceptions of instability and economic crisis were felt in a more pronounced way after the halfway point of the 1990s, with a generalized crash during the government of President De la Rúa in December 2001. However, by the end of the 1980s (and throughout the 1990s), Jujuy suffered from a situation of “ungovernability” (Lagos & Gutiérrez, 2009, p. 102) that anticipated the national crisis by ten years and was caused by the provincial government’s lack of decision-making power, a gubernatorial dispute related to patrimonial interests, inaction in the face of unemployment, and the economic crisis. This caused the province to adjust itself politically to have eight governors over the course of the decade, with a virulent and conflict-ridden fall in the case of four of them⁹ (Lagos & Gutiérrez, 2006).

Thus, the period historically identified as experiencing the greatest economic decline and debacle of political institutionalism at the national level—i.e., 2001-2002—was experienced at the local level as a continuation of a very long-standing conflict that, however, found the province in relative governmental stability, having experienced for the first time in many years the same governor in power for the three preceding years.

Nevertheless, the economic crisis was sustained as a structural mark of the local experience, and the population below the poverty line that year reached 68.1%, according to Indec (Lagos & Gutiérrez, 2009). Between 1980 and 2002, of the Northwest provinces, which show lower levels of production and employment than the rest of the country, Jujuy registered the lowest rates of average activity and employment in the region (Martínez, Golovanevsky & Medina, 2010).

The local situation unfurled in two modes of experimentation of the political citizenship. On the one hand, as part of the conservative turn promoted by neoliberal logic, a large sector of the population turned to a depoliticized anomie translated into the mediatization of traditional politics.¹⁰ On the other hand, the emergence of the movement

⁹ Ricardo De Aparici resigns (1987-1990); Eduardo Huáscar Alderete completes the mandate of his predecessor (1990-1991); Roberto Rubén Domínguez resigns (1991-1993); José Carlos Ficosco resigns (1992-1994); Oscar Agustín Perassi completes the mandate of both predecessors (1994-1995); Guillermo Eugenio Snopek dies (1995-1996); Carlos Alfonso Ferraro resigns (1996-1998); Eduardo Alfredo Fellner completes the mandate and is elected and reelected (1998-2007) (Lagos & Gutiérrez, 2006).

¹⁰ This is also connected to modification in consumption starting from access to television services through private cable with almost exclusive transmission of content produced in the region of the national capital. It also involves the influence and the market partiality in local media production influenced by the discretionary use of the official standard at the local level (García, Arrueta & Brunet, 2009).

of the unemployed and the strength they acquired from state unions¹¹ translated into a powerful popular resistance facing weak provincial governments, a marked use of official force to combat protest and a generalized climate over the course of a decade characterized by social belligerence and governmental instability.

A rough map of local citizenship can be characterized as follows: a sector of the population that separates itself from participative political action; a sector aimed at public demands, especially against the State; and an autocratic government that responds to provincial claims without any strong local recognition and legitimacy.

Similarly, as another of the vectors of this map and upon presenting in recent decades a demobilizing panorama in the base of traditional parties, we can see that Jujuy's recent political history is fully guided by the struggle of the social movements: unions, road blocking (*piqueteros*) organizations, the indigenous movement, the human rights movement, etc. (Gaona & López, 2013; Karasik & Gómez, 2015; Kindgard, 2009; Rodríguez, 2002).

The social construction of the city

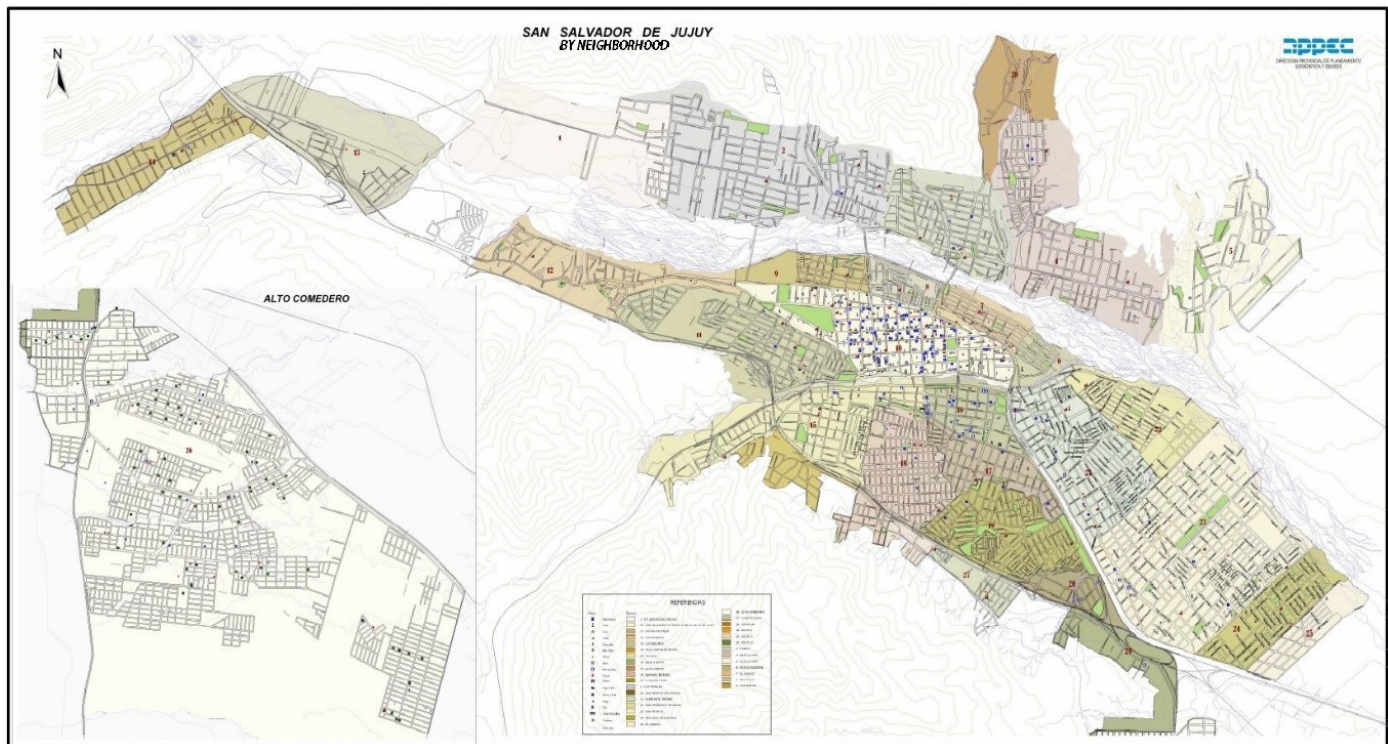
From topography to senses of urban living

These modifications in urban living were also translated into an aggravation of the signs of territorial inequality, from the marked expansion of popular settlements to disputes over ceding territory to conditions of overcrowding in the southern area of the city. However, in terms of the meanings of the city, a marked distance between what is included between the Grande and Chico (or XibiXibi) rivers and the rest of the city became consolidated (see Figure 2). This foundational urban framing between the two rivers historically marked the city's modes of experimentation and the majority of the city's political, administrative, commercial, and tourist¹² activities organizing around it (García, 2000).

¹¹ Kindgard (2009) recognizes that the tendency of the General Confederation of Work (*Confederación General del Trabajo–CGT*), aligned with the government during those years, generated the need for new dissident unions to express the demand and the struggle: the Movement of Argentine Workers (*Movimiento de Trabajadores Argentinos–MTA*), the Classist and Combative Current (*Corriente Clasista y Combativa–CCC*) and the independent workers' headquarters of Workers of Argentina (*Central de Trabajadores de la Argentina–CTA*). One of the largest conflicts in Jujuy was that involving the State Guilds Front (*Frente de Gremios Estatales–FGE*), which, among other guilds, included the Union of Municipal Employees and Workers (*Sindicato de Empleados y Obreros Municipales–SEOM*), with Perro Santillán as a brilliant figure in the struggles of the decade. Another key configuration of the time on the political level is at the multisectorial level, which is composed of unions, student organizations, and professional schools.

¹² Tourism in the provincial capital cannot be compared with the enormous flows that traverse the region of the Quebrada de Humahuaca. Local attractions include only government buildings, churches and some historical landmarks from the independence period, mainly concentrated around or near Belgrano Plaza (Gaona, 2014).

Figure 2: Map of the city of San Salvador de Jujuy



Source: DIPEC (n.d.). Accessed at http://www.dipec.jujuy.gov.ar/cys_cartografiadigital/cartografiaurbana/ssfinal.pdf

Topographical influence is just another element when thinking about the city, not only because of these rivers that make partitions in the urban plan but also because of the whole series of unevenness, hills, depressions and borders, the condition of all territorial expansion of the capital. When García Vargas (2009, p. 156) mentions a city in which, according to the media, “space is lacking” (as is modernity), he also refers to the difficulties posed by (and the economic effort involved in) the physical terrain related to construction and habitability. Moreover, much of the available land belongs to landowners and to private business capital. This phenomenon is not restricted to the territory of the capital, but in a province marked by the monoculture of the property owner, large-scale mining and patrimonialization of the area of the gorge—with the consequent escalation of touristic property for private profit—has been “shrinking” the land’s availability to its own inhabitants.¹³

The bridges that connect the central area with the rest of the city operate like connecting arteries between the different sectors and neighborhoods, and through them

¹³ The last two episodes that had the greatest repercussions for the land dispute in Jujuy happened during 2011 and 2012. In July 2011, in the city of Libertador Gral. San Martín, on land belonging to Ingenio Ledesma, approximately five hundred families sued for occupation of 15 hectares that had been demanded for years by the company, whose land encloses the entire area enclosed. The police intervened in the eviction, leaving four dead. The second episode, also in the interior of the province, in this case in Humahuaca, involved a face-off between representatives of the social organization Tití Guerra and area neighbors, leaving one dead.

flows the transit between the rural areas, commerce, employment, and leisure. Roughly, to the north of the city center are the most comfortable areas, the most picturesque views in the city and the best access to service; in the southern zone, the most popular and populous section of the local population is concentrated, and there is an obvious deficit in access to infrastructure (Bergesio, Golovanevsky & Marcoleri, 2009a).

The marked “statehood” in the formation of the central region of the city, especially in its sector with the most patrimony, largely corresponds to the metropolitan public space plans, according to what was proposed by Gorelik (1998). The state house, the cathedral, the provincial police (the former town hall), the provincial legislature, public buildings, the artisanal market, the shopping center, the historic building of the *Pregón* newspaper and the promenade represent vital nodes in the Jujuyan experience, all of which orbit around or are situated next to the Belgrano *plaza*, the city’s principal *plaza*.

The urban fracture, which has been accentuated since 1990, is part of the logic of the type of city configured from neoliberalism (Grimson, Ferraudi & Segura, 2009; Svampa, 2001) (see Figure 3). To establish in broad strokes how the city of San Salvador de Jujuy was structured, we incorporate some of the points made by García and Echenique (1990) and taken up again by Bergesio, Golovanevsky and Marcoleri (2009a) to point out the spatial socioeconomic divisions generated in the city:

- Center-Periphery Division: The socioeconomic level of the inhabitants decreases the farther one moves from the center of the city.
- North-South Division: To the north of the Rio Grande live the most economically comfortable groups, whereas to the south of the Xibi-Xibi the socioeconomic levels descend.
- Convex-Concave Division: the lowest-income groups live “in the contours of the riverbeds, at the limits of the flood zones, at a level below that of the center of the city, whereas the residences of the bourgeoisie occupy the heights of the west and the sides of the northern hills (Bergesio et al., 2009a, p. 48).

Figure 3: Panoramic image of Jujuy



Source: *La Gaceta Cristiana*. (n.d.). Accessed at <http://www.gacetacristiana.com.ar/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/jujuy.jpg>

This “spatialization of difference” (García, 2006, p. 6) was also demonstrably translated in the housing problems noted at the local and provincial levels. The topographic gaps and contractions thus became the anatomy of the socioeconomic topography. The “lack of space” found a channel of amplification through the popular sectors’ strategies to “gain” terrain and land, not without difficulties in the dispute over the parcels, their inaccessibility to basic services and transport, and the need for dignified living conditions. There was an increase in the action by the popular sectors that resulted in a massive expansion of the popular settlements (García & Echenique, 1990) located in territories of low value to state planners and sectors with more resources: banks of rivers and streams, mountainsides, cliffs, and area routes and paths located close to the administrative sector and with greater access to resources (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Disassembled popular settlement

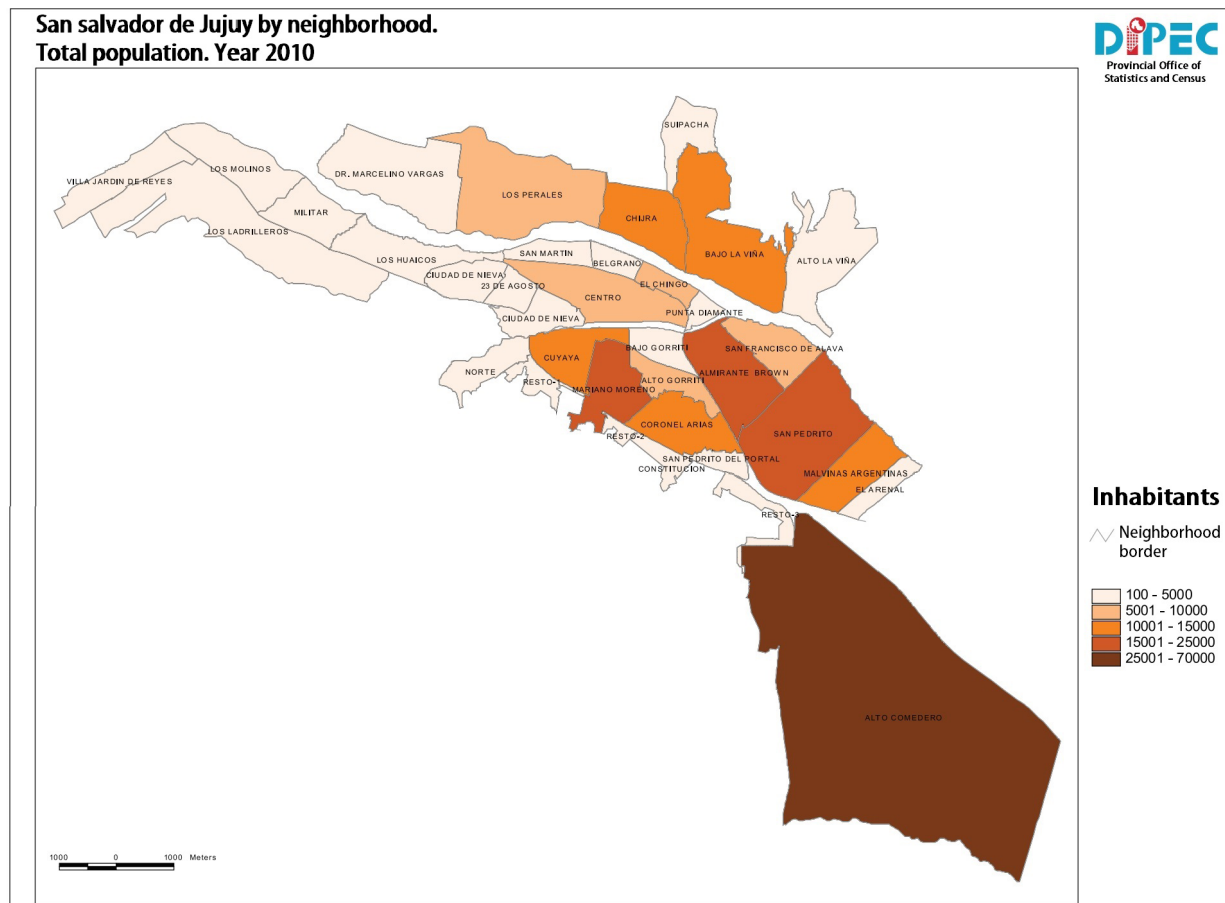


Source: Digital newspaper *El Libertario.com Noticias de Jujuy*. (2016). Accessed at <http://www.ellibertario.com/2016/06/08/desalojo-600-usurpadores-alto-comedero/>

The phenomenon of Alto Comedero

The paradigmatic case of this popular expansion is Alto Comedero (Figure 5). This neighborhood, which was created in 1986 and is located approximately five kilometers from the center of the city, contains (according to census estimates) almost one-third of the city's population, that is, approximately seventy thousand people. It is currently the most populous neighborhood in the city and the one with the largest geographic area.

Figure 5: Quantity of inhabitants per neighborhood



Source: DiPEC. Accessed at http://www.dipec.jujuy.gov.ar/idx_barrios/san_salvador/mapas/pobtotalssdejujuy.pdf

The character of the neighborhood's forms of development and habitation clearly reveal the need for housing as a local phenomenon, an issue that has arisen in various parts of Latin America.

This terrain, elevated above the rest of the city, has uneven levels and clay-like soil. It sustains the local aero club at its original and never-expropriated center. This is not only a geographically central point but also has been a territory at the center of disputes involving peri-urban land grabs throughout the province since 2011. The diversity in the

neighborhood's expansion also speaks to the State's chosen method of intervening in peripheral city spaces.¹⁴ Thus, it is a synthesis between occupations of private terrains and fiscal lots with the construction of precarious housing, private lots, housing constructed by the Housing and Urbanism Institute of Jujuy (*Instituto de Vivienda y Urbanismo de Jujuy-INVUJ*) with financing from the National Mortgage Bank (*Banco Hipotecario Nacional*), and by work cooperatives through national programs mediated by social organizations (this latter modality implemented in 2004) (Fournier, 2002; Gaona, 2011). The government's intervention for neighborhood expansion, especially during electoral periods, did not coincide with appropriate expansions at the margins of services' organized reach.

In Alto Comedero, there are rapidly multiplying claims for the scarce presence of public schools, insufficiency of normal security services, the inefficiency of the "great health post" (as the hospital located there is called, a large building without supplies and with little personnel), the absence of jobs, the scarcity of public transport and the lack of paving (Bergesio & Golovanevsky, 2010, p. 120).

There is, in the evolution of both environments in recent decades, the central area and the formation of the Alto Comedero neighborhood, a strong intervention from a State that with each decision legitimizes a model of the hierarchical organization of spaces through quality of life, the accentuation of distances despite their relative closeness, and the type of citizen who, one hopes, can access one or the other. They are two cities within one: the one between two rivers that the logo of the city uses metonymously as "the" city¹⁵; and the other one in which the population "implodes"¹⁶ from different parts of the city, the region, and the province.

Disputed senses of city

Construction of the Jujuy media space

As part of the cartographic reconstruction of the city, it is also important to consider the senses elaborated in the media space of Jujuy because this space:

Is co-constitutive of the social space —and of its ties to the physical space— since it does not limit itself to *shaping* something prior and pre-existing but rather it *is part* of the process of formation, stabilization, criticism or rupture of the majority of the figures that come forth in the social debate (García, 2011, p. 47).

¹⁴ There is a historic bid from different political sectors in the city to make Alto Comedero into a municipality. During 2015, the third project aiming to create the new municipality was presented; however, according to media reports, this project, like previous attempts, has neither municipal nor provincial support.

¹⁵ García (2003), in a semiotic analysis of the maps of the city, analyzes the logo of the Municipality of San Salvador de Jujuy that only illustrates the two rivers and the nine blocks within them.

¹⁶ Bergesio et al. (2009a) attribute the population overflow experienced in Alto Comedero to the wave of immigration from different sectors of the province, starting with the socioeconomic crisis.

In the reconstruction of the hegemonic senses of the city, one story that is particularly effective as a constructor and reproducer of messages influence how we represent the world in which we live and our environment is the one told by the mass media.

Even in medium-sized cities such as the one being analyzed, it is understood that experience is permeated by and understood largely in the terms in which the media manage the basic “images” of life, group and class practices and values; it is the images, representations and evaluations that create the social totality (Hall, 2010b).

San Salvador de Jujuy’s mass media construct a hegemonic meaning for the city and the people who live in that city (Burgos & García, 2008; García, 2004, 2010b). They present it as:

An Argentine city, which is the capital of a border province, that it lacks space and modernity, and that it is also necessary to remember the past [a past tied to the heroism of the locals during the process of national independence]. (...) The city is constructed in opposition to others (to *some* others: Buenos Aires and Salta),¹⁷ to nature (which is also a *special* nature: the *patrimony* countrysides of the Quebrada de Humahuaca), and it is situated in a national space (whose *constitutive exterior* is restricted to one of the border countries: Bolivia) (García, 2010b, p. 86).¹⁸

In addition to some of the external factors that influence the media’s construction of the city, there are also interpretations of what is internally visible and not visible. Accordingly, through an operation of spatial reduction, the city is circumscribed by its historical and commercial center. This identification of the city with its center:

Avoids showing the neighborhoods, which are restricted instead to news about infrastructure —generally based on press releases from public organizations— or to the space of police stories (...). The mapping of men and women by the media reproduces the differential spatialization of actors, assigning unfavorable places to those who escape the role of ideal citizens for the equally idealized city of San Salvador de Jujuy (García Vargas, Gaona & López, 2016, p. 96).

What is not idealized, what falls outside of the norm, appears in the news framed in the police sections and relates to other sectors that are not this center: the bus terminal, the neighborhoods in the southern area and the popular city sectors (García, 1999). Regardless of State management, public works aimed at meeting urgent needs are also presented in these other sectors, whereas beautification, value-adding and patrimony is presented in the central public area.

¹⁷ The city of Salta is approximately 100 kilometers away and is the capital of the other Argentine province that borders Bolivia and Chile.

¹⁸ Another facet in this hegemonic characterization of Jujuy—in contrast to other places, cultures, and customs—that we retake tangentially from the viewpoint of an essayist talks about:

That other Argentina, that doesn’t summer in Punta del Este [Uruguay], but that holds, with the participation of vast popular sectors, the festival of Tantanakuy; which does not have, like Buenos Aires, one of the highest concentrations in the world, per capita, of psychoanalysts, psychiatrists, and psychologists, and that, however, preserves deep religious sentiment, where Christianity gets lost, through syncretism, in the night of the times and where, with excessive frequency, healers replace doctors (Espejo, 2006, p. 25).

To this method of construction of the Jujuy capital space we should add another lens with equal influence. We are referring to that view and way of speaking about the north of the country by the media of the city of Buenos Aires, which function as the “national” media in the spectrum of reception and consumption at the provincial level. In this case, the images generated present a synecdoche that blurs the province-city difference; in general they tend to report almost exclusively on situations that criminalize the border (López, 2013), make poverty visible, or involve social violence, especially in areas affiliated with the politics of the social organizations (Gaona, 2016). Also recurring is the presentation of the rural-countryside-touristic nature of the area, as seen in images of the Quebrada de Humahuaca.

Local hegemonic identitarian discursive articulations

The connection to the rest of the country is experienced in a complex, even conflictive way. The demand for recognition as part of the national territory resides under the umbrella of local reproductive instances, in the mass media (Burgos & García, 2008), in sporting events (Burgos, 2014), and in festivals of popular Jujuy culture such as the National Student Festival (Ficoseco, 2007) or the anniversary of the Jujuy Exodus¹⁹ (Gaona, 2015; Maya, 2014), and it tends to be held up as a symbolic horizon, present in political conflicts, depicting popular belligerence and as a shibboleth to selectively demarcate what it means to “be Jujuyan” (Figure 6).

A common analytical characterization used in studies of identities around Jujuyan-ness is the one elaborated by Belli and Slavutsky, which, at the risk of being seemingly essentialist because of its brevity, presents some of the recurring elements of local/provincial self-identification. For these authors, being Jujuyan:

Can take a juridical character —one is Jujuyan because one was born here— where identification distinguishes between who was born and stayed in the province and those who were temporary migrants. Another enunciative way to mark Jujuyan identity, by agents, is to point out features, distinctive signs: a Jujuyan loves his or her land, celebrates with devotion the “Jujuyan Exodus,” is very Catholic and venerates the saints, etc.: or points out precise differences (that tend to be oppositions) from the neighboring province of Salta and from southerners, especially marked for the case of people from Cordoba and Buenos Aires (Belli & Slavutsky, 1994, p. 121).

It is understood that when talking about identities, we are talking about hegemonic articulations in the framework of the processes of recognition and identification in the struggle in which different forms of representation, discursive work and demarcation of symbolic limits (Hall, 1997) operate, establishing not only a certain constitutive reciprocity between different groups as an order of maintenance but also the contingent and localized configuration of hierarchical organizations between “signifiable” groups (Hall, 2010a).

¹⁹ For example, in the case of the evocation of the Exodus and the various performances that “reconstruct” historical events, images are presented as part of the Jujuy tradition that do not require conversation with some past, but instead require a margin sufficient to enable the attachment of symbols with which it would be possible to imagine visible signs that could survive from such a past as part of the national story.

These hierarchical organizations are established with a horizon permanently in conflict with the local; the claim of national belonging:

Is not naturally unambiguous and constitutes an ideological political space where strong contradictions face each other. Under certain conditions, the most reactionary aspects of nationality discourse (adherence to official culture, hostility against Bolivians) could be prioritized, but under other conditions it could represent the demand for participation and real democratization of society, under the protection (of) common membership in the political system (Karasik, 1994, p. 69).

Figure 6: Ceremony evocative of the Jujuy Exodus



Source: *Jujuy al Momento.com*. Accessed at http://www.jujuyalmomento.com/upload/img/120-agrupaciones-gauchas-formaron-parte-del-desfile-por-el-exodo-jujeno-20786_2505.jpg

This identification is transferred through what the bodies themselves imply, as a border movement between what they “are” and what constitutes them from outside their limits (Butler, 2008). That materialization depends on the reiterative property introduced as a system of discursive truth. Material formulation exists insofar as its space for inscription is delimited by that which it excludes. Thus, the demand for inclusion with respect to

the rest of the country appeals to a configuration that excludes some internal elements (Gaona, 2015).

The apparent discomfort with which national identification is assumed in the Jujuyan context implies that “becoming” Argentine requires recapturing, through symbols of national traditionalism, the means of erasing certain negatively valued frameworks. In the attempt to detach oneself from the condition of foreignness within one’s own national territory, one renounces all instances of one’s own local materialization that allude to the liminal and border-related.

Recognition, the statutes of the most legitimate and most habitable existence, not only make one wonder about certain ways of being citizens but also support safeguarding all those who appear to be denied by that supposed being. Events and festivals such as the National Student Festival and the evocation of the Exodus appeal to the construction of an “us” that is also built from an exteriority, alienation or otherness that, even if foggy, constantly shines through as part of the historical story, like that of the imposition of a type of corporality admissible in the present.

These discourses are conflictively woven between bordering and culturally connecting with Bolivia (much more than with Chile and more than the other northern provinces), with the rest of the country as a whole and with the city of Buenos Aires as a symbolic horizon. Similarly, in the struggle for the recognition of their national condition, the hegemonic discourses of “the city” have been characterized by a development within the appeal to Argentine-ness beyond the features recognized as Bolivian; features that definitively also allude to their condition as a city of the Southern Andes, unlike the geography of a large part of the country. However, these discourses are stretched by the symbolic disputes with Salta, disputes that appeal to the development and “modernization” of both cities, the countryside images offered as symbols of tourism, and the ethnification and foreignization as resources of hierarchical organization.

All of these discursive layers point out part of the way in which the territorial border has conditioned the construction of belonging itself, the procedures—not unambiguous—for national identification, and the need for purification from the traditionalization of culture as part of the hegemonic elements over and above the densities of the cultural ethnic mix specific to the border.

Systematization of concepts and conclusions

This article has reached a level of understanding of the city of San Salvador de Jujuy by arguing the foundations of the hypothesis proposed about the capital city of Jujuy as a border space in tension with the national space. This hypothesis is induced by the recurring political and social idea about Jujuy’s conflicts related to its position both on the border and on the periphery of Argentina’s political and commercial centers.

This text was organized according to three principal axes: migratory and sociopolitical factors as part of the local history; urban territorial expansion and configuration as the “spatialization” of the dispute between dominant and popular sectors; and the hegemonic senses of the city, especially from the media and the ritual.

Each of these three elements is part of the historical materiality on which San Salvador is based. This article proposes to systematize aspects of different social studies about the city, having them dialogue with each other to create a map of the elements that affect the daily urban experience of the border. We have considered each of these facets of the

discourse network about the city to reconstruct it as a social space. Thus, we observe that the space of the city of San Salvador de Jujuy is permanently invigorated by its condition as a border space (of the capital of a border province).

We can note that the migration process from Bolivia, from the mountains and from the *Quebrada*, sustained for more than a century, permanently conditions the assignments, tensions, and internal rejections related to the claim to national belonging. This has also contributed to a strong disarticulation and imbalance between the border-adjacent rural zones and the urban regions.

On the political level, this situation has translated into a permanent climate of “ungovernability” for more than a decade beginning toward the end of the last century. Confronted by weak autocratic governments, political productivity saw itself particularly mobilized by the paths of local social movements.

The almost chronic critical economic situation was also translated into an aggravation of the signs of territorial inequality. These were consolidated in the city spaces as a marked distance between what occurs between the two rivers that demarcate the central area and the rest of the city’s neighborhoods and settlements.

The city and the region, marked by landowning property on a grand scale, have suffered a “shrinking” of housing access and land available for habitability, resulting in the expansion of unplanned (by the State) settlements in territories poorly suited to building and peripheral regions lacking both services and transportation access, with Alto Comedero as a principal symbol of this local phenomenon. A strong state intervention can be distinguished both in the hierarchical organization of the quality of central spaces representing patrimony and in the impoverishment of the expended periphery validating a model of the hierarchical organization of spaces through quality of life, the accentuation of distances despite their relative closeness, and the type of citizen who, one hopes, accesses one or the other.

This type of configuration of the city is also reproduced and sustained in the media space. There too, hegemonic discourses are reproduced that concern both the internal view and the manner in which the city (and the province) is represented from outside. There is a distance between the local media and the Buenos Aires media: whereas one considers the qualities of a type of idealized inhabitant and the differences between what happens in the city center versus the periphery, the other (i.e., the media from the Río de la Plata region) reproduces and alludes both to situations that criminalize the border and reveal regional poverty and to violence tied to social movements.

The demand for recognition as part of the national territory is established as a nodal element for each of the ritual cases at the local level (patriotic, festive, sporting, cultural, etc.). The apparent condition of foreignness within one’s own national territory uncomfortably situates the border condition, reinforcing with each gesture their belonging as Argentines by dint of excluding some internal elements.

As noted above, historically, the analyses of the city from sociocultural perspectives have focused on phenomena of explosive growth, either in mercantile terms of comparative metrics (whether culturally symbolic or productive-material) or in terms of the city’s most recent set of issues (from the perspective of technological effects on the urban experience) (Legates & Stout, 2016; Miles, Hall & Borden, 2004).

Latin American studies have focused on transcending the colonial stamp that has connected the history of Latin American cities (Rama, 1998; Romero, 2010). Historically, however, the most memorable essays about Argentina’s national territory have focused on interpreting the Pampas–Río de la Plata cities as an element that is fundamental to understanding the colonial condition in the national territory (Gorelik, 1998; Martínez,

1997; Sarmiento, 2011). More recently, interest in the effects of postmodernity on great urban centers has dominated the local and national scene (Carman, 2006; Sarlo, 2010; Svampa, 2001).

For the case of the city of San Salvador de Jujuy, this issue has been analyzed as the result of both external and internal migratory processes; as a city with dominant senses, as a political terrain and as a city that is lived in, circulated through and experienced by its inhabitants; these analyses (coming from different disciplines and with varied problematics) converge in the tense local events that occur in the context of their relationship with the regional and the national. In this academic agenda, which also represents the city—and constitutes yet another element regarding its senses—the various geographic scales put into play continue to be considered: the closest territory as a culturally determinant factor, the broadest national and regional effects in provincial development, and local territorialization given globally imposed conditions. The consequences of the neoliberal mercantile factors in a globalized paradigm for the population, especially when it comes to these factors' damaging effects on the habitability of the land (and on city life) by non-hegemonic sectors has already been analyzed. The manner in which this type of city, with its demands of belonging, brings with it mechanisms that exclude and expel its internal elements is an issue that remains to be examined in depth.

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