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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Confronting/Reinscribing the Argentine White Narrative:
Identity Construction and the Reclaiming of Indigeneity through Autochthonous
and Folkloric Music

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

by

Hannah Eliza Alexia Balcomb

September 2018

Dissertation Committee:

Dr. Jonathan Ritter, Chairperson
Dr. Deborah Wong
Dr. Leonora Saavedra
Dr. James Brennan

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2018

The Dissertation of Hannah Eliza Alexia Balcomb is approved:

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University of California, Riverside

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Confronting / Reinscribing the Argentine White Narrative:
Identity Construction and the Reclaiming of Indigeneity through Autochthonous and
Folkloric Music

by

Hannah Eliza Alexia Balcomb

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Music
University of California, Riverside, September 2018
Dr. Jonathan Ritter, Chairperson

Although Argentina is not a place associated with indigenous scholarship this image is shifting as scholars, activists, musicians, and artists demand a revisionist history to challenge the myth of a homogenous Argentina and recognize the country's estimated 900 indigenous communities. This dissertation analyzes the role that musicians, dancers, and other culture bearers of Argentine popular and folkloric music play in this burgeoning indigenous movement. In an attempt to capture a multifaceted indigenous narrative of Argentina, I begin from the premise that identity is not static but rather a production, always in process (Hall 1998). Thus, I consider the multiple ways that Argentines choose to align or distance themselves from a shared indigenous ancestry and how they use particular dress, symbols, musical genres and instruments to do so. I analyze shifts in this discourse in relation to broader trends of tourism, national politics, transnationalism and a

growing international indigenous awareness. This dissertation begins with a look at indigenous trends in national music and within the country's capital Buenos Aires and moves into a detailed study of musical practices in the northern province of Salta, a locus of gaucho folklore. In particular, I examine the ways—again—through which instruments, genres, and dress, that three separate groups of musicians: copla performers, an “Indian” comparsa, and an ethno-folkloric fusion group, revalorize indigeneity by representing native northern Argentine communities in their performances. Ultimately I argue that musical expressions of indigeneity in Argentina both contribute to and detract from the struggle for indigenous recognition by allowing for a retelling of Argentine history and the emergence of native peoples onto a historically White nationalist narrative and by simultaneously perpetuating indigenista exoticist trends in which the “great,” ancient, Indian civilizations are elevated as authentic culture bearers while extant ones are excluded or portrayed as primitive in comparison.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures	ix
INTRODUCTION: “Real Indians”	1
Pushing Back Against a Misconception	5
Multiculturalism	6
Beginning Queries	8
Argentine Music	10
Regional and National Genres	10
Scholarly Contributions	14
Folkloric Music	14
Folklorization and Tourism	18
Nationalism and Ethnicity in Argentine Identity	21
Music and Identity	27
Nationalism and Performance	30
Terminology	32
Methodology and Introduction to Case Studies	38
Los Bagualeros del Norte	39
Huayra	40
Sumaimana	41
Placing My Work in a Broader Context	43
Chapter Breakdown	47
Final Thoughts	50
CHAPTER ONE: Indigeneity and Whiteness	52
Part I: Whiteness	52
Argentine White Imaginary	55
Racial Constructions: Mestizaje and Whiteness	59
Mestizaje	62
Indigenismo	63
Argentine Exceptionalism	72
Deconstructing Whiteness	66
A History of Indigenous “Disappearance”	72
Pre-Spanish Conquest	72
Inca Invasion	74
Conquest of Los Quilmes	75
Independence	77
First National Census	78
Expansion	80
Desert Conquest and the Campaigns to the Green Desert	80
New Blood: Immigration for a “Modern” Nation	82
Politics of Otherness: Solidifying Whiteness	85

Part II: Indigenous Recognition	
Indigenous Today	85
Increased Mobilization	91
The 2001 Census	94
Argentine Indigenous Recognition in a Global Context	98
Continued Challenges	102
Conclusion	105
Multiple Narratives of Los Quilmes	106
Desmontar el Monumento de Roca	109
Powerful Narratives	110
CHAPTER TWO: National Icons, Gauchos and Kollas	113
Part 1: Gauchos	113
Distinct Interpretations of National Icons	122
Mercedes Sosa: A Cultural Lens	124
Regional Tensions	132
Being Gaucho in Salta	135
Historical Antecedents of the Gaucho	138
Gauchos: Shifting	141
From Politics to Popular Culture: The Gaucho as White Icon	147
The Gaucho as Masculine Trope	150
Gaucho as Folkloric Icon: Embodying Whiteness and Masculinity	151
The Folkloric Musician in Salta	154
Resituating Salta as Andean	157
Part II: Kollas	160
Kolla: A Historical Overview	171
Kollas as Tokenized Figure in Tourism	173
Folklorization of the Kolla: “El Carnavalito”	174
The Reclaiming of the Kolla	179
Conclusion	184
CHAPTER THREE: Framing of Coplas: Indigenous?	186
Coplas/Bagualas	190
Frame 1: Performance on the National Stage	196
Reframing the Frame: A Closer Look	202
Nationalization/Retraditionalization	205
Frame 2: Coplas and Tourism	209
Pachamama Ceremonies and Coplas	211
Coplas for Carnival	216
Coplas as Regional Markers	222
In Defense of Our Culture: Coplas and Identity	225
Syncretism and Coplas	230
Frame 3: Coplas in Folkloric Music	233

Gauchos Decentes	234
Frame 4: Coplas in a Modern	235
The Lady Gaga of Folklore	235
New Text for an Old Tradition	242
Closing the Frames	242
Coplas and Indigenous Revitalization	244
CHAPTER FOUR: Huayra: Urban Indians	247
Las Comparsas de los Indios	259
Ideological Positioning	263
Huayra: An Introduction	265
Promoters of Indigeneity	269
Dress, Repertoire, and Instruments	276
Self-Identifications / Motivations of Huayra	283
Syncretism	284
Pachamama Ceremony with Huayra	285
Sources of Indigeneity	290
Gauchos vs. Indians	292
Inclusion and Exclusion within a Salteño Context	293
Competing Interpretations and the Comparsas	295
Conclusion	296
CHAPTER FIVE: Sumaimana: An Intentional Hybrid	299
Sumaimana: First Impressions	303
Band History and Members	306
Musical Transmission	317
Repertoire and Instruments	322
Performance	332
Dress	334
Song Interpretations	336
“Y en la Distancia”	337
“Pa’l Carnaval”	342
“En la Tierra Calchaquí”	350
Lyrical Analysis and Subject Position	355
Syncretism	359
“Volvimos y Somos Millones”	365
CONCLUSION	369
BIBLIOGRAPHY	384

List of Figures

Appendix A.

Figure 1. Folkloric Dancers in Salta

Figure 2. Author and dance teacher, Andres Ramos, dressed as paisana and gaucho

Figure 3. Severo Baez initiating a Pachamama Ceremony

Figure 4. Copleras and pinkullo player

Figure 5. Banner in Báez home

Figure 6. Severo Báez playing a copla at Pachamama ceremony in Báez home

Figure 7. Severo Báez closing the pozo during the entierro

Figure 8. Severo Báez closing the pozo during the entierro

Figure 9. Offerings to the Pachamama

Figure 10. The pozo, with offerings for the Pachamama

Figure 11. Marchers in Buen vivir protest gathered around the General Roca Monument

Figure 12. Crowd gathered at Buen Vivir march

Figure 13. General Roca monument with protest messages

Figure 14. Message, "Roca Assassin"

Figure 15. People in Buenos Aires writing Messages Calling out Roca for His Perpetration of Genocide

Figure 16. Marchers Gathered Together for Buen Vivir March

Figure 17. Gathering for Buen Vivir March

Figure 18. Waiting Outside the Assembly Hall for the Buen Vivir Act to be Confirmed

Figure 19. The Stage for the Concert in Support of the Buen Vivir March

Figure 20. Bruno Arias and Che Joven sharing the stage in support of the Buen Vivir march

Figure 21. Comparsa Procession

Figure 22. A Brujo from the Comparsa

Figure 23. A Crowd Watches the Comparsa Procession

Figure 24. A Comparsa Gorro Mayor (Headdress)

Figure 25. Comparsa de Los Incas Carry Banner in Homage to Indigenous Peoples

Figure 26. Comparsa Huayra carry banner with Kollas and Dancers of El Baile de los Suris

Figure 27. Javier Lopéz Huayra Cacique

Figure 28. Huayra members dancing at Huayra cultural center, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 29. Huayra members dancing. Picture, used with permission by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 30. Huayra member in "Kolla" dress at ceremony for the Virgin of Urkupiña

Figure 31. Calchaqui initiating Pachamam ceremony at Huayra's cultural center

Figure 32. Huayra members in Huayra's cultural center

Figure 33. Martin Antonetti playing the erque with suri dancers

Figure 34. Suri dancer leader at Tastil

Figure 35. Suri dancers at Tastil

Figure 36. Suri dancers at Tastil

Figure 37. Suri dancers at Tastil

Figure 38. Author with Huayra procession

Figure 39. Huayra Headdress

Figure 40. Comparsa boots

Figure 41. Huayra tumbadores (large drums)

Figure 42. Huayra performing as guests of Sumaimana, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 43. Huayra performing as guests of Sumaimana, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 44. Sumaimana performing in Pachamama Ceremony at El Mercado Arsenal. Picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 45. Martín Antonetti playing the erque. Picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 46. Caporal dancer in Carnival Parade

Figure 47. Sumaimana performing, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 48. Valeria Esquivel and Carlos Contreras performing with Sumaimana, , picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 49. Hernan Bass performing with Sumaimana, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora

Figure 50. Sumaimana performing in pimpim masks

Figure 51. Los Quilmes Ruins

Figure 52. Guarani Community Celebrating the Arete Guazu

Figure 53. Author making a Caja Drum

Figure 54. Frame for Caja Drum

Figure 55. Soaking Skin for Caja Drum

Figure 56. Stretching Skin for Caja Drum

Figure 57. Sewing Caja Drum

Figure 58. Completed caja with zefalo painting

List of Tables

1.1 Table of Indigenous Pre-Conquest Andean Peoples	81
1.2 Table of Indigenous Pre-Conquest Plains Peoples	82
1.3 Table of Indigenous Groups in Argentina per 2010 Census	93
1.4 Table of Indigenous Groups by Region Based on the 2010 Census	94

Introduction

“Real Indians”

February 2015

It is 3:00 in the morning and it is raining. I am dressed as a Kolla (a local Indigenous person) in a colorful black skirt with stripes, sandals, and a white cotton blouse. I have a dark green Andean cloth (an aguayo) slung across my body like a sash, pinned with a brightly-jeweled yellow flower, meant to look like gold. My hair is in two braids that are noticeably shorter than those of my fellow dancers.

I am carrying a bag made of a purple aguayo that contains a bottle of water and a bunch of, now sodden, pieces of colored confetti paper. In my right hand, I hold a multicolored wiphala, (a flag symbolizing Indigenous solidarity). I wave this in a sinuous pattern in front of me, trying not to hit the parade spectators.

The rain is relentless and weighs down my clothes and the flag. I try to avoid meeting the eyes of the spectators since this usually results in some kid, caught up in the carnival fun, blasting me in the face with shaving cream-like foam. Instead, I concentrate on keeping my place in the group and follow the steps, bringing one foot together to the beat of the tumbadores (drums) as we process forward. Yet, I can't help but turn my head one time and see a couple pointing at me. "Hey," the man shouts, jolting me out of my performance, "You are not a real Indian."¹

This ethnographic excerpt is taken from my work in Salta, Argentina, with Huayra, an Indian *comparsa* (Indian parade group). Members of Huayra – along with the other two groups in this study, Los Baguales del Norte, a group of *copla* (Argentine genre dominated by voice and percussion) musicians², and Sumaimana, an ethnofolkloric group, who use their music to foster Indigenous recognition and awareness in Argentina. While each of these groups has their own individual

¹ In this dissertation, I use italics to indicate fieldnotes and, I do not italicize foreign words within these fieldnotes to set them apart. My fieldnotes are taken directly from my observations during my research.

² Coplas are a genre from Northwestern Argentina. I will explain this more in chapter III.

philosophies and approaches, as well as ways of self-identifying, they are all part of a broader trend in Argentina to redefine the country as something other than a homogenous culture of White ancestry.

I begin with this ethnographic anecdote for two key reasons. First, Argentina is not a place commonly thought of in relation to Indigenous scholarship. Yet, the man's comment indicates that, even in Argentina, there is a frame of reference for identifying indigeneity. Though he had not heard my American accent, the man could easily spot me as a non-native based on my looks alone. This wouldn't be surprising had this taken place in Bolivia, Guatemala, Mexico or other parts of Latin America known for their Indigenous and *mestizo* (mixed-race) people.³ However, the fact that this story takes place in Argentina, a country known for being Whiter than the rest of Latin America due to its high European immigrant populations and its lack of Indigenous peoples, *is* remarkable. It shows that despite popular opinion, a person who is White presenting in (particular regions of) Argentina can be just as easily singled out from the masses as they would if they were in Bolivia for example.

The second reason for this experience's significance is that it questions what is, or is not, at stake in calling someone an Indian, or a "real" Indian. I was not threatened by the man's singling me out. His tone was jovial; he was at a parade, eating junk food, and watching a show. He did not truly care if I was an Indian or not. And, of course, he was right, I am not an Indian real or unreal by any stretch of

³ According to the World Bank Group, Guatemala and Bolivia both have 41% Indigenous populations. <http://www.thebubble.com/information-lack-Indigenous-peoples-argentina/>

the imagination. Quite the opposite, I am a White U.S. American ethnomusicologist participating in an Indian performance as part of an ethnographic research project. His comment strikes a nerve as it highlighted what Michelle Bigenho describes as my own “middle class gringa reservations about representing Indigenous peoples on stage” (2012: 2) and thus my own positionality. However, precisely because I have no experience of the term “real Indian” being used to question my cultural authenticity, this phrase held little power over me. This was not necessarily the case for my fellow performers however, and so the man’s comment forced me out of the immediate moment and made me consider the bigger picture, as well as its profound implications.

I began to wonder if I was so clearly “not a real Indian,” then was the inverse automatically true? Were the others “real Indians?” Further, who had the authority to make this judgment, and how should it (if in any way) impact a reading of this and other Indigenous performances in Argentina? None of these questions is simple, and they each merit nuanced and thoughtful responses.

Classifying someone as a “real Indian” (or the opposite) can have incredible power, both for those who make these judgments, as well as those who are their recipients. As Forte reminds us, using the term “real” in this context, “...introduces various categories of unauthorized Indigeneity, or non-recognizable ‘Indians’” (Forte 2013: 6-7). This further implies that the “nearly divine intercession of some higher authority” is needed to resolve the question, and that establishing one as a

“real Indian” also imbues this person with a type of impenetrable purity and cultural authenticity (ibid).

Stepping back from modifiers like real or unreal, questions surface about “who is an Indian” in relation to history, taxonomy, ontology, positionality, science, and, most importantly, power (ibid). These questions may carry even more weight in countries like Argentina (as well as in Uruguay or Trinidad and Tobago)⁴ in which, until recently, people have believed there were no Indigenous groups to speak of. In these countries, the stakes of identification are high, as recognition by the state can sometimes lead to land repatriation and stronger human rights legislation; furthermore, the struggle for Indigenous groups, who have been heavily assimilated or rendered invisible, to be acknowledged is paramount. At the same time, these groups are often faced with skepticism since the historical lack of Indigenous presence makes it easy for cultural outsiders to read their Indigenous expressions as an invented heritage (Hobsbawm 1983) or cultural appropriation.

Thus, after the spectator’s comment, with all these thoughts about what not being a “real Indian” means in an Argentine context, I looked around at my fellow performers. I saw an amalgam of pan-Indian cultures being represented through huge feather headdresses, North-American plains Indian bone-breastplates, devil masks, and Incan symbols, like the *chakana* (Incan cross) and the wiphala. Given the multiple cultures from which these performances drew, I wondered what meaning

⁴ See Verdesio, Gustavo. 2008. “From the Erasure to the Rewriting of Indigenous Pasts: The Troubled Life of Archaeology in Uruguay.” *The Handbook of South American Archaeology*.

the comment, “you are not a real Indian,” would hold for my fellow performers. Was it a question they ever asked themselves, or was I the only one considering the constraints involved in being a “real Indian?”

Pushing Back Against a Misconception

When one searches the internet for information about Argentina, they are most likely to find pictures and articles relating to Lionel Messi, the famous soccer player, *gauchos* (Argentine cowboys) riding on the *pampas* (grasslands), grandiose landscapes, aerial shots of the busy Buenos Aires metropolis and shots of (generally, White presenting) tango dancers in la Boca, a touristy part of the capital city known for its Italian immigrant populations. What one is less likely to come across in this general search are images of Indigenous peoples or cultural symbols related to these populations. This is largely due to a myth that has surrounded Argentina since independence—a myth of Whiteness—that characterizes all Argentines as being of European ancestry and omits many people, particularly those in northern provinces, who identify as mestizo or *criollo*⁵ (of mixed ethnic ancestry), as well as 955,032 people who self-identify as Indigenous or being of Indigenous descent.⁶ Buenos Aires has famously been called the “Paris of Latin America,” and Argentina, along with the Southern Cone in general, is thought of and referred to in scholarly works

⁵ Criollo technically means *peninsulare*, but in Argentina it commonly refers to people of mixed heritage (mestizo). However, it has a connotation of being more -White and less mestizo.

⁶ 2010 national census http://www.iwgia.org/images/stories/sections/regions/latin-america/documents/IW2016/Argentina_IW2016_web_redu.pdf

as the White part of Latin America. Indeed, until recently, people both in and outside of the country have considered Argentina to be lacking in diversity and devoid of Indigenous, Blacks, and other non-Whites (Alberto and Elena 2016: 1-22; Kalczewiak 2017).

This White myth or White imaginary was constructed as part of a nationalist project at the formation of an independent Argentina to position the country as more European and distinct from the rest of Latin America (Shumway 1993; Bletz 2010). It has been further strengthened through subsequent nationalist movements in reaction to huge influxes of immigration, and has been maintained through both historical accounts that ignore the presence of minorities and through the propagation of particular cultural symbols, icons, and genres – most notably the *gaucho* (Argentine cowboy), and the *tanguero* (tango dancer).

My research examines this construction of Whiteness and the resultant historical denial of Indigeneity and Indigenous music in Argentina. In referring to a White imaginary, I wish to highlight not the actual number of phenotypically White versus non-phenotypically White people in the country, but rather the ways that a powerful investment in Whiteness as a cultural identity (Lipsitz 2006) and as part of a settler-colonial logic has shaped the boundaries of national belonging and citizenship in Argentina. Whiteness is a broad subject, and I will discuss it further in this and subsequent chapters. However, for the moment, the point I would like to make is that in Argentina, Whiteness is connected to a European identity. Thus,

throughout my work, when I use the phrase “a White imaginary,” I am referring to a White European identity in Argentina.

Multiculturalism

Over the last thirty years, scholars and activists in Argentina have been challenging the myth of a homogenous nation by remapping African⁷ and Indigenous heritage back into the historical narratives. This has engendered an Indigenous cultural revitalization, and increased cultural visibility, which has been focused particularly on the figure of the Kolla, an Indigenous group that is closely tied to the Incas. Yet, despite these gains, Indigenous recognition is a fairly recent development, and the ways in which people in Argentina choose to align with, deny, push back against, claim, and/or perform indigeneity are multitudinous and complicated.

My work examines the tensions and negotiations that are part of these identity politics and performances of Indigenous groups in Argentina. I begin from the premise that identity is not static, but rather in a constant state of flux. As Stuart Hall explains,

Identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact,...we should think instead of identity as a ‘production,’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation (1989: 68).

⁷ See Savigliano, Marta. 2011. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder: Westview Press.

Given the amorphous nature of identity, markers such as gender, ethnicity, and race can be transgressed, and reformulated through, among other things, musical and dance performance.

Using music as my lens, my aim is to dissect the ways in which performers of indigeneity both contest and re-inscribe this White imaginary and, thus, simultaneously contribute to and detract from the struggle for Indigenous recognition. In particular, I focus on how conceptions of Argentine folk music and dance (and the wielding of these definitions by local practitioners, national folk institutes, schools, and even government officials) have directly impacted which musical styles have become part of a nationally recognized repertoire and which have not. My overall aim is to focus not on statistical data like censuses, but rather on ethnographic accounts that demonstrate why an ostensibly straightforward query, “Are there Indigenous people in Argentina?” must be answered in a multitude of ways.

Returning to my own positionality as a cultural outsider for a moment, I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not invested in, nor do I have any preconceived notions of who is or is not, a “real Indian.” First, as a White U.S. American, it would be inappropriate for me to presume such authority. Further, I strive to avoid determining for others what their cultural practices should look like based on a Western bias. With this in mind, even though my interviewees sometimes used words like inauthentic, I have avoided using descriptors that would classify the participants in any of my case studies as “real” or “unreal” Indians. Instead, I

complicate simple readings of race, ethnicity, and culture, highlighting the various reasons why people in Argentina choose to distance or align themselves with particular ethnic, racial and/or social markers.

Being cognizant of the limitations of being a cultural outsider, I have also been intentional about conducting work primarily in urban spaces where cultural mixing is prevalent so as not to perpetuate the idea that only through interacting with “real” Indigenous peoples, meaning those who have kept themselves separate from the larger mainstream culture,⁸ can we as scholars learn about contemporary Indigenous realities. I have purposefully focused on groups who were actively engaged in reframing narratives about who they were through the “reclaim[ing], recontextualiz[ing], and expan[din]g of ‘traditional’ concepts” (Diamond, Szego and Sparling 2012: 2). This approach fits well with my research as it allows for the mixed heritage and varied experiences of the groups I worked with as well as their wide breadth of cultural expressions.

My decision to work in urban environments and with groups of mixed heritage may be puzzling to some readers. If I wanted to know about Indigenous peoples, why did I not go and live among the Mapuche or the Guarani, two widely recognized groups, the former of whom has gained much fame recently for their struggles against corporations like Monsanto and the ensuing violence of these confrontations? This study would certainly have been a worthy undertaking and

⁸ Charles Hale points out a tendency to divide Indigenous groups based on class differences and to reassert the misconception that “real” Indians are poor, rural, and backward, while middle class ones are “inauthentic.” See Charles Hale “Rethinking Indigenous Politics in the Era of the “Indio Permitido” 2004.

there is no doubt that I, or perhaps another scholar should conduct it in the future. The major reason that I worked primarily with people who self-identified as Kolla, is because the prominence of the Kolla as a cultural symbol was so strong that I wanted to know what it meant for actual Kollas.

I was interested in how Indigenous peoples in Argentina who had *not* been part of strong resistance movements and who perhaps had lost a strong sense of identity were now using music to rearticulate that identity and to carve out space for themselves. I also wanted to examine regional tensions and the space, or lack thereof, that folkloric music performances allowed for Indigenous expression. I knew from my pilot research that tensions were highly pronounced between Buenos Aires province and those of Salta and Jujuy and that Salta was a hub of folkloric culture. In sum, while I was aware of a large Mapuche population in Argentina, the questions I was asking were not as aptly suited to that research context.

In moments when my research overlapped with Mapuche causes, such as during the *Buen Vivir* First Indigenous Woman's March in which I participated in Buenos Aires, I touch on broader fights for Indigenous rights in Argentina. For the most part though, the people that I worked with were engaged in efforts to establish their identity and to redefine a popular understanding of Indigeneity in the country.

There are many different Indigenous groups in Argentina, and each one has a specific history that has shaped its interactions with the dominant colonial society, its sense of identity, and their particular struggle for recognition and/or more

tangible rights such as land repatriation. Argentina is a large country, and I cannot pretend to understand the position of each of its Indigenous groups. While there were moments in my research in which I saw Indigenous groups from across the country join together, in general my work was limited to the northwestern area of Argentina and the urban-based groups in the city of Salta. For this reason, while I value the current struggles of other Indigenous groups, such as the Mapuche, I leave this discussion to experts on these political struggles, as I focus on identity politics in ambiguous racial spaces.

At the same time that the coterminous relationship between music and identity has been highly theorized in ethnomusicology, this approach has also caused consternation. As ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice has pointed out, beginning in the 1980s, many ethnomusicology scholars began writing about the relationship between music and identity, yet failed to connect their work with a larger literature about identity or even clearly define the term (2007: 20).

In my work, I take the approach that identity is not a given, but rather each individual chooses to self-identify in his/her/ their own way, which changes based on context. To reiterate Stuart Hall's definition, identity is always in flux (1989: 68). I am also primarily interested in identity as a social category that joins a group of individuals based on common rules, characteristic features or attributes. In particular, I am interested in the ways that those groups of individuals who do not feel recognized or see themselves reflected in the dominant society, choose to self-identify. In his seminal essay, "The Politics of Recognition," Canadian philosopher

Charles Taylor argues that human beings do not develop their identities in isolation, but rather depend on their “dialogical relations with others (1994: 34). Therefore, our own self identities are shaped not only by the recognition of others, but also by the misrecognition of others.

A person or a group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning one in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being (1994: 25).

Thus, Taylor argues that recognition is a “vital human need” and advocates for state recognition of the Quebecois and Indigenous peoples in Canada, which is essential for Native communities to “preserve their cultural integrity” (1994: 40).

Many scholars have lodged critiques against identity politics. In his study of the self-determination efforts of Indigenous peoples in Canada, political science and First Nation and Indigenous studies scholar, Glen Coulthard critiques the emphasis on recognition that both activists and scholars have placed on this movement. Coulthard contends that “the colonial relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian state” cannot “be significantly transformed via a politics of recognition” (2007: 437). Drawing on the work of Frantz Fanon and Hegel, Coulthard challenges the “assumption that the structure of domination that frames the Indigenous—state relations in Canada can be undermined via a liberal politics of recognition” (ibid). In particular, Coulthard opines that an approach in which “recognition” is conceptualized as something that is “granted” or “accorded” a

subaltern group by a dominant one not only fails to significantly modify, but also to move beyond the power dynamics inherent in colonial relationships (2014: 30-31).

A similar critique of an empty multiculturalism has been expressed by Charles Hale and Rosamel Millamán through the concept of “el Indio permitido” or “the permitted Indian” (2002; 2007). As Hale and Millamán explain, the origin of this phrase lies with Bolivian sociologist Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui who uttered it in frustration to describe the ways that governments were using “cultural rights to divide and domesticate Indigenous movements” (2004: 17). Building off this idea, Hale and Millamán have developed the concept of the “permitted Indian” to warn about the potential menace of an empty multiculturalism that has been implemented for neoliberalist projects; they refer to this as “multicultural neoliberalism” (2004: 18). These scholars further argue that in Latin America, *mestizaje* (racial mixture), a highly assimilationist project, that had the trappings of progressiveness, has been replaced by a “politics of recognition” which, as part of a neoliberal cultural project, simultaneously contributes to a rising Indigenous movement and constricts that movement within certain limiting parameters. The permitted Indian is the “civilized” Indigenous figure who can be incorporated into the state’s diversity project, but yet who does not cause the dominant power holders to fear them based on their demands for structural change (Hale and Millamán 2002).

At the same time that Hale and Millimán interrogate an agenda based solely on the “politics of recognition” neither do they support a dichotomous view that places cultural rights and economic gains on the opposite side of the spectrum.

It would be wrong, however, to let this stark dichotomy between “cultural” and “political-economic” rights stand. The crude Marxist distinction between superstructure and base does injustice to the holistic political visions of Indigenous movements. Cultural resistance forges political unity and builds the trenches from which effective political challenge can later occur (2004: 18).

Thus, while Hale and Millimán urge us to be cautious and to consider the intention and outcome of identity politics-driven movements, they also recognize that cultural battles are vital to political ones.

Similarly, social historian James Clifford warns against taking too strong a stance against identity politics.

However justified our revulsion of exclusivism or separatism, if the criticism hardens into a general position against identity politics as such, or leads to arguments for getting ‘beyond’ such claims, the effect may be disabling. We risk being left with a narrowly foreshortened view of contemporary social movements around culture and identity, missing their complex volatility, ambivalent potential, and historical necessity (2000: 95).

Thus, Clifford argues, since the project of identity is always fraught and unfinished, we must continue to engage with this concept, to interrogate it and to recognize its continued importance in articulating complex, historically specific processes.

Finally, in the introduction to *Native Diasporas: Indigenous Identities and Settler Colonialism in the Americas*, a comprehensive analysis of Indigenous pluralities and identity formation throughout the Caribbean, the Americas, and the

Pacific world, Gregory D. Smithers and the other contributors to this volume argue that “a historical study of Indigenous identity” is not an exercise in “historical exoticism” (2014: 7).

[I]nstead it should constitute an attempt to cut to the very heart of what has made life meaningful for Indigenous peoples in the Caribbean, Americas, and Pacific Islands since the arrival of European colonizers and colonists in the early sixteenth century (ibid).

These scholars further push back against the colonial and postcolonial intellectual trend led by Patrick Wolfe that locates the analysis of colonialism around the “elimination” of Indigenous peoples and land. They argue that this perspective overlooks the agency of Indigenous people, their role in trade, diplomacy, and labor and reinforces the erroneous idea that Indigenous peoples were essentially eliminated from colonial-settler lands by the end of the nineteenth century (2014: 6). Thus, the contributors to this volume urge scholars to conduct an analysis of the social, political, economic, and cultural structures that created both contradictions and trends in the way that Indigenous Americans spoke about themselves in relation to one another and in relation to colonizers” (Smithers 2014: 4). This includes the innovations, adaptations, and inventions that this necessitated and involved in the formation of a post 1492 identity.

Based on these scholars, I make a case for holding questions about identity and cultural recognition at the forefront of my research. While I do provide a history of indigeneity in Argentina that necessarily includes a delineation of the acts of genocide and the attempt to eradicate these populations in the name of “progress”

and to justify settler occupation of Indigenous lands, I also tease out the important moments of Indigenous resistance and cultural agency that are hidden within those tragic events. In this way, I am in concert with the efforts of many Indigenous contemporary scholars to “broaden our historical understanding of how Indigenous peoples responded and adapted to different forms of colonialism” (Smithers 2014: 7). This approach also comes from Argentine scholars, musicians, and activists themselves who have led movements to reframe the narrative of Argentine history through dismantling monuments and other symbols that represent a “justified” colonial and settler-colonial past, remapping Indigenous realities back into moments of “disappearance,” and advocating for further cultural recognition on the national stage. While this is not as radical as direct confrontation for land reclamation, I argue that the work of my participants is vital to shifting a national narrative and popular understanding of Indigenous belonging in Argentina. It is unclear if political action precedes cultural change or vice versa. In any case, there is certainly a relationship between the realm of cultural and political-economic rights. It is this relationship within an ever-changing Argentine Indigenous context which I explore in this dissertation.

Beginning Queries

When I began my project, I was motivated by a set of central questions. First, how has the erasure of Indigenous groups in Argentina occurred, and how has this erasure been maintained? In other words, despite the existence of thirty-five

officially recognized Indigenous groups and statistics in which just under a million people in Argentina self-identify as Indigenous or of Indigenous descent,⁹ how and why has the myth of a homogenous, White European Argentina remained so persistent in both national and international discourses?

Second, given the extent to which Indigenous people have been made invisible, how have they begun to reclaim a lost, or at best, fragmented culture and heritage? Has this been through a process of creating an “invented tradition,” (Hobsbawm 1983) or through borrowing cultures from a range of Indigenous groups? Or, perhaps, as in the case of Victoria Santa Cruz and the Afro-Peruvian movement, have Indigenous people in Argentina made a claim for an ancestral and corporeal memory (Feldman 2006)?

Using these questions as a jumping off point, I explored the role that musicians are playing in this formation of culture and an Indigenous revitalization. How were displaced groups in Argentina using their music and dance practices to confront the mainstream and define their social status? How had the introduction of instruments and genres formerly considered Indigenous into urban and national spaces opened up room for minority expression? How and why had particular genres and instruments become incorporated into a national musical narrative, and how had these inclusions and exclusions been shaped by the discursive boundaries of Argentine national belonging? Finally, was the contemporary popularity of

⁹ <http://www.iwgia.org/regions/latin-america/argentina>

Argentine Indigenous culture serving as a catalyst for broader social and political agency, was it simply empty multiculturalism or was there a dialogical relationship between the cultural and political realms of this movement?

Based on these driving questions, I divided my research into two parts. First, I focused on the erasure of Indigenous groups in Argentina, framing the ways that national icons and cultural practices have denied or barred Indigenous inclusion. In particular, I looked at the cultural emblems of the gaucho, and the ways that this icon had been, and continues to be, represented through dance and song. Second, I worked with Argentine musicians and performers who use music to create a space for indigeneity. More specifically, I focused on the Kolla, both an Indigenous figure and, more broadly, a symbol of indigeneity as a concept. Through examining these figures – two extremes of a cultural spectrum – I have come to understand how performance has shaped and continues to shape an Argentine national identity. I further am now able to see the important role musicians and dancers are playing in expanding the boundaries of this national identity to push back against historical erasures and the myth of a homogeneously White Argentina.

My dissertation engages with a number of critical theories and topics including identity, which I explored somewhat above, music, race, Whiteness, folklorization, nationalism, and tourism. In this introduction, I will provide a brief explanation of each of these concepts, which I will elaborate on further throughout the rest of the chapters in the context in which they are relevant. To begin, I give an overview of music in Argentina.

Argentine Music

Regional and National Genres

Argentina, the eighth largest country in the world, offers great diversity in its geographic and cultural landscapes. The country can be broken into seven distinct regions each with their own characteristics and music and dance styles, which include a variety of traditional, classical, and popular musical genres. These regions are the Falklan Islands (Islas Malvinas), Patagonia, the Pampas, Cuyo, the Littoral, Gran Chaco, and the Northwest. My research took place in the Pampas (specifically, Buenos Aires) and in the Northwest in Salta. Some of the most popular genres come from these regions.

Buenos Aires, located in the pampas, as a cosmopolitan capital city has by far the greatest variety of musical forms. Within this metropolis, one can find venues for opera, symphonic music, jazz, electronic, rock *nacional*, cumbia villera, pop music, and, of course, tango and the milonga. Tango is undoubtedly the most well-known of musical genres outside of the country. Although it is generally portrayed in Hollywood films and other means of popular culture as being a phenotypically White, upper class genre, it is actually rooted in Afro-Argentine traditions (see Farris-Thompson 2006; Savigliano 1995). Tango was associated with its development in brothels and initially looked down upon as lower-class music and dance; however, after its endorsement by Parisian society, upper class Argentines embraced the genre and it was elevated to the status of an iconic national dance (Schwartz-Kates 2013: 296).

While tango is the most internationally known genre of Argentina, it is primarily centralized in Buenos Aires. Outside the nation's capital, the music that has a much stronger national identity for most Argentines is folkloric music. Folkloric music, which Argentines call *folklore* or *musica folklórica* is played on the radio and is performed in festivals year-round. One of the most important festivals is the Cosquín National Festival, which takes place each summer in a town outside Cordoba city in the province of Cordoba. In this festival, which is a huge showcasing of national folkloric musicians as well as a major celebration of Argentine folkloric culture and national pride, people from all across the country gather to perform the folkloric style that is most closely tied to their particular region or province. A few examples include *chacarera*, *zamba*, *chamame*, *el gato*, *el escondido*, and *el carnavalito*. In order to give the reader a foundation for these genres, which I will refer to frequently within this dissertation, I provide a brief overview of a few of the most prominent genres here.

The *chacarera* is an upbeat genre that combines a 6/8 and 3/4 meter. The primary instruments in the *chacarera* are a *guitarra criolla* (nylon-string guitar); a *bombo leguero* (a large double-sided bass drum played with two beaters); and often vocals. Other instruments, particularly violin, may be included, but guitar and bombo are the staple instruments. *Chacarera* is also a lively couples dance. *Chacareras* are popular throughout Argentina, but the true hub of this style was said to be the province of Santiago del Estero, an area in the Northwest known for its

strong early colonial Spanish influence (Schwartz-Kates 2012: 279-291; Soles 2011; Berruti: 2012).

The zamba is a much more sedate genre than the chacarera. This dance and music genre is derived from the Peruvian *zamacueca* (Karush 2017: 149; Berruti 2012: 234-235). The zamba is a passionate couples dance in which partners circle one another, forming an S pattern. Dexterity manipulating one's *pañuelo* (handkerchief) is key to dancing zambas well. Played primarily with voice, bombo, and guitar, the zamba is in 3/4 time. Lyrics are typically sophisticated and highly poetic.

Zambas became part of the repertoire of the folklore boom in the 1950s and 1960s and were integrated into the leftist *Movimiento Nuevo Cancionero* (New Songbook movement) founded in 1963 (Karush 2017:149). Famed singer Mercedes Sosa popularized songs such as "Luna Tucumana" by Atahualpa Yupanqui and "Zamba por Vos" by Uruguyan musician Alfredo Zitarrosa. Argentine musicologist Pablo Vila posits that the zamba's lack of a festive tone was crucial for the somber sophistication and poetry musicians sought to develop during the folklore boom and with the *Movimiento Cancionero* (Vila 1982: 24-27; Karush 2017:149). However, it should be noted that there is a variation of the zamba called *zamba alegre* (joyful zamba), which is very upbeat (Berruti 2012: 246). In fact, in Salta, the *zamba alegre*, which locals call *zamba carpera* (festive zamba) is very popular.

The chamame is a music and dance form that comes from the Littoral region in the Northeast which is bordered by the Parana and Uruguayan rivers. The

chamame resembles the Czech polka but with a combination of 6/8 and 3/4 meter. It is a partner dance, and can be performed at various tempos (Schwartz-Kates 2012: 279-291; Berruti 2012: 11, 15).¹⁰ There are many genres of music in Argentina, and many more styles of folkloric music, but the chacarera, zamba, and chamame are some of the most popular ones.

Scholarly Contributions

Folkloric Music

To date, little scholarship exists on Argentine folkloric music in Anglophone literature. Of note are publications of Oscar Chamosa, Deborah Schwartz-Kates, and Julius Reader Carlson. Each of these authors highlights the ties between the construction of folkloric music in Argentina and that of national, regional, ethnic, and class identity.

Chamosa traces the historical trajectory of folkloric music in Argentina beginning with the early musical documentation by figures like folklorist Juan Alfonzo Carrizo and musicologists Carlos Vega and Isabel Aretz up through the Perón era and the state's initiation of national folk festivals. Chamosa argues that the sugar mill owners and politicians in Tucuman, who saw themselves in opposition to the immigrants of Buenos Aires, were instrumental in shaping the folklore movement as a way of legitimizing their claims to an Argentine culture. They funded

¹⁰ For a complete guide to Argentine folkloric dance and music genres see Pedro, Berruti. 2012. *Manual De Danzas Nativas: Coreografías, Historia Y Texto Poético De Las Danzas*.

researchers like Carrizo and later Aretz to gather evidence that they as criollos, Argentines descended from Spanish *conquistadores* (conquerors), were the cultural bearers of a primordial Argentine way of life. Chamosa asserts that Carrizo's main premise was to demonstrate the survival of Spanish and Christian traditions in his song collections. Chamosa finds that both through selective musical analysis and through declarations that there were no autochthonous types of people in Tucuman; however, Chamosa notes this as unlikely, given contemporaneous reports of individuals with Indigenous physiognomy. Thus, Carrizo and other early folklorists and musicologists helped perpetuate the myth that only Spanish settlers occupied the interior (Chamosa 2010: 99).

Deborah Schwartz-Kates (1997) traces the gaucho symbol in Argentine art music, primarily in the compositions of Alberto Ginastera. Like Chamosa, she makes the argument that the criollo gaucho became the nostalgic symbol of rural life and the primordial source of Argentine culture, which was being endangered by urbanization and a new wave of European immigrants. She also notes a similar problem with Vega's documentation on Argentine folk music in which he aimed to prove *a priori* theory regarding the origin, evolution, and diffusion of music (Schwartz-Kates 1997: 183).

Julius Reader Carlson (2011) delineates three overlapping categories to describe folk musicians of the Santiago del Estero region: traditionalists, revivalists, and new folklorists. The first group, traditionalists, perform a narrow repertoire of what they claim to be unadulterated folk songs, and highlight their connection to

regional identity through the mention of certain, local foods and lifestyle choices in their lyrics. Revivalists incorporate more sophisticated melodic nuances, and their lyrics are not a homage to the peasant life but rather tend to reflect a leftist political slant. Finally, new folklorists incorporate rock sounds with traditional instruments and repertoire (2011: 38-39). Carlson explores the way that folkloric music has been historically constructed, socially propagated, and experienced by the musicians who create and listen to this genre. He argues that the chacarera is not a rural tradition, but rather one that developed in an urban setting as a commemorative of “traditional” Argentine life.

In Spanish-language scholarship the early publications of Carlos Vega (1944) and Isabel Aretz (1946) are highly important. Although both researchers reflect diffusionist theories of the time period in which they worked, their research provides detailed accounts of folkloric performances within rural settings. Vega also documents the existence of *queñas* (vertical cane flutes) in Jujuy as far back as 1944.

More recent discussions of Argentine folkloric music include that of Ercelia Moreno Chá (1987) and Jane Florine (2012). Moreno Chá traces the development of folkloric music and the musical and extra musical changes that occurred under urbanization and nationalism. She notes that beginning in 1929 people began moving from the provinces to Buenos Aires and to the outskirts of the city. In 1945 the government introduced folkloric music, stories, rhymes, and games into school curriculum. Then, in 1945, Perón issued a decree to play an equal number of national genres as international ones on the radio. Thus, folkloric music became

incorporated into a nationalist agenda. Through this process, folkloric music became standardized. Presentational settings replaced the community-oriented participatory mode and musicians began performing in large concert halls rather than small, intimate venues. Professionalism also brought new repertoire and the elevation of the zamba as a symbol of Argentine folkloric music.

Jane Florine's research on the annual Cosquín Folk Festival raises important questions about the way in which folkloric music is defined within a national context. Florine worked closely with the festival organizers and discovered that the "authenticity" of particular genres was still highly debated. In her assessment of the annual Cosquín Folk Festival, Florine notes a difference in opinion between those who limit folk music to an "authentic," pure, music in which only particular instruments like the bombo and acoustic guitar are featured, and those who include popular styles and a fusion of traditional and modern styles, known as *proyeccion folklorico* (2012: 2-3; 2016).¹¹

Notable here is the perpetuation by some of the festival organizers in using criollo instruments to define folk music as authentically Argentine. The ramifications of this interpretation in the Cosquín Folk Festival are tremendous since decisions about who can participate or who should win this competition not only can determine careers with nationalist trajectories but also set the boundaries

¹¹ For more on Cosquín see Florine, Jane L. 2016. *El Duende Musical y Cultural De Cosquín, El Festival Nacional De Folklore Argentino*. Capital Federal, Argentina: Editorial Dunken

for certain types of music as typically Argentine. Thus, it appears that the codification of Argentine folk music as more criollo than Indigenous persists today.

Michelle Bigenho (2012) describes how Bolivian folkloric music became popular in Argentina in the 1970s when a Bolivian folklore ensemble on their way to Lima, Peru, took a detour through Salta, Cordoba, and Buenos Aires. According to Bigenho the musicians were “discovered” in Salta and eventually continued to triumph in the national Folklore Festival of Cosquín (2012: 43). Bigenho further elaborates on two different genres of indigeneity at work in her research on Bolivian music. She argues that while many of the music performances are examples of mestizos representing Indigenous worlds, another form of “Indigenous voice” connected to broad social movements and the inspiration of radical social reform through reference to Indigenous cultural politics (2012: 45).

Folklorization and Tourism

While English language-scholarship on Argentine folkloric music is scarce, the broader questions of my work depend on issues that have been thoroughly analyzed in a variety of works. The subjects of folklorization and tourism, as well as constructs of nationalism, class, race, and ethnicity have long been important subjects of research within the fields of ethnomusicology, musicology, performance studies, and anthropology; and scholars have analyzed the interplay of these concepts extensively.

The dichotomous categorizing of tango versus folkloric music in Argentina reflects broader discourses about art versus folk music and the over simplified way that each term references constructs of modernity versus traditionalism. Mark Slobin provides a short, yet thorough overview about the history of folk music within anthropology, musicology, and ethnomusicology. He notes that outside the Western world “folk,” and folkloric in Latin America, are labels that Europeans (and, later Americans) imposed on the musical communities they studied and documented (2011: 2). Slobin pinpoints musical invention as a hallmark of folk music and concludes that even though the term folk continues to reference the “comfortable sense of a face-to-face community” even the smallest and most remote rural music is linked through global networks to international enterprises and major recording opportunities (ibid).

Ruth Bendix provides one of the most comprehensive historical outlines of folklore in Europe and the United States to date. She demonstrates that scholars and folklorists have deployed the trope of “paradise lost” and the overly facile dichotomy between modernism and traditionalism to justify salvage projects since the dawn of the enlightenment. Bendix also traces the origin of the term folk or *Volk*, as linked by Johann Gottfried Herder, to a whole people in history suffused with myths and folk poetry, which he often referred to as a nation or tribe (Bendix 2009: 41). Bendix further highlights a long-time association between authenticity and nationalism and the reasons that certain folksongs and folktales became vehicles to argue the case for political independence. Bendix’ work exposes the highly

subjective interpretation of the terms authenticity and folk and the ways that these terms are manipulated in the context of larger political and social agendas.

Heidi Feldman and Zoila Mendoza offer separate case studies that closely scrutinize how folklorization is formed within broader discourses of race, ethnicity, and nationalism in Peru. Feldman traces the path of Afro-Peruvian music throughout history and shows how the genre has been reinvented and shaped within a national and transnational Peruvian context.¹² She posits that through a process of cultural memory similar to an “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm 1983) the leaders of the Afro-Peruvian revival of the 1950s and 1960s drew on a variety of sources from within and outside the country to create an Afro-Peruvian identity and “authentic folklore” that was linked to the past and to a transnational African diaspora. Feldman notes that the meaning of “folklore” shifts and can indicate both a paternalistic decontextualization of culture or an “authentic” expression depending on how the word is used and by whom (2006: 129). Her research (along with that of Peter Wade) further demonstrates how minority groups have used music and dance to establish themselves socially as well as artistically.

Mendoza concludes that folklorization in the highland dances, called *comparsas*, of Jeronimo, Peru, has had contradictory consequences. On the one hand, she writes, national and regional elites can reinforce the ideology of *indigenismo* and stereotypes about subjugated groups as symbols of culture but not

¹² Studies of folk or folkloric music have long been important for ethnomusicology and many scholars have written about the subject. See Hellier-Tinoco, Ruth (2011), Nettl, Bruno (1973), Rios, Fernando (2008), Buchanan, Donna (2006), and Canclini, Néstor García (1995).

as political forces with which they must contend. However, Mendoza stresses, performers use dances as a space to negotiate their racial/ethnic identities and their participation reflects their social status outside of the performance (2000: 234).

Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2012) make a similar argument about agency within a touristic setting. Tourism is intricately tied to processes of folklorization since performers are frequently restricted to particular representations of themselves and their culture in this context. Bruner and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett posit that tourism is a type of improvisational theater, and when “natives” step out of their roles of exotica it is bad for business (2005: 17-18). However, they continue, this does not indicate that performers lack agency, rather both tourists and locals engage in a co-production in an ever-changing, evolving borderzone of engagement (2005: 17-18).

Mendoza's book also offers important insights concerning the shifting definitions of race and ethnicity in Latin America. Although race was an important referent during the colonial era to determine the categories of White, Indian, mestizo and *cholo*, today these classifications are based less on phenotype than on categories like clothing, occupation, and musical tastes (2000: 12). The value ascribed to a particular ethnic or racial label can also change in relation to social and economic trends. Thus, race and class are not static but mutable and fluid constructs.

Nationalism and Ethnicity in Argentine Identity

Eric Hobsbawm analyzes the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism. Defining ethnicity as a cultural rather than biological category, he notes that large-nation states are almost invariably too heterogeneous to declare a single ethnicity. However, he continues, people often highlight visible physical features in an attempt to differentiate between “us” and them.” Thus, ethnicity is often framed in reference to national identity. Hobsbawm also argues that ethnicity can be a force to unite populations living on large territories or even in widely dispersed, into what he terms, proto-nations, or groups with shared sentiments that lend themselves ideally to being converted into a nation” or solid group. However, he concludes, ethnicity has no historical relation to the formation of the nation-state (Hobsbawm 1992: 64).

Peter Wade has also been quite influential in his discussions of race and ethnicity. He argues that race refers to phenotype and ethnicity, (which, in turn, specifically refers to culture) and both are social constructions highly shaped by colonialism and linked into a European history of thinking about difference (1997: 12-14). Furthermore, particular discourses of race and ethnicity must be understood within their specific historical and social context. Thus, while in the U.S. a drop of ‘Black blood’ will classify a person as Black, in Latin America there is a broad spectrum of racial categories, and people with mixed ancestry will be identified through multiple names denoting a position between Black and White (Wade 1997: 12). However, Wade clarifies, this does not mean that racism in Latin America is more superficial than it is in the U.S. Wade posits that phenotype

features, so often referred to as evidence of biological difference, also reflect early European colonial beliefs since certain features were worked into signifiers of difference at that time. Finally, in his analysis of Afro-Colombian *música tropical*, Wade demonstrates how processes of racial identification are intricately tied to nationalism and national identity.

The interplay of race, class, ethnicity and nationalism has been well researched throughout Latin America. Turino notes that during the early to mid twentieth century, culturally-based conceptions of the nation became prominent in Latin America, and efforts to link formerly disenfranchised groups got under way (2003: 169). Similarly, Peter Wade posits that redefinitions of nationhood have encouraged local and international mobilizations for the promotion of ethnic and racial identities and rights, which in Colombia finally led to official recognition of the multiethnic nature of the country (2000: 1). However, the racial and ethnic makeup of Argentina is slightly different than the rest of Latin America and must be understood within this country's historical and social context, particularly in relation to national and regional identity.

Argentina (and Uruguay) has a much lower percentage of Indigenous or African descendants than most of Latin America. In the 1500s Spanish colonizers killed the majority of Indigenous people; others were either massacred or forced onto reservations during government expansion in 1879. Similarly, the majority of the once large Afro-Argentine population was either conscripted into war or died of yellow fever. These events combined with a huge influx of primarily Northern

Europeans immigrants from 1870-1930 have led to the contemporary misconception that there are *not any* minority groups in Argentina, only descendants of Anglo-Europeans (Eduardo and Elena 2017).

It is easy to see how the White national imaginary has been perpetuated in Argentina. However, the presence of groups like Afro-Argentine groups including *Grupo Cultural Afro* (Afro Cultural Group), *SOS Racismo* (SOS Racism), and *Africa Vive* (Africa Lives) is growing in Buenos Aires.¹³ The Argentine government's revision of the National Constitution in 1994 to incorporate the rights of Indigenous Peoples and in a law passed in 1985 on Indigenous Policy and Aboriginal Community Support provides further evidence of public recognition of Indigenous groups.¹⁴

It is also crucial to remember that statistics both in the past and present are inconclusive since in order to mitigate discrimination, people who can blend into upper class, White society, often do so by passing¹⁵ or marking themselves as White on censuses. George Reid Andrews notes that Blacks "disappeared" through processes of miscegenation and highlights a conspicuous lack of censuses taken from 1838 to 1887 by which time the Afro-Argentine population had dropped dramatically from one quarter of the population to less than 2 percent (1980: 4). Similar arguments have been made about the "disappearance" of Blacks in

¹³ According to Africa Vive (Africa Lives), and the 2010 census, there are about 1,000,000 African descendants in Argentina. <http://ahorasecreto.blogspot.com/2012/04/argentinas-Black-population.html>

¹⁴ <http://en.mercopress.com/2012/09/19/un-calls-on-argentina-to-stop-eviction-of-Indigenous-peoples-from-their-lands>

¹⁵ Deborah Wong notes that passing and impersonation are performatives of privilege and longing. See Wong, Deborah (2000: 88).

Colombia, (Wade 2000) Peru, (Feldman 2006) Mexico, (González 2004) and Ecuador (Ritter 2011).

Nationalism was also bound up in issues of race and ethnicity since the criollo, the descendant of the Spanish colonizer, was promoted by the state as the true bearer of Argentine culture while Indigenous and African people were completely overlooked. Deborah Schwartz-Kates traces the emergence of nationalism back to the 1800s when the country became polarized between the liberal upper class in Buenos Aires and the provincial criollos of the interior. The criollo gaucho became the nostalgic symbol of rural life and the primordial source of Argentine culture for Northern Argentines who feared that their way of life was being endangered by urbanization and a new wave of European immigrants.

This tension between the Rio de La Plata region and the interior has been reflected in academic scholarship, which as James Brennan notes, has focused heavily on Buenos Aires to the exclusion of the provinces. Only in the past twenty years due to the efforts of historians like Brennan and David Rock have scholars re-oriented their focus to consider the provinces in political and economic discussions (Brennan and Pianetto 2000).

This division is mapped onto Argentine music as well, and while tango has become popular around the world and significant scholarship has been dedicated to this topic, the many other regional traditions of Argentina have been largely ignored. Thus, I propose, echoing Brennan's proposal for history scholars, that a reframing of musical scholarship in Argentina needs to be undertaken to explore

genres in Argentina that have not gained international acclaim and do not reflect a Buenos Aires-centric perspective.

Music in Argentina has also been framed as White, and in different ways both tango and folkloric music have been promoted as national symbols of a White Argentine identity. Following similar trends in Cuba, Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Mexico, the middle classes appropriated tango from the lower-class barrios, “cleaned up” (Whitened), modernized, and converted the genre into a national symbol (Wade 2000: 8-9). As mentioned above, folkloric music was also framed within a national agenda, but one in opposition to Buenos Aires, as a criollo art form that highlighted the Spanish elements and ignored any autochthonous ones. Under Peronism folklore and the symbol of the criollo as the true source of Argentine culture became even more entrenched in the nationalist agenda. The president appropriated the gaucho symbol to gain favor from the internal migrants among whom he positioned himself in opposition to the oligarchy (Schwartz-Kates 1997: 135).

In another demonstration of how ethnic and racial constructions are bound up in nationalist sentiments, the Perón era further marks the emergence of the term “*las cabecitas negras*” (the little Black heads), a pejorative label for darker skinned people from the interior who migrated to Buenos Aires in search of work. Pablo Vila and Malvina trace current negative connotations associated with the label “*negro*” (Black) as well as its ambiguous usage to this time period when White elites in Buenos Aires demonized the incoming masses from the country’s provinces as morally suspect (2012: 99). Today, Vila and Malvina note, the term “*negro*” in

Argentina is used to label people on a broad racial and ethnic continuum, from individuals who are phenotypically mestizos to people of Native American and African ancestry (ibid).

Although folkloric music never gained the international popularity of tango, the fact that in the latter genre the influence of Afro-Argentines was omitted while in the former Argentine nationalists emphasized Spanish influence to the exclusion of any other race or ethnicity is significant. Thus, it is important to examine how people in Argentina who wish to challenge the White only narrative use music to articulate alternate Argentine identities.

Music and Identity

Music is constitutive of social identity rather than merely reflective (Wade 2000: 24) and through performance, musicians, dancers and listeners can embody, challenge or transform the construction of class and race in which they fit (Mendoza 2000: 4). As ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong writes, “theorizing race through performance might even be regarded as a tautology—a full circle reflexive look at that-which-is-made-through performance (2000: 88).

Music is an essential element of the human experience, and is often present in rituals or ceremonies, including rites of passages, weddings, funerals, and in some cases, births. Music helps mark important moments in our lives. Often, these events are accompanied by powerful emotions and intense memories, and music, again, serves to evoke these feelings and thoughts, both in the moment and in

remembrance. Indeed, many of us have experienced the nostalgia that waves over us as we listen to a particular song and are all but transported back to the time in which we first heard it. Stokes reminds us,

The musical event, from collective dances to the act of putting a cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power, and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. (1994: 3)

Part of the social significance of music comes from the fact that it is integrally embedded in our cultural interactions and helps determine the ways in which we see others and ourselves, or the “means by which people recognize identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them” (Stokes 1994:5). Music then allows for a type of articulation of the self or community that is highly sensuous and not only reliant on a cognitive interpretation.

The role that music plays in shaping and forming identity has been thoroughly explored by ethnomusicologists in a variety of contexts. A large body of scholarship on music and identity has focused on the ways that immigrant groups or minorities in urban settings put great value on traditional musics, not only as a creative expression, but more importantly, as a way of maintaining group identity and fostering strong cultural values. Thomas Turino analyzes this relationship between music and Andean migrants in Peru (1993) and also in Zimbabwe (2003: 51-79). Heidi Feldman sees a similar phenomenon in Peruvian-immigrant communities in Los Angeles (2007), and Aaron Eckstaedt analyzes how Klezmer

music, originally unpolitical and cheerful, in the face of a multicultural post-war Germany, became a symbol of Jewish identity (2010: 37-47).

In addition to being determined through shared musical experience, identity can also be marked through the performing of particular instruments. In her study of musical traditions in English society, H el ene La Rue highlights the ways that instruments convey certain elements of our identities as, for example, the Irish harp can denote national identity, while trumpets have been historically associated with high status groups. She also elucidates that status is earned, not only through which instrument a person plays, but also the amount of time spent in learning (2010: 190-191).

Since music is such a strong marker in which identity is not only reflected, but also constituted, performance (including music and dance) can be powerful vehicles for minorities and displaced people to confront the power of the mainstream and define their social status. Mark Slobin has demonstrated that music "illuminates patterns of inter-ethnic contact" in that it may "be one of those features of social interrelationship that reflect underlying patterns of ethnic boundary maintenance" (1976: 1). Similarly, in his study on radio music in the formation of an Afghan national identity, John Baily writes that "music is itself a potent symbol of identity" (1994: 48). He highlights the ways that musical expression, like language, can most readily be a vehicle for asserting one's ethnic identity when the need arises. Zoila Mendoza posits that "through performance, ethnic/racial markers can be appropriated and redefined" (2000: 236).

The relationship between identity and music is crucial to my work. Historians Paulina L. Alberto and Eduardo Elena argue that in Argentina, “the idea that race is irrelevant or even foreign has made it challenging for victims of racism who claim ethnic or racial difference to have their concerns heard, respected, and addressed” (2017: 3). For this reason, music has been a somewhat non-threatening access point. Thus, I argue that through studying the critical, yet often-paradoxical, role of musicians in Argentina’s recent Indigenous movement, we trace paths of resistance in which racial outliers have begun to remap themselves onto a White imaginary from which they have been excluded.

Nationalism and Performance

One of the most prevalent ways in which music is linked to identity is through nationalism. In her study of Mexican tourism, nationalism, and performance, Ruth-Hellier Tinoco analyzes two particular dances, and shows how they were used to, “perform, image, construct, and imagine Mexico and Mexicanness” (2011: 4). In my research, I take a similar approach by examining how Argentines perform Argentine-ness or *Argentinidad*, and how the Indigenous or people in solidarity with them, perform indigeneity. Like Hellier-Tinoco, I acknowledge that performance of a national identity is about multiple things:

a sense of national belonging, a notion of authenticity, an expectation of difference, a collective identity, a real soul, a tourist destination, an amalgam of past and present, a crossing of borders...an imagined community, a question of hybridity, a folkloric culture, a trace of pre-Conquest civilizations, a confidence in diversity, an idea of otherness, an Indigenous presence, a desire for tradition, a history of superimposition... (2011: 3).

Culturally, Argentine Whiteness has been propagated through two archetypes: the tango dancer, an internationally exported icon indelibly linked to a cosmopolitan Buenos Aires, and the gaucho, who is not only the Argentine cowboy but also the protagonist of folkloric music and dance indexical of the rural provinces. The tango dancer and gaucho have vied historically as the legitimate White standard bearers of Argentine culture. The former highlights Buenos Aires' White immigrant population of a primarily Mediterranean descent, while the latter although certainly mestizo, has been recast by nationalists and folklorists as White, highlighting a Spanish heritage and excluding a native one (Chamosa 2010: 99; Schwartz-Kates 1997: 183).

While the tango dancer is an important cultural icon in Buenos Aires, because the gaucho is much more popular throughout the rest of the country, I focus on how the reiteration of one type of performance (Argentine folklore) has constricted the expression of another (Indigenous music). I argue that folkloric performances nostalgically reinvent and reconstitute a time period in which Argentina constructed itself as a European nation distinct from Latin America. Although gauchos were denounced as mixed-breeds and products of a Spanish and native union, they have

been “cleaned up” and redeemed as icons through time.¹⁶ As Michael Pisani observes, “Music, like social and even political discourse, establishes, reinforces, and redefines the cultural margins of even “imagined communities” (2006: 188). Thus, the championing of the tango dancer and of the gaucho continues to profoundly shape and determine boundaries for a White European-only Argentine identity.

Terminology

In my research, I use complicated categories of identification or, “murky intellectual terms” (Chapman, McDonald and Tonkin 1989: 11), including identity, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, and Whiteness. Scholars have long recognized that race is a social construction and not a biologically determined category. This has moved us away from the ideas of scientific racism and eugenics in which one race was thought to be biologically superior to the next. However, even as they tend to agree that race is a construction, scholars simultaneously treat it as a concrete determinant of identity used to describe and define certain peoples. I, similarly, find myself in this bind of needing to define my project through the use of somewhat undefinable terms.

Given these complexities, using words like race and ethnicity, Indigenous, and White is complicated. However, since my research deals explicitly with these concepts, it is necessary for me to interact with them in my writing. I fully take into

¹⁶ For processes of Whiteness in music see Wade (2000); Pacini Hernández (1995); Austerlitz (1995) Moore (1997); Dâz Ayala (1981); Savigliano (1995).

account the ways that scholars have used these terms. However, as an ethnomusicologist, I take an ethnographic approach and strive to honor the ways that every individual in my case studies and interviews self-identified by deferring to the words that he/she used. Thus, my use of the terms Indigenous, White, criollo, and other identity markers directly reflect the ways and contexts in which I heard them spoken in my fieldwork.

Within Argentina, I frequently heard the same terms being used differently by different people. For example, in most scholarship about Latin America, the term criollo, although first used to identify Black slaves in Colombia,¹⁷ now refers to first-native-born Spaniards or their descendants. In Argentine scholarship, the term criollo delineates between the first Europeans and the later ones from Italy, Poland, Germany, Russia, and France, who arrived during the three major periods of immigration in Argentina. Additionally, I found this term in everyday speech has different connotations depending on where I was and with whom I was speaking.

Within Buenos Aires, criollo was used to describe people and culture from “*el interior*” or the country (anything outside Buenos Aires). Thus, the term seemed to be as much a marker of class and regionalism as it was of ancestry. This could be pejorative or complementary depending on the circumstances. For example, I once heard a taxi driver speak about the “uncultured criollos” of the interior/country. However, since criollo was also used synonymously with the concept of regional or

¹⁷ See De La Cadena, Marisol. "Silent Racism and Intellectual Superiority in Peru." *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 17, no. 2 (1998):

local, many tourist restaurants boasted “authentic criollo meals” or criollo jewelry. In this manner, the word criollo when related to a person could have either a positive or negative connotation; however, generally, when related to culture, it was positive.

In Salta, criollo had multiple meanings. Similar to what I found in Buenos Aires, criollo in Salta was equated with regional, local, and authentic, and criollo restaurants and souvenir boutiques lined the streets of downtown Salta, a very touristy area. However, differing from Buenos Aires, in Salta, criollo also described a mestizo or mixed-race person, but one in which specifically a European/White influence was underscored. In many cases, when people spoke about being criollo in Salta, they were also differentiating themselves from a mixed-race but lower class, and sometimes phenotypically darker, group of people. Thus, in this circumstance, criollo also communicated being White or more European, as well as being a marker of class or higher status.

Further, the use of these terms shifted depending on context. For example, to most Argentines, from Buenos Aires and Salta alike, I was a “yankee.” This term marked me as a U.S. American, and could be used pejoratively or affectionately. To most Argentines, I was not a criollo because criollo indicated a specific Argentine identity. However, when I visited *Guaraní* Indigenous communities, the people I met there called me a criolla, because with my pale skin, I was White, or simply looked like a non-Indigenous Argentine to them. This difference in terminology shows the

highly-constructed and subjective nature of labels as identity markers, as well as the influence of region on these definitions.

Another term that shifted dramatically with location and context was gaucho. Gauchos are essentially Argentine cowboys. In Buenos Aires, the gaucho is largely a mythical figure, and a remnant of the now extinct or civilized knife-wielding gauchos of the pampas. The gaucho is a trope often deployed in tourist shows and stamped on coasters, rather than a flesh and blood human being. One might encounter people who speak with pride of the Argentine *gaucho*, but have little personal connection to this figure within a non-folkloric context. Within this city, I rarely saw people dressed as a gaucho in the typical harem-like pants, buttoned up shirt, poncho, and wide-brimmed hat, other than those who were performing on a stage, and thus acting out a historical role or character.

In contrast, in Salta, a gaucho is a living, breathing figure, as well as a powerful local trope. The term gaucho was used almost synonymously with Salteño or Argentine. It was a regional and national descriptor as well as a symbol of great pride. In Salta, it was an everyday occurrence to see men and women dressed in *gaucho* outfits (for women, the pants would be replaced with long skirts), which they did not see as costumes, but rather as markers of regional pride. I will explore further throughout this dissertation, understanding these types of regional differences is crucial to comprehending the boundaries of national belonging and citizenship in Argentina.

I later discovered that some people in Salta claimed gaucho status because they knew how to work the land. Others were elite landowners or urbanites who did not perform these types of physical labors. Indeed, some did not even own horses (although the gaucho is indelibly connected to his horse both literally and metaphorically), and rented horses to take part in gaucho parades.

Kolla is another important and complex term in this research. Much like the word *indio*, (Indian) Kolla could be used to insult someone or to honor them, again, wholly dependent on the intention of the speaker. The word Kolla itself has a long history in Argentina and, prior to the past twenty-five to thirty years, was used as a way to demoralize others. In fact, it was often combined with the word *sucio* (dirty) as in a dirty Kolla. Argentine anthropologists Paula Lanusse and Axel Lazzari explain that, historically, the term Kolla was also used interchangeably with that of Boliviano, or Bolivian, and was deployed to place someone outside of the national boundaries of Argentine belonging. Thus, calling someone Kolla placed multiple monikers on them of being an Indian, a Bolivian, and an outsider (2005: 238-240).¹⁸ Even as of recent, this association has not completely dissipated; when I asked a friend's boyfriend, a phenotypically White and upper-class man in Salta, what the word Kolla meant, he unhesitatingly told me that Kollas were Bolivians.

As I will explore further in chapters two and three, the socio-political status of Kolla people has shifted dramatically over the last twenty to thirty years,

¹⁸ See also Colombres, Adolfo, and Veronica Ardanaz. 2013. *Aportes Andinos a Nuestra Diversidad Cultural: Bolivianos y Peruanos En Argentina*. Buenos Aires: Secretaría de Cultura, Presidencia de la Nación.

particularly after the 1990 Argentine Constitutional reform that officially recognized Indigenous people for the first time in the country. As a result, the word Kolla has taken on new meaning, and, in many contexts, is even a catchall term for indigeneity in a positive light. This has led to early Indigenous protests like El Malon de la Paz, which I will discuss in chapter two, being rebranded as the Kolla march.

There are further important distinctions that Argentine sociologist Raúl Javier Yudi points to regarding spelling differences. He explains that in literary and historical works, as well as dictionaries and other official documentation, the common spelling is *coya* or *colla*. However, in new movements to revitalize this group as representatives of an Indigenous movement, the spelling with the letter *k* has been implemented. Yudi, uses the former spelling, *coya* or *colla* when he is referring to the use of this word in a pejorative sense connected to a history of prejudice and discrimination. He then uses the term Kolla with a capital *K* when referring to the moniker in a positive light and as a self-determined label by Kolla people themselves (2015: 11). In my work, I choose to adopt the spelling that carries a more positive connotation, so with the exception of translated works that use the letter *c*, I use the spelling Kolla.

Another term that is necessary to discuss is *pueblos originarios* (first peoples). In Argentina, whenever people would talk about Indigenous issues or rights, they would use the term *pueblos originarios* or sometimes simply *los pueblos* in order to refer to Indigenous peoples in a positive light. I rarely heard people say *indígena* (Indigenous) or *aborigen* (aboriginal). Occasionally, I heard the term

indio/s (Indian/s); however, this could be both pejorative and complementary, depending on the speaker. Other words, like *native* or *criollo*, did not generally fit as in Argentina *criollo* and folkloric culture is referred to this way. As a result, *chacareras* and *zambas*, typical of a folkloric repertoire, were labeled as *danzas nativas*, meaning *native/criollo/mestizo*, and not *native* as in the English usage of *Native American*. To be respectful, I always used the words *pueblos originarios* when discussing Indigenous-related issues.

In this dissertation, I have pondered how best to engage with the term *pueblos originarios*. One argument is to directly translate it into, “first peoples or first nations.” This translation actually underscores an important through line in this work, which is the many ways in which the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Argentina depart from those of other Indigenous groups in Latin America, and more closely parallel those of Native Americans in the U.S. Indeed, Argentine political thinkers in a post-independence war era looked directly to the U.S. for models on how to solve “the Indian problem.” However, I also do not wish to conflate North American Indigenous movements with South American ones. In the end, I have used the terms *Indigenous* and *indigeneity* in my own writing and have kept the word *pueblos originarios* in my translations.

Methodology and Introduction to Case Studies

One of the central tenants of ethnomusicology is participant observation (Stone, 2008: 12-13), a process by which the ethnographer simultaneously participates in and observes a particular event. The level to which a researcher becomes involved with his/her research participants varies greatly depending on the ethnographic context, the intended outcome, and the degree to which he/she gets along with the participants. In my case, I had very distinct relationships and levels of involvement in each fieldsite and with each of my case study participants.

I designed my ethnography to be multi-sited and planned to spend time in both Buenos Aires and in the Northwestern region of Salta to compare the musical representations and discussions around indigeneity that I found in both locales. In the end, Salta ended up being the main field site as I worked closely with three case studies there. After my initial field period in Buenos Aires ended, I continued to conduct work in this capital city, although on a less frequent basis. My work attempts to demonstrate feedback loops between these two locales, in particular through highlighting the overlap between musicians in Buenos Aires and those in Salta, and the ubiquity of certain songs that have now become symbols of Indigenous identity and in some cases, solidarity throughout the country.

In both Buenos Aires and Salta, I conducted interviews with music organizers, spectators, and practitioners. I attended national festivals, most notably, Cosquin, an internationally known folkloric festival of high prestige. I also observed

many other Indigenous and folkloric events and even took part in an Indigenous protest and an Indigenous conference held in Buenos Aires.

In Salta, I took classes in folkloric dance, singing, and guitar, participated in *peñas* (folkloric venues), and attended *certámenes* (folkloric competitions). To learn about non-folkloric cultural practices, I sought out the tutelage of a copla teacher, and participated in *copla* performances, ceremonies, and celebrations. My teacher, Severo Báez, and his group, Los Bagualeros del Norte, (the baguala players from the north) ended up becoming my first case study in Salta.

Los Bagualeros del Norte

In broad terms, Los Bagualeros del Norte had the strongest markers of indigeneity out of all the case studies. They come from rural backgrounds outside Salta city and wear traditional dress in their performances. Their practices are highly syncretic, combining primarily Andean Indigenous rituals, like *Pachamama* (mother Earth) ceremonies with Catholic ones. Their music, coplas, are typically performed in participatory, communal contexts. Yet, as a professional group, Los Bagualeros del Norte also performed in presentational settings, such as festivals and theatrical performances. Finally, their music is passed down through oral tradition.

Despite these characteristics, Los Bagualeros del Norte did not refer to themselves as Indigenous. When I asked my teacher, Severo Báez, what culture he and his group were defending, he mentioned the two regions from which he and his wife were from: the *vallistas*, (meaning from the valleys) and the *punenos*, (meaning

from the *puna*, an area of Jujuy the neighboring province). Beyond this, Baez identified as an Argentine first and a gaucho second.

My second and third case studies emerged about four months into my time in Salta when I attended a conference marking the *Día del Indio* or Day of the Indian, which takes place every April 19th.¹⁹ At this conference, I met the *Comparsa Huayra Kalpa*, an Indian parade group, that mainly performed during Carnival but also in schools and tourist venues. I eventually joined *Huayra* and performed with them for two consecutive years in the annual carnival parade competition known as *Los Corsos Carnestolendos*.

Huayra

Out of my three main case studies, *Huayra* provided the widest variety of contexts in which to examine the ways that Argentines distance or align themselves with Indigenous identities. This is because the group consisted of a wide range of ages, educational levels and backgrounds. *Comparsa* members generally come from the *villas* (slums) of Salta capital, and represent the less affluent and less White sector of society. They call themselves *indios urbanos*, or urban Indians, by which they mean that they are internal Others who have been assimilated into urban life and who have maintained their Indigenous traditions yet kept them hidden from public view. Although *comparsas* were not initially formed with the intention of

¹⁹ For a brief description of this day see <http://www.salta.gov.ar/prensa/noticias/hoy-se-conmemorara-el-dia-del-indio-americano/51863>

creating Indigenous recognition, Huayra members utilize their performances as a platform for this cause. This positions them within a hemispheric broader discourse in Latin America that reframes Indigenous struggles not as histories of domination but rather as 500 years of resistance (See Radcliffe and Westwood 1996; Forbes; Hernandez-Avila; Montejo; Smith; Hale; Delgado). Simultaneously, however, Huayra participants' efforts to present a more realistic Argentine Indigenous figure has made them outsiders within the comparsa practice in Salta. What I examine then are the negotiations that Huayra members make to place themselves within a long Salta tradition of "playing Indians" while simultaneously pushing back against a narrative in which Indians are only celebrated if they are savages or are descendants of a great ancient empire.

Sumaimana

My third case study, Sumaimana, is an ethno-folkloric rock group that I also met at the conference celebrating the Day of the Indian. Although I never performed with this group, I became close with the members and attended many of their concerts and practices. I also helped them to translate some of their materials into English, including a short documentary about the band.

Of all the groups I worked with, Sumaimana had the strongest narrative and the clearest intention about what they were doing. Every decision about the band's representation was meticulously planned out, from the careful construction of their songs and selection of instruments, to the dialogues they had with audiences in

performances, the artwork on their CD liner notes, and the venues in which they chose to play. As such, Sumaimana simultaneously had the most prescriptive interpretation of Indigeneity and the broadest one. For example, they saw gauchos and Argentine folkloric music as antithetical with Indigenous music. However, they also included genres into their repertoire that were decidedly not Indigenous and Argentine, like Afro-Bolivian *caporales* since they recognized that indigeneity cannot be constrained by borders. The two founding members of Sumaimana both claim Indigenous heritage, while the other three see themselves as defenders of an Indigenous reality; this positioning informed the group's musical decisions.

My main reason for working with these three case studies is that each group, in its own way, is actively engaged in trying to foster Indigenous recognition through music. Although the three groups all come from Salta and have similar goals, the individual way each group chooses to articulate and defend indigeneity varies greatly. This is apparent in their musical choices, as well as the language and dress they use to identify themselves and others. Each group also represents a unique socio-economic sector of Salta society, which influences their group subject positions, and the authority with which they align themselves either closer to or further from a shared Indigenous heritage.

I also chose specifically to conduct my research in urban settings. This is because I wanted to see how indigeneity was performed and, thus, discussed in a popular context. I also wanted to look at fusion or hybrid musical forms, as opposed to supposedly "pure" Indigenous, rural ones. Finally, since what I specifically wanted

to examine were the ways by which people were reconstructing an Indigenous identity in a space where indigeneity was significantly erased, urban fusion hybrid music provided the best context.

Placing My Work in a Broader Context

Ethnographic work is about the details or the “thick description” (Geertz 1973: 3-32). For this reason, my ethnography is a long-term sustained project with a specific set of individuals or groups. Certainly, indigeneity is performed and articulated differently in other regions of Argentina. In my fieldwork, I met people who identified across a wide spectrum of Whiteness and indigeneity, and whose participation in cultural practices defied any dichotomous thinking about Indigenous/Western, coastal/highland, pre-capitalist/capitalist, pagan/Christian, or traditional/modern tendencies.

At the same time, my research did not occur in a vacuum. Rather, the actions and thoughts of the people with whom I worked were highly influenced by broader identity politics within Argentina, Latin America, and to a certain extent, the entire world. Alberto argues that the strength of the Whiteness project in Argentina has made it difficult for Indigenous and other minority groups to come forward and have their voices heard (Alberto and Elena 2016: 4). I make a parallel argument that the success of Argentine folklore, and the particular ways that folklore has been defined and codified, has limited Indigenous and other minority groups in sharing their music and gaining attention on an international stage. However, this has begun

to shift slightly as Argentina has embraced a multi-ethnic or multi-plural society. Over the last twenty-years, many contemporary Argentine scholars and activists have begun combatting the notion of a White homogenous Argentina, or the construction of a White imaginary. They have called for the retelling of historical narratives to include those who were left out. They have also brought about efforts to dismantle and deconstruct both literally and figuratively some of the country's greatest heroes.

It is here that my story begins, in a moment of Argentine history in which it has suddenly become viable and popular to reclaim a lost Indigenous heritage. This reclamation is first being done as a push for human rights carried over three decades after the "Dirty War," and a multicultural political agenda carried out by the then current Kirchner administration. On an international scale, world organizations like the United Nations have refocused efforts to solve problems Indigenous people face in the areas of the environment, human rights, education, and health. This began with the First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004), which was followed by the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014).²⁰

Reclamation has also come with the recent rise of Evo Morales, the first Latin American Indigenous president in neighboring Bolivia (Radcliffe 2009: 29). Morales has had a huge impact on public opinion about Indigeneity in Argentina, since as the

²⁰ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/InternationalDecade.aspx>

first Indigenous president, he has shown that being Indigenous is not a barrier, but rather a strength. In my research, I spoke to many people, for example, members of Huayra, who talked about feeling shameful of their Indigenous roots growing up, but now in a post-Evo world, they find great pride in their heritage.

One of the other major things that I found in my investigations was that a new awareness of indigeneity and a push for a corrective historical narrative about an Indigenous erasure emerged in tandem to discussions about other groups that have been made to disappear in Argentine history. In the aftermath of the military dictatorship of the 1970s throughout the Southern Cone and much of Latin America, Argentina has become a hotspot for discussions about the disappeared. The very term "*los desaparecidos*" (the disappeared used as a noun instead of a past-tense verb), which describes the thousands of (primarily young) people who were abducted by the military and never seen again, originates in Argentina (Taylor 2003).

The victims of Argentina's "Dirty War" are the most famous example of people who have been systematically made to disappear in Argentina. However, a closer look at history, literature, art, music, and other elements of popular culture reveals much earlier occurrences of groups who have been erased from the annals of the Argentine past. These include Blacks or Afro-Argentines, multiple Indigenous groups, and even captive White women who were caught in the crossfire between Argentines pushing to expand their territories and Indigenous groups fighting to

retain their own (Reid Andrews 1980; Lewis 1995; Savigliano 1995; Castro 2001; Farris Thompson 2006).

In the wake of the “Dirty War” and the conversations that this tragedy elicited about disappearance and remembrance, other discourses about historical erasure surfaced. These discussions brought to light the fate of other disappeared groups in Argentine history: primarily Indigenous and Blacks. The phrase “the Indigenous were the first disappeared” became part of scholarly and activist parlance (Bayer 2010). This led to a historical revisioning in which national heroes like General Roca, who led a famous siege against the Mapuche and Tehuelche people, were denounced as perpetrators of genocide, and the Indigenous people who suffered under him, were recast as strong warriors and as the victims of ethnic cleansing. Historical recognition gave Indigenous people more strength to mobilize (Hau and Wilde 2009).

Chapter Breakdown

In chapter one, I provide a more-in-depth historical overview of Indigeneity and Whiteness in Argentina. I argue that the White imaginary is not based as much on the racial demographic and the phenotype of subsequent waves of European immigration, as much as it is based on a historical investment in Whiteness, which has been used to legitimize and or form citizenship and national belonging. I explore Whiteness as a construct and how a White imaginary in Argentina was formed. I provide an overview of critical Whiteness studies, highlighting recent changes in the

scholarship that interrogate Whiteness as a global construct. From here, I show how and why critical Whiteness studies can and should be applied to an Argentine context. I demonstrate the ways in which the Argentine Indigenous experience mirrors that of Native Americans in the U.S., and the colonial settler logic that is applicable in both places. Therefore, I argue that it is logical to discuss Whiteness in an Argentine context.

In the second half of chapter one, I discuss the reality that a White myth of Argentina hides: the presence of almost a million Indigenous peoples. I explain the challenges in understanding indigeneity in Argentina given the ways that the state systematically eliminated Indigenous, as well as Afro-Argentines, from the national landscape and created a national myth of homogeneity. Next, I give a brief overview of Indigenous mobilization, starting with El Malon de la Paz in 1946 and ending with the most events in 2018. I conclude this chapter by explaining recent shifts in popular understanding of two emblematic events in Indigenous history in Argentina: the Desert Conquest and the conquest of Los Quilmes.

In chapter two, I analyze tourism, nationalism and performance, embodied in particular through two national icons: the gaucho folkloric cowboy and, more recently, the Kolla Indian. I give a detailed explanation of the two major icons in Argentine culture: the gaucho and the Kolla. I demonstrate explicitly how the recasting of the gaucho as a White-European figure was central to a nationalist project in Argentina, as well as a product of regional tensions. Drawing on interviews from folkloric dancers, I further show how these performances continue to mark the

boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in Argentina. I then turn to the Kolla, the poster-child of Indigeneity in Argentina. I provide a brief history of the Kolla and the different ways this figure is portrayed.

In chapter three, I move from a discussion of the resurgence of indigeneity and the popularity of the tokenized Kolla figure to an analysis of the main musical genre of Kollas: the *copla*. Using sociologist Erving Goffman's theory of frame analysis, I examine *copla* performances in different contexts to show how the framing of each carries significant meaning, as well as identity markers. In this chapter, I engage with participants in my case study group, Los Bagualeros del Norte, as well as other *copleras* (*copla* players).

In chapter four, I discuss my second case study, Huayra. My discussion of Huayra highlights the ways that within the *comparsa de los indios* setting, any type of cultural expression that can be read as Andean, or more specifically, Kolla, can be used as evidence against Huayra that they do not fit within a Salteño mold. This again highlights the intricate ways that the term Kollas is often used interchangeably with Bolita, or Bolivian and as a marker of non-Argentine and outsider status.

Chapter five focuses on my final case study, Sumaimana. Similar to Huayra, Sumaimana members see themselves as a bridge between Indigenous communities and a broader Argentine audience. However, they are much more specific and intentional about the ways that they promote Indigenous awareness; this is reflected in their mission statement as well as in their repertoire, instrumentation,

and the venues where they are invited and choose to play. This case study also demonstrates that musicians who play music inspired by or derivative of Indigenous groups *other than Kollas*, are often barred from traditional folkloric venues including national competitions. Both Huayra and Sumaimana use their more politically themed songs, to position their group, within a pan-Latin discussion about indigeneity that reframes five hundred years of colonization as five hundred years of resistance

In my conclusion, I include some follow-up about the groups with whom I worked and the paths that their quests for identity and social justice have taken in light of policy changes under President Mauricio Macri, who was elected in 2016. I also discuss a legal battle, led by Sumaimana's founder, to have Indigenous music and dances recognized as part of a folkloric repertoire, and, therefore, part of a national performance identity.

Final Thoughts

Argentina provides a prime location in which to examine disappearance, silence, and the strength of voices pushing their way through the woodwork and the cracks in official narratives and national imaginaries. As scholarship shows, the Argentine government has, at particular moments in time, tried to eliminate entire groups of people, including Afro-Argentines, Indigenous, and political prisoners, and has almost succeeded in literally erasing them from existence and history. It is only

through memories, stories, photographs, and testimonials that these groups have not been completely obliterated.

In addition to identity, then, this dissertation is also about disappearance and remembrance, the spaces in between and the imaginaries that we construct through this process. It is an attempt to relocate or remap a particular minority group back into a historical narrative. Although it is focused on Argentina and the narratives and experiences of Argentine peoples, this dissertation is also about the universal need for all people to claim space, forge identity, and become visible. It is also about the desire to honor the dead and to retain their presence through memory.

At the same time, this work is an attempt at a scholarly intervention to re-theorize racial constructions in Argentina, a country that I see as largely misunderstood and often misconstrued in the popular imaginary. It is an effort to give voice to those who have historically been denied one by hearing their words and committing them to paper and by honoring their stories of identity reclamation.

Chapter One

Indigeneity and Whiteness

Part 1: Whiteness

Introduction

When I first began my project, I was often asked somewhat skeptically, “Are there really Indigenous people in Argentina?”²¹ In the simplest terms, the answer is yes. There are Indigenous people in Argentina, although in much smaller proportion as compared to most other countries of Latin America. According to the latest national census in 2010, a total of 955,032 people self-identify as belonging to or descending from an Indigenous people.²² While this is only roughly 2% out of Argentina’s total population (41, 343, 200) at the time the census was taken, it is still almost a million people who do, indeed, exist.

However, Indigenous belonging is also a complex matter. In undertaking this project, I had to move beyond a simple statistic-based response and ask: what does it mean to be Indigenous? Who decides? Are there specific characteristics, phenotypes, and/or social behaviors that have to be in place to consider a person Indigenous? Is indigeneity tied to a particular place, be it a country or a community?

²¹ This is a question that I was asked frequently by both scholars and everyday people as I was designing my research project and writing my prospectus. Today, I still get that question, but significantly less frequently from scholars than from non-scholars. Thus, it seems that the myth of a White Argentina is beginning to lose its grip.

²²http://www.estadistica.sanluis.gov.ar/estadisticaWeb/Contenido/Pagina148/File/LIBRO/censo2010_tomo1.pdf

How then do we understand Indigenous peoples in urban settings? How do we understand narratives for reclaiming ethnic heritage?

While many people were skeptical about the presence of Indigenous peoples in Argentina, no one questioned that of White people. This is because the country is typically characterized as homogeneously White and of European ancestry in both national and international discourses. But, again, how are we to understand the characterization of a White country? Is this based on phenotype alone, or are there other more ideological factors at play?

Throughout this dissertation, I will explore these questions and the multiple ways that they can be answered. Before providing a more thorough look at the ways that people choose to identify or not to identify as Indigenous in this country, however, I first provide some background information to better contextualize these discourses around identity as they emerge in the case studies.

In this chapter, I discuss the history of indigeneity in Argentina—first the supposed disappearance of Indigenous groups through the formation of the White imaginary—and then the reappearance of these groups in recent decades as Indigenous voices around the globe have gained prominence. I begin this chapter with a discussion about Argentine exceptionalism and the ways in which this country has been and continues to be perceived as homogeneously-White in both internal and external discourses. Here, I wish to highlight the difference between the demographic reality of a country and its prevailing national (and often inaccurate) imaginary. Drawing on critical Whiteness studies, I argue that this theoretical

framework can and should be applied to an Argentine context. I demonstrate that, given the particular ways in which the Argentine Indigenous experience mirrors that of Native Americans in the U.S., and the ways in which Argentina, like the U.S., maintains a myth of being an immigrant country, it is fruitful to consider Whiteness and indigeneity within this parallel setting. I conclude this half of the chapter with a historical overview of key moments of Indigenous erasure and White dominance.

The second half of this chapter focuses on what the White imaginary hides: the presence of multiple Indigenous groups today. This includes an overview of the many self-identified Indigenous groups, as well as a more substantial discussion of the three largest ones: the Mapuche, the Quom, and the Kolla. This last group is central to this dissertation both because they are regionally situated in Salta where much of my fieldwork took place, and because its members have become a tokenized symbol of Indigeneity more generally in Argentina. That tokenism underscores some of the challenges in understanding Indigeneity in Argentina today. I conclude this section with an explanation of some of the major changes in social and political trends that have led to a greater visibility for Indigenous peoples in this country today. I show how these changes, and broader discussions around indigeneity, have brought to light the prevailing dominant White-only narrative of Argentina and the need to contest that myth.

Argentine White Imaginary

The idea that Argentina is White and therefore exceptional or different from the rest of Latin America is supported both within and outside the country. Two examples, drawn from coverage of sports events including the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics in Brazil, show that Argentina continues to be seen as White—and even White supremacist—in a global context. In the first, *The New York Times* article titled “Why So Many World Cup Fans Dislike Argentina,” the author makes no qualms in announcing to its readership, “to put it bluntly most people can’t stand the thought of an Argentine World Cup title” (Romero and Gilbert 2014).²³ In a similar piece in *The Huffington Post* titled “Why Are There No Black Men on Argentina’s Roster?” (Décoste 2014) the author highlights the fact that Argentina has an all-White soccer team, and asks why Argentina cannot follow the patterns of their neighboring “rainbow nations” and promote Black athleticism for the World Cup? Her theory is that the country’s history of genocide and ethnic cleansing in their effort to become “South America’s Whitest country” was unsurpassed. She concludes that thus today, there is a purging of African roots from the socio-historical landscape and conscience and that there are few Black people in Argentina.²⁴

What makes both of these articles interesting is their authors’ perceptions of Argentine racial superiority. As Argentine scholars, historian Paulina L. Alberto and

²³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/11/upshot/why-so-many-world-cup-fans-dislike-argentina.html>

²⁴ https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/rachel-decoste/argentina-world-cup-_b_5571761.html

ethnomusicologist, Eduardo Elena note, *The New York Times* article expresses a public desire to see Argentina fail in the World Cup, which goes beyond a mere soccer rivalry, but rather stems from a perceived Argentine cultural superiority in which they have “traditionally viewed their nation, which received millions of European immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries as a dominion of racial pre-eminence in the region” (2017: 1). *The Huffington Post* article is also problematic as it tells only a partial story and makes no mention of Afro-Argentine organizations today. Further, the author critiques Argentina for not recognizing the African roots of tango, but makes no mention of parallel cases in the U.S. with rock or bluegrass.

The point that I wish to make in highlighting these articles is not simply that they take advantage of half-truths to make a catchy headline, but rather that they contribute to prominent public opinion that perpetuates the image of Argentina as a racial outlier by remarking on its Whiteness and condemning a perceived arrogance and ethnocentrism. This narrative places “Argentina well outside of the narratives of racially mixed nationhood that characterizes much of modern Latin America” (Alberto and Elena 2016: 2).

The idea that Argentina is White and therefore exceptional or different from the rest of Latin America is also supported within the country. The following instance of recent writing about Argentina demonstrates this perfectly. In her book about White women who disappeared in Indian raids in Argentina, Susana Rotker, Venezuelan by birth, shares that taxi drivers, noting her tropical accent, would ask her where she was from.

You're not here, are you. Where are you from? From up there, from Latin América? (¿Usted no es de aquí, ¿verdad? ¿De donde es? De *allá, de América Latina?*”) I was never quick enough to respond by asking the taxi driver if here was located on some other continent. (2002: 5).

As Rotker explains, this interaction exemplifies that Argentines who self-identify as not Latin American, cannot change the reality that they live in a country that is unquestionably part of this region; yet, the reality they wish to present is usually more important than reality itself (2002: 6). Thus, a perception of a White and non-Latin Argentina has persisted within the country itself.

While Argentina did have a huge influx of immigrants from Europe, I argue that the characterization of the country as White has been formed less by demographics and more by racial and ethnic ideologies intricately tied to parameters of national belonging. In other words, the national mythical identity has more power than the reality itself. As Rotker reminds us, the national imaginaries of countries continue to shape popular understanding of those places even in the face of contradictory evidence.

In the 1930s, France became the country with the largest quantity of immigrants in the world, with an index of 515 foreigners or every 100,000 inhabitants; meanwhile the U.S. index was 492. In the 1970s, resident aliens constituted 11 percent of the population of France and 6 percent in North America. Why this discrepancy? Because France sees itself as a nation that has been ethnically and linguistically united since the Middle Ages, and since it was the most populous European nation at the time of the French Revolution, it only conceives of immigrants as temporary labor. The United States, in contrast, has maintained an image of vast territories to be populated by immigrants, the American model of the “new man” and the new, unfinished country (2002: 4-5).

As this quote demonstrates, despite statistics that indicate the inverse, France is known as the place of tradition, while the U.S. is famous for being a country of the new and of immigrants. In this manner, national rhetoric shapes our understandings of our personal identities, as well as those of the countries in which we live. Argentina, like the U.S., has been characterized as an immigrant country. Indeed, a famous saying is that Argentines "*vienen de los barcos*," or come from the boats (Miller 2014). However, this myth that in Argentina, the country is composed solely of European immigrants and in the U.S. that our declaration of independence was founded with "life, liberty, and happiness for all" ignores a history of violence against the non-Whites who inhabited these countries prior to colonization and who were left out of the national ideology of White privilege. As Ernest Renan notes, "the essence of a nation is that all its individuals have much in common and that they have all forgotten the same things" (1999: 56)

In the case of Argentina, what has been forgotten has been the presence of what Briones refers to as the internal Others: Blacks, Indigenous peoples, Asians, and more recently, immigrants from the rest of the Southern Cone as well as Bolivia (Briones 2005; Scott 2014). What has been remembered is the nation-building myth of an immigrant country in which a homogenous White European population has completely replaced the others.

Racial Constructions: Mestizaje and Whiteness

In order to discuss the Argentine White imaginary and Whiteness as an ideology in this dissertation, I must first clarify and deconstruct the broader constructs of race and ethnicity, as well as highlight the ways that these constructions shift from one country or region to the next. To begin, I acknowledge that race and ethnicity, like other components of identity (Hall 1989), are constructs. Despite their constructed nature, these concepts have a concrete influence on how we see the world, in particular, because they continue to propagate ideologies that were highly shaped by colonialism and linked into a European thinking about difference (Wade 1997: 12-14). As Peter Wade explains, phenotype features, so often referred to as evidence of biological difference, reflect early European colonial beliefs since certain features were worked into signifiers of difference at that time (ibid). Of course, while these signifiers still may still remain, the value ascribed to a particular ethnic or racial label can also change in relation to social and economic trends. Thus, race, ethnicity, as well as gender and other monikers, are not static, but mutable and fluid constructs.

This is particularly true in Latin America, where as Zoila Mendoza shows, the categories of White, Indian, *mestizo*, and *cholo*, although important referents during colonial times, today are less based on phenotype than on categories like clothing, occupation, and musical tastes (2000: 12). This complex interplay of race, ethnicity, class, and overall social status, marks a distinction between the discourses around race and ethnicity, in the U.S and Latin America. In brief, race in the U.S. is typically

determined by a blood quota or the drop of blood rule;²⁵ by this logic, if a person has one drop of African-American blood in them, then they are African-American.²⁶ In contrast, race in Latin America is crosscut in complex ways, and may be influenced by class, as well as clothing and sometimes language (Wade 2000; de la Cadena 2000). Thus, terms like race and ethnicity intersect with class and other social markers in complex ways. While “passing” may be possible in both the U.S. and Latin America, the extent to which one’s skin color stands as a class and social barrier is not equal in both places.

For example, social anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers shows that in Barranquilla, Colombia, racial categories intersect with class in such a way that the term Negro is solely used to define people from lower-class neighborhoods. One may be told that only White people live in the modern housing developments simply based on the assumed class status of those in this area. Racial constructions and identifiers vary from place to place and shift with local and transnational movements. Thus, “a man may be defined as Negro in one place, but simply as *moreno*, *trigueño*, *canela*, or even White in another” (1994: 62). Pitt-Rivers also notes that the term Indian, once it no longer references a member of an Indian community, similarly holds distinct connotations depending on class and place

²⁵ Peter Kolchin observes that “Although the well-known “one-drop rule” dictates that in the United States anyone with the slightest bit of Black “blood” be categorized as Black, there is no particular logic to labeling people Black who are part White and part Black, and in some places they are not so labeled” (2002: 158).

²⁶ The drop of blood rule was applied by the Haitian dictator Papa Doc Duvalier to prove that the Haitian population was 98 percent White (Kolchin 2002: 158).

(ibid). This understanding that the word Indian can be used in a positive or a negative sense and is wielded differently by those who place it on others than by those who use it to self-identity is key to this dissertation.

In this manner, a person in Latin America may be identified as White if he/she lives in an upper-class neighborhood. However, in the U.S., even if an African-American is part of the upper class, he/she is still not considered White. This, in a sense, makes race seem like a mutable category in Latin America, and a less amorphous one in the U.S. because it is directly tied to a particular phenotype. Of course, “passing” is a part of the history of race in the U.S. as well, and the application and meaning of identity categories, such as Whiteness and Blackness, have also shifted in the U.S. over time. However, as sociologist Mary Waters highlights, Whites and Blacks (in the U.S.) have different access to defining their ethnicities.

Whites enjoy a great deal of freedom in these [ethnic identity] choices; those defined in “racial” terms as non-Whites much less. Black Americans, for example, are highly socially constrained to identify as Blacks, without other options available to them, even when they believe or know that their forebears included many non-Blacks (1990: 18).

The Irish may have become White through social mobility, (Roediger 1956), but this type of social climbing was never available to African-Americans, who could move between social classes, but never become White. In summary, race in Latin America is more tied to social caste, while in the U.S. it is still very much tied to skin color.

Mestizaje

One of the most important ways that race has been framed in Latin America has been through the ideology of mestizaje (see Wade 2000; Graham 1990; Skidmore 1974; Whitten 1981; Stutzman 1981; and De La Cadena 2000). Part of an intellectual movement, mestizaje attempted to classify all Latin Americans under a broad national identity through ignoring Indigenous and other alterities and subsuming these groups into a homogenous category of mestizos. At the same time that mestizaje was meant to envelop everyone under a nationalist project in places like Mexico and Peru, this harmonious vision was undercut by the fact that the proponents of this ideology (including Mariategui and Vasconcelos) essentially believed that inferior Indian and Black characteristics would naturally be eliminated and superseded by superior European ones. Anthropologist Peter Wade writes,

Mestizaje takes on powerful moral connotations: It is not just neutral mixture but hierarchical movement, and the movement that potentially has greatest value is upward movement, *blanqueamiento* or Whitening understood in physical and cultural terms (1992: 21).

In addition, in order for the concept of a mixture to have meaning, it must also highlight the idea of difference (2000: 15). In this way then mestizaje is somewhat paradoxical, since it promotes the idea that everyone is the same, but relies on difference as part of its very definition (ibid). Further, since progressive whitening is part of the assumption of mestizaje, Indigenous peoples and Blacks may be

classed as different and excluded, yet they may also be seen as potential recruits to mestizaje.²⁷

Despite the fact that mestizaje is not a neutral process, this ideology frames race in terms of non-race and thus an equal or color-blind society in which everyone is simply a mix of races. However, ultimately, mestizaje has not succeeded in creating an equal society, but rather mestizo is deployed in different ways in distinct countries, and is modified by other signifiers such as dress, and class. This last point is key since racial or ethnic classifications in Latin America intersect in complex ways with other identity markers like dress, class, and language such that a person may be classified as Indigenous based on his/her shoes as much as on his/her skin color and physical features.

Indigenismo

Another important development in racial ideology in Latin America was *indigenismo*, a cultural, political, and intellectual movement that lauded Indigenous culture and heritage (Moore and Clark 2012). *Indigenistas*, proponents of indigenismo, were primarily members of the criollo and mestizo elite who were looking for a new symbol of national identity, in the 19th century post-independence era, and focused on the Indigenous figure. Proponents of indigenismo saw the movement as an effort to vindicate the area's Indigenous peoples after

²⁷ See Bagley and Silva (1989); Wade 1993a, Helg (1989, and Friedemann (1984). Friedemann asserts that Blacks in Colombia, until the 90s, had been made "invisible" (1984). I make a similar argument for Indigenous in Argentina.

centuries of marginalization and oppression (Coronado 2009: 1). Critics of indigenismo saw the movement as a way for the elite to claim a unique Latin American identity through a renewal of Indigenous culture and to resolve the so-called “problem of the Indian” through incorporating Indigenous peoples into state policy (De la Cadena 2000: 6-7). Thus, while indigenistas drew attention to the plight of Indigenous peoples and their historical suffering since colonization, their actions did not raise the status of Indigenous peoples in a significant way. Rather, Indigenous groups and scholars have criticized the indigenista movement for being paternalistic and tokenizing Indigenous peoples as well as promoting their assimilation into larger society, and thus, to an extent, their demise (Warren 1998).

A cultural as well as social movement, indigenismo drew on painting, photography, literature, cultural criticism and, of course, music. Composers began emphasizing Indigenous themes in their works (Moore and Clark 2012). However, another critique of indigenismo is that its followers focused solely on the “great” ancient Indian civilizations like the Incas and the Aztecs. They elevated these ancestors as authentic culture bearers, while simultaneously portraying extant ones as primitive in comparison, or outright excluding them (Kuenzli 9-10). This again meant that an emphasis on Indigenous peoples through indigenismo did not translate to improved conditions or more rights for Indigenous peoples in Latin America, but rather remained in the realm of an empty multiculturalism (Hale and

Millamán 2006).²⁸ Whether ultimately characterized as negative or positive, indigenismo did draw attention to the presence and history of Indigenous peoples particularly in Peru and Mexico. However, the ideologies of mestizaje and indigenismo did not take hold in the same manner in Argentina.

Argentine Exceptionalism

In some ways, Argentina's conception of race parallels that of Latin America since race and ethnicity are intricately tied to social caste. Racial mixing took place in Argentina just as it did in other parts of Latin America. Indeed, the initial concept of the gaucho was that he was the child of a Spanish father and Indigenous mother. However, as Amy Kaminsky writes, "the founding myth of mestizaje, as in Mexico or Vasconcelos' notion of the *raza cosmica* (cosmic race) that vaunted this racial mixture as a Darwinian path to the improvement of the human race, or as the basis for a new kind of culture, did not gain purchase in Argentina" (2008: 31). Thus, while other countries were lifting up European origins under a veil of mestizaje, Argentine scholars made no pretenses that their aim was to join the nation under the umbrella of racial mixing. Instead, although early-twentieth-century Argentine nationalists were part of the Latin American discussion on mestizaje, they agreed

²⁸ This empty multiculturalism was best explained by Charles Hale and Rosamel Millaman who warned that multicultural agendas can simultaneously contribute to the rise of Indigenous voices and place limits on their transformative aspirations. They coined the term "the permitted Indian" to encompass this theory (2006).

more with social scientists who understood race to be a biological, rather than social determinant. Thus, they hoped to expunge any “inferior blood” through an aggressive policy of immigration (Chamosa 2010: 6).

Other Argentine intellectuals rejected the biological idea of race and promoted a return to rural criollo traditions (ibid). However, what is key to understand is that this criollo tradition, although technically used to describe a mixed-race heritage, like mestizo, highlighted Spanish heritage to the exclusion of Indigenous and other non-Europeans. (ibid) Therefore, what continued to be emphasized on either side of the issue was a European heritage.

In a similar fashion, indigenismo also did not carry the weight in Argentina that it did in other parts of Latin America. In a sense, Argentina’s version of indigenismo, a post-independence re-fashioning of the national identity was characterized by a preference for European heritage, either immigrant or Spanish. The criollo figure, embodied by the gaucho, took the place of the Indigenous one. The fact that mestizaje and indigenismo did not take hold in Argentina combined with the predominant myths of Whiteness and an investment in White privilege in both Argentina and the U.S. make an argument for deconstructing Whiteness in Argentina in parallel to the U.S.

Deconstructing Whiteness

I refer to the White imaginary and Whiteness as discourses of power that have shaped the boundaries of citizenship and belonging. Anthropologist Claudia Briones argues that Whiteness in Argentina was institutionalized through national policies that granted citizenship to European immigrants over what she refers to as internal Others: non-European immigrants, just under a million people who self-identify as Indigenous or of Indigenous descent, and 35 officially recognized Indigenous groups (9-40).²⁹ This has led to the myth of a homogenous White European Argentina.

Whiteness as a construct has been written about in broad terms in Argentina. Many authors mention the White character of Argentina, but their discussions focus primarily on the physical reality of a White European immigrant population that replaced a native one (Chamosa 2010). Within this scholarship, none of these authors deconstructs the concept of Whiteness from a theoretical perspective. Following my argument that the racial imaginary in Argentina is based less on demographics and more on racial and ethnic ideologies intricately tied to parameters of national belonging, I interrogate the guiding fiction of Whiteness in Argentina from the perspective of critical Whiteness studies.

Whiteness studies can perhaps be most properly located within the field of ethnic studies; however, it is essentially an interdisciplinary study that draws from

²⁹ <http://www.iwgia.org/regions/latin-america/argentina>

anthropology, sociology, critical race studies, critical legal theory, and most recently the arts. Whiteness studies was developed in the U.S. and is based upon U.S. constructions of race. Thus, scholars have typically focused on the White/Black divide. However, today scholars recognize that there is no universal experience of being White, but rather that Whiteness is a global phenomenon, which does not look the same across communities. As Twine and Gallagher explain, “As Whiteness travels the globe it reinvents itself locally upon arrival” (2012: 6).

Whiteness studies scholarship begins from the understanding that race and ethnicity are constructions, and thus that Blackness, Whiteness, and other identity attributes formerly thought to be biological are also constructions. Most Whiteness scholars identify with the Left and seek to confront White privilege. Key foci of Whiteness studies include the following: the ways that racial minorities have been omitted from history; the ways that those on the racial margins were Whitenized; and how Whiteness has been culturally propagated and made normative. In essence then, Whiteness, as defined within this theoretical framework is not about phenotype, but rather about the privilege and status that identifying as White bestows on one. It is about hegemonic structures and frameworks of power.

In applying a critical critique of Whiteness in Argentina, I have had to reconcile with the fact that critical Whiteness studies is primarily a U.S. based field. The majority of texts that engage with Whiteness are written about the U.S. However, the study of Whiteness is growing as a field, and this is allowing for a broader discussion about the subject matter.

The book *Unveiling Whiteness in the Twenty-First Century: Global Manifestations, Transdisciplinary Interventions* (2015) is the first major compilation to approach the concept of Whiteness outside the U.S. on a global scale. One of the major goals of the book is to deconstruct and analyze the discursive strategies by Whites to recuperate, reconstitute, and restore White identities in a post-Apartheid, post-Civil Rights era (Watson, Howard-Wagner, and Spanierman 2015: xi –xxi). These strategies have become the subject of contemporary discussions of Whiteness as the phenomenon of “reverse racism” has recently grown.

Another important contribution, which is particularly relevant to my work, is Carleen Basler’s examination of the seeming contradiction/paradox of Mexican-Americans who voted for Bush in the 2004 presidential election as a way to realign themselves with White elites and distance themselves from poorer, Mexican relatives and Black Americans. Basler’s work complicates the meaning of Whiteness and White identities to the Hispanic/Latino populations (Basler 2012: 119-163).

Her demonstration that Latino groups use politics to align themselves with a conservative identity and thus become White echoes Roediger’s argument that U.S. immigrants’ establishment of White identity was based on their firm efforts to define themselves by what they were not. However, where these early immigrants took pains to disassociate themselves from Black slaves, Mexican-American groups in 2004 wished to define themselves as distinctive from more recent Latino immigrants. This further shows that Whiteness is a category of power in Latino

groups as well, an area of Whiteness studies that has received little scholarly attention (Twine and Gallagher 2012: 14).

In order to analyze Whiteness in Argentina, I draw from a primarily U.S. based scholarship and apply it to an Argentine context. Of course, this is a highly complex and somewhat controversial intervention, precisely because race is a social construct that is treated differently within each context, and because Whiteness studies is based on U.S. constructions of race. While acknowledging these distinctions, I make a case for this theoretical application based on two factors. First, to date, there is little scholarship about Argentina that critically analyzes Whites.³⁰ This means that the corpus of critical Whiteness theory scholarship based in an Argentine context is limited. Second, and more important, while I acknowledge that racial constructions in Latin America are distinct from those in the U.S., I also argue that discussions of race (including Whiteness and indigeneity) can (and should) be understood in a parallel/comparable context between Argentina and the U.S. based on the historical commonalities between these nations. I draw on Juliet Hooker, author of *Rethorizing Race in Latin America* (2017), who, in comparing the seminal texts of U.S. African American thinkers Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois, with those of Latin American thinkers Domingo F. Sarmiento and José Vasconcelos, argues that thinkers from both Americas looked to an American other to construct their ideas around race (Hooker 2017: 2).

³⁰ The book *Rethorizing race in Argentina* (2017), which I quote extensively in this dissertation is an exception.

Indeed, not only did the Argentine government's treatment of the Indigenous and the policies to repopulate with immigrants in Argentina mirror the U.S., Argentinians took their inspiration from the American example. During a visit to the U.S. in 1847, Sarmiento was impressed by the Indian Removal Act (1830) and its ideas of "civilization and progress" (Sheinen 2006: 23). As president (1868-1874), Sarmiento sent delegates to the U.S. from Army and Navy Department to confer with the federal Indian Bureau on how to best civilize Indigenous Argentines (ibid).

Further, Sarmiento approved of the U.S. ideology of biological racial inferiority, which was used to justify the Indigenous massacres in the name of national growth. This position influenced Sarmiento's policies as well as those of General Julio A. Roca, the general who would lead one of the most infamous examples of Argentine genocide: the Conquest of the Desert. In fact, Roca cited Sidney Johnson's campaign against Rocky Mountain native bands in 1857 ordered by President James Buchanan, as a basis for war against Argentine Indigenous peoples (ibid).

In addition to the treatment of its Indigenous peoples, Sarmiento was highly admiring of U.S. education systems and immigration policies (Sheinen 2006: 23). Roca and Sarmiento were not alone in their admiration of the U.S. Argentine political theorist Juan Bautista Alberdi, in his support of Argentina's immigration policy, wrote,

The United States is such an advanced country because it is now, and has been continually, composed of people from Europe. From the very beginning it received tremendous waves of European immigration. Those who believe that progress in the United States dates only from the time of independence deceive themselves (2002: 97. Translated by Patricia Owen Steiner)

This again justifies applying a framework for Whiteness studies, taken primarily from U.S. scholarship and applying it to an Argentine context. Thus, I argue the Indigenous experience of Argentina parallels that of the Native Americans in the U.S., perhaps even more so than it does that of other Indigenous groups in nearby nations like Bolivia and Peru. The long history and nature of the Indigenous subjugation in which families were torn apart and entire communities were forced to uproot themselves and relocate across thousands of miles, resulted in what Argentine scholars Walter Delrio, Diana Lenton, Marcelo Musante, Alexis Papazian, and Pilar Pérez (2010) refer to as Indigenous genocide. Coupled with huge influxes of European immigrants, this history strengthens the case for examining Argentinian racial, ethnic and national constructions parallel to this conversation in the U.S.

A History of Indigenous Disappearance

Pre-Spanish Conquest

Prior to the Spanish conquest many different Indigenous groups inhabited the territory of present-day Argentina.³¹ Argentine anthropologist Carlos Martínez Sarasola, in his comprehensive discussion of Indigenous peoples in Argentina, breaks the Indigenous groups prior to conquest into two groups: *pueblos Andinos* (Andean peoples) and *Pueblos de las llanuras* (People of the plains). The Andean peoples occupied primarily the Northwest and the plains peoples mostly the Southern section of the country.

Table 1.1 Indigenous Pre-Conquest Andean Peoples

Diaguitas	Calchaqui Valleys Salta, Tucuman, Catamarca	Participated in the Cult to the Pachamama Spoke Cacan or Kakan Conquered by Incas
Omaguacas	Quebrada de Humahuaca, Jujuy	Agricultural Cult of the dead Trade with Bolivia Conquered by Incas
Atacamas	La Puna, west Jujuy, Salta and northwest Catamarca	Grew corn, potatoes, beans Practiced human sacrifice Trade Conquered by Incas

³¹ In this section I am discussing countries that did not yet exist since these time periods precede the declaring of the nation state. To avoid confusion and verbosity, I will simply refer to the countries as they would be called today. Therefore, Argentina is current-day Argentina, Bolivia the same.

Lule-Vilelas	Part of Chaco, parts of east Salta, north Tucuman, northwest Santiago	
Tonocotés	Central and west Santiago	
Comechingones	Cordoba	Marks the edge of Inca empire.
Sanavirones	North Cordoba	
Los Huarpes	San Juan, Mendoza, San Luis	Marks limit of sedentary, agricultural communities Also known for fishing and hunting

Information for table is from *Nuestros Paisanos Los Indios*. Carlos Martínez Sarasola. 1992.

Table 1.2. Indigenous Pre-Conquest Plains Peoples

Tehuelches	Pampa, Patagonia, Chubut, Santa Cruz	Nomadic
Pehuenches	Neuquen	Nomadic
Guaikurúes Includes: Tobas, Mocovies, Abipones	Chaco Formosa	
Mataco-Mataguayos Includes: Matacos, Mataguayos, Chorotes, Chulupies	Chaco	Hunters and gatherers Fishermen
Chiriguanos Includes: Tupí Guaraní, Arawak, La Carib Los Chane	Parts of Northwest and Northeast Argentina South Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia	

Information for table is from *Nuestros Paisanos Los Indios*. Carlos Martínez Sarasola. 1992.

Inca Invasion

The first major invasion into Argentina³² was from the Incas in the late 1400s. Around 1471, Emperor Tupac Yupanqui, continuing his father's goal to increase the Inca empire throughout the continent, invaded the highlands of Bolivia, through Northwestern Argentina, and into Chile via the Atacama Desert (Saunders 2000). Under Inca rule, the conquered peoples were invited to join the empire, which required them to change their way of life and adopt that of the Incas. Those who did not surrender peacefully were either killed or rounded up and sent to other areas of the empire. Submitting to Inca governance meant paying tribute in goods and services in the *mita* system. In return, the Inca would provide food and clothing (Saunders 2000; Bauer 1992; Bingham 1970; Cobo 1653; D' Altroy 2002; Covey 2006; and MacQuarrie 2007).

The Inca's reign in Argentina was not as prominent as it was in other parts of South America, particularly Peru, where Cuzco, the empire's capital was located. This is because the Incas were only in certain sections of Argentina, and for less than a hundred years. However, the Inca presence is significant because in areas where the Incas had conquered, Indigenous groups, already subservient to a larger empire, tended to become more easily enveloped in Spanish encomienda systems. In contrast, in other areas, "where Argentine Indians were less sedentary, the colonial pattern of building on pre-existing civilizations" broke down (Shumway 1991: 8).

³² In this section I am discussing countries that did not yet exist since these time periods precede the declaring of the nation state. To avoid confusion and wordiness, I will simply refer to the countries as they would be called today. Therefore, Argentina is current-day Argentina, Bolivia the same.

Conquest of Los Quilmes

Under Spanish rule, Indigenous groups were forced into systems of *encomienda* (a grant of land and its inhabitants from the Spanish crown to a colonist settler) and transformed into peons, massacred, or, in some cases, uprooted from their homes. After Spanish colonization, and during the 17th century, many First Nations peoples were taken from their homelands and brought to Buenos Aires, where they were forced to work in hard labor. These groups included the following: *Comechingones, Lules, Juries, Huarpes, Acalianes, Guaranies, and Quilmes*. The last of these groups, the Quilmes, is the most famous of these cases in Argentina, both because these peoples resisted occupation for so many years, first by the Incas and then the Spanish, and because, once they had been defeated, their population was almost completely decimated during their long trek to Buenos Aires.

The first group that the Quilmes fought and resisted for years were the Incas. Although the heart of the Inca Empire was located in the capital city of Cuzco, in present-day Peru, this ancient civilization was vast and extended throughout much of South America, as far north as present-day Quito, Ecuador and south to Santiago, Chile; this also included part of Argentina. In 1480, the Incas invaded and conquered a large portion of present-day Northwest Argentina, extending to Mendoza Province (Malpass and Alconini 2010). The Inca takeover was not as brutal as that of the Spanish some 70 years later; yet, it still had deep implications for the Indigenous peoples of those invaded territories. The Incas imposed their cultural norms,

including ceremonial rites and use of the Quechua language. They also forced the conquered peoples to work for them (MacQuarrie 2007).

One group that was particularly subject to Incan oppression was the Calchaquies who were forced to work in the silver mines.³³ One Calchaqui group, the Quilmes, who lived in the Calchaqui valleys of the present-day province of Tucuman, resisted occupation by first the Inca (who arrived in 1476) and then the Spanish empire (who arrived in 1536) for a total of 130 years, until they were finally defeated in 1665³⁴ by General Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta (Prebisch 2004). This general, famous for his military strategy, "*sin patria no hay patriotismo*" (without nation there is no patriotism), postulated that he could break the Quilmes' spirits and prevent further uprisings by uprooting them from their homeland.³⁵

Thus, in a tragic historical moment akin to the U.S. Trail of Tears, the Spanish, under de Mercado y Villacorta's command, rounded up the Quilmes people and forced them to walk approximately 850 miles to the Mar de Plata region of what is present day Buenos Aires, where they were permanently relocated. During this time, many people died from hunger, exhaustion, suicide, and sickness, and of the 2,000 who left the Quilmes city, only 1,200 arrived at the reservation, "Exaltación de la Cruz de Los Quilmes" (Bonatti y Valdez 2011; Martínez Sarasola 2013).

³³ Calchaquies is a term often used interchangeably with Diaguitas and enfolds multiple Indigenous groups under this large heading.

³⁴ Los Qilmeños' surrender was due in large part to their rivalry with neighboring groups who became allies of the Spanish and helped them defeat Los Quilmeños.

³⁵ Although I could not find documentation to support this exact quote, my interlocutors mentioned it frequently. It is even included in the lyrics of a Sumaimana song.

Independence

In 1810, Argentina declared itself an independent state. As bad as things had been under colonial rule, things became even worse as any regulation under the Spanish crown disappeared. As Shumway observes,

Perhaps the greatest tragedy of Independence was what it did to the Indians. The Spanish colonial rulers had created a legal system to protect Indian communities and properties. While these laws were frequently abused, they did give Indians legal status and legal recourse however imperfect. In contrast, the post-Independence societies abandoned colonial legal and economic structures in favor of new theories of private property and free trade (1993: 61).

What we now think of today as the Argentine nation, post-independence was a formation of largely autonomous areas, which were not united by politics, geography, economics or a vision of a national destiny (Shumway 1991: 9).

Distances between destinations were great and travel, only by over-land, was slow. Therefore, cities and provinces in this nation developed isolated from one another. Central government held little sway, and most areas were run by caudillos, outlaws (ibid). This again, meant that any protection the Spanish crown had provided for Indigenous peoples, meager though it may have been, disappeared after independence.

First National Census

In this new world, Indigenous people ceased to have any legal status. This was made abundantly clear through the first census in Argentina, the *Primer Censo Nacional*, which completely omitted Indigenous peoples. In 1869, fifty-three years

after independence, Domingo F. Sarmiento, future president and leading intellectual thinker, implemented the first national census. This survey both helped to build a homogenous identity for a newly emerging nation and justified government expansion into supposedly unoccupied Indigenous peoples' territories. Writing about the *Primer Censo Nacional*, Argentine scholar Pilar Barrientos states, "It was a tool not only for generating policies that intervened in people's lives but also for constructing a hegemonic discourse about Argentine identity" (2012: 43).

Barrientos argues that censuses, much like Shumway's notion of "guiding fictions" are often based on fabrications, but that nonetheless, they are necessary to provide people with a collective identity and a sense of nation and national purpose (Shumway 1993: 13 in Barrientos 2012: 42). Thus, the first census was not only about collecting data, but it was also about forming a new Argentine identity, one in which Afro-Argentines and Indigenous peoples did not exist.

This use of census data is not unique to Argentina. Indeed, as Forte writes, historically, census data has been important to government administrators primarily for the purpose of reducing the size of Indigenous territories by diminishing the numbers of occupants with rights to this land (Forte 2013: 7). Thus, governing bodies around the world have invested large sums in determining who is or is not an Indian and the implications for land recognition claims that this has had. One prominent example is that of the Branch of Federal Acknowledgement in the U.S., which aimed to spend millions to try to determine which tribes should or should not merit federal recognition (quoted in Hagan 1985: 309). This example

draws a parallel between the Indigenous experience in the U.S. and in Argentina, and further emphasizes that those who are in a position to define indigeneity for others have historically wielded significant power over shaping the national narrative.

In addition to symbolically eliminating minorities, the *Primer Censo Nacional* justified territorial expansion, since the apparent lack of Indigenous peoples meant that the Argentine land was there for the taking. Thus, quoting Otero, Amadassi and Massé, Barrientos notes that,

If the Desert/Patagonia Campaign of 1879 and the Chaco Campaign of 1884 succeeded at the military level in eliminating the Indigenous peoples in those territories which up to then had yet to be incorporated into the Argentine nation-state, the corresponding national population censuses at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries expressed through the census process what arms expressed in the conquest of territory (2005: 3).

In this way then, the census paved the way for the next steps in eliminating Indigenous peoples and framing the nation as European: expansion and immigration.

Expansion

Desert Conquest and the Campaigns to the Green Desert

Conditions became even worse for the First Nations as the Argentine state implemented its goal of eradicating these people from the nation through two major military campaigns: the “Conquest of the Desert” (Pampa and Patagonia, 1878–

1885) and “the Campaigns to the Green Desert” (Chaco, 1884–1917). The Conquest of the Desert and the Campaigns to the Green Desert, which took place in the pampas south of Buenos Aires and in parts of what today are Salta and Tucuman provinces of the northwest, respectively, were brutal massacres against the Mapuche and Tehuelche people of the South, and the many Indigenous groups of the Chaco region. Both of these wars were justified through the state’s desire to expand its national territory. Indeed, by calling the areas deserts, the Argentine state reaffirmed what the *Primer Censo Nacional* had already demonstrated, that there was a supposed lack of Indigenous peoples inhabiting these empty deserts (Gonzalez in Viñas 1983: 5).

The myth that Indigenous peoples had been exterminated, paved the way for intellectuals to encourage mass immigration to fill these “empty” lands. Prominent intellectual thinker and diplomat, Juan Bautista Alberdi promoted this idea with his famous aphorism, “gobernar es poblar,” to govern is to populate (Shumway 1191: 147). Following this logic, future president (1868-1874), then prominent intellectual, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento advocated for an official policy to entice Germans to South America in exchange for subsidized travel, settlement, tools, seed, and land. Sarmiento had spent time in the U.S. and was highly impressed with the U.S. government’s methods for eradicating Indigenous populations and encouraging Westward migration, most notably through the Homestead Act of 1862 (ibid). This act, enacted by Abraham Lincoln, essentially opened up Native American lands to

White settlers. In return, Native Americans were forced to fight aggressively to protect their lands, a battle they eventually lost.

Thus, much like in the U.S., the two guiding mottos for “getting rid of the Indian problem” in Argentina were first, de Mercado’s “*sin patria no hay patriotismo*” (without country, there is no patriotism), which justified forced relocation, and Juan Bautista Alberdi’s aphorism “*poblar es gobernar*,” (to populate is to govern), which justified a call for immigrants to occupy the “vacant” lands of the pampas (Gonzalez in Viñas 1983: 5).

New Blood: Immigration for a “Modern” Nation

Mid-nineteenth century founding politicians and intellectuals of the Argentine state not only aimed to eliminate Indigenous peoples, but also desired to replenish the country’s population by replacing any remaining Indigenous peoples as well as mestizos and criollos with people of “superior” Northern European stock (Bletz 2010: 53). At the formation of the nation, a concerted effort was made by leading intellectuals and by the government to eradicate the Indian and Black populations and to essentially replace the current Argentine population with a superior (Whiter) one from Europe. Indeed, then statesman Sarmiento advocated for enticing as many European immigrants as possible. While Sarmiento discriminated against the Indigenous people most, and called *gauchos* (the original offspring of a mixed Indigenous and Spanish lineage) “the scourge of the nation,” he

was also not a fan of the Spanish. Sarmiento, who believed that the Spanish were vulgar, aimed to repopulate Argentina with the “Whitest” Europeans (Shumway 1999: 147).

Again, Argentine intellectuals and political leaders looked to the U.S. for guidance in forming a new nation. Juan Bautista Alberdi in his plan for immigration writes,

The United States is such an advanced country because it is now, and has been continually composed of people from Europe. From the very beginning it received tremendous waves of European immigration. (2002: 97. Translated by Patricia Owen Steiner).

This quote again demonstrates the powerful influence that the U.S.’ creation of a White immigrant nation had in inspiring an Argentine mimicry.

Politics of Otherness: Solidifying Whiteness

In this dissertation, I argue that the White myth in Argentina is based less on phenotype and more on racial and ethnic ideologies that frame non-Whites as being outside of the national boundaries of belonging. This means that, in cases where the influx of immigration failed to completely eradicate otherness and achieve the “ruling class’s dream of transformation by racial Whitening and cultural Europeanization” (Bletz 2010: 54), state policies and the pressure to hide one’s Indigenous roots, solidified a White-only identity. Argentine anthropologist Claudia Briones explains that national policies granted citizenship to European immigrants over what Claudia Briones refers to as the internal Others (2005). In addition, the

practice of “passing” allowed for social mobility. Thus, Whitening was often “necessary for Indigenous and afro-descendants,” and “class mobility was made possible by cleansing one’s roots and...choosing to identify with one’s least stigmatized grandparent” (Briones 2005: 10). This emphasis on equating national belonging with Whiteness has made it hard for Indigenous and other groups including Afro-Argentines and more recently, immigrants from neighboring Latin American countries, to establish their presence and gain rights.

Despite these struggles, Indigenous and Afro-Argentines have increasingly gained more recognition and rights over the course of the last few decades. More and more scholars have begun to re-theorize race in Argentina (Bayer 2010; Nouzeilles and Montaldo 2002; Kalczewiak 2017; and Alberto and Elena 2018), and the White imaginary has begun to crumble. However, as I will explain in this next section, deconstructing the national White narrative has been and continues to be a long and arduous process full of vicissitudes.

Part II: Indigenous Recognition

Indigenous Today

In the previous section, I discussed the White imaginary. I now focus on what the national myth obscures: the presence of 955, 032 people who self-identified at the time of the national census in 2010 (INDEC).³⁶ According to the *Instituto*

³⁶ In addition, according to a Clarin article (January 16, 2005), 54% of Argentines have some Indigenous heritage.

Nacional de Estadística y Censos-INDEC (National Statistics and Census Institute) of Argentina there are thirty-three distinct Indigenous groups in Argentina, which include the following:

Table 1.3. Indigenous Groups in Argentina per 2010 Census

Group
Mapuche
Toba
Kolla,
Quechua,
Wichi
Comechingon
Huarpe
Tehuelche
Mocovi
Pampa
Aymara
Ava Guarani
Rankulche
Charrua
Atacama
Mbya Guarani
Omaguaca
Pilaga
Tonocote
Lule
Tupi Guarani
Querandi
Chane
Sanaviron
Ona
Chorote
Maimara
Chulupi
Vilela
Other

The following table, collected from data in the national census in 2010 (INDEC), shows a general breakdown of Indigenous groups by region. It is notable that some,

such as the Guarani, are located in multiple regions of the country. Additionally, some groups, including again the Guarani and the Mapuche, are found on the borders and in communities on both sides of Argentina and its neighboring countries of Bolivia and Brazil. This relates to the idea explained in the Introduction, that Indigenous peoples are not locus-bound, but rather can exist as Indigenous diasporas.

Table 1.4. Table of Indigenous Groups by Region Based on the 2010 Census

Region	Provinces	Peoples
South	Chubut, Neuquén, Santa Cruz, Tierra del Fuego	Mapuche, Ona, Tehuelche, Yamana
Central	Autonomous City of Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires provinces, Córdoba, La Pampa, Mendoza,	Atacama, Ava Guaraní, Diaguita-Calchaquí, Huarpe, Kolla, Mapuche, Rankulche, Toba, Tupi Guarani, Comechingon
North-east	Chaco, Entre Ríos, Formosa, Misiones, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero	Charrua, Lule, Mbya-Guarani, Mocovi, Pilaga, Toba, Tonocote, Vilela, Wichi
North-west	Catamarca, Jujuy, La Rioja, Santiago del Estero, Tucuman, Salta	Atacama, Ava-Guarani, Chane, Chorote, CHulupi, Diaguita-Calchaqui, Kolla, Ocloya, Omaguaca, Tapiete, Toba, Tupí-Guaraní, Wichí.

The three largest Indigenous groups in Argentina today are the Kollas, the Quom, and the Mapuche. The largest, and perhaps, best-known group, with a population of 205, 009 is the Mapuche who inhabit the southwestern regions of the country as well as parts of Chile. The Mapuche are traditionally farmers whose

social organization is made up of extended family units. The second largest group, with a population of 126,967, is the Quom, also known as Toba, whose people are found in Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay. The Quom were never conquered by the Incas, nor were they enveloped into the colonial project like the Kollas were. Traditionally nomadic hunters, the Quom lived in the jungles and had little contact with mainstream Argentine culture before the Argentine government usurped their land in the 1880s. The Quom suffered greatly under the Argentine government, first being forced to work in the sugar plantations and then undergoing a terrible massacre in 1924, in which police and ranchers ransacked the village of Napalpi, killing 200 Quom people (Bonatti and Valdez 2010: 159). Today, many Quom people who continue to reside in Indigenous communities on the outskirts of the northern jungles are greatly threatened by government deforestation and the loss of land and livelihood.³⁷ (Blaser 2010; Gordillo 2004: 253-254).³⁸

The Kolla people, the third largest Indigenous group, with a population of 65,066 are found in Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia. Kolla people are one of the most highly incorporated Indigenous groups in Argentina, since they were conquered by, and became part of the workforce and society of, first, the Incas, and then, the Spanish. Although historically Kolla people have suffered from pronounced

³⁷ <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/Indigenous-peoples-of-argentina.html>

³⁸ For a discussion of the Quom protests see <http://www.pts.org.ar/El-dirigente-toba-qom-Felix-Diaz-inicia-una-huelga-de-hambre> and <https://www.eltribuno.com/jujuy/nota/2016-3-9-1-30-0-el-cacique-qom-felix-diaz-visita-jujuy>

discrimination, today, many members hold elected positions and participate in regional government politics.

The Kolla people have a particularly strong presence in the Northwest region where I conducted the majority of my research. In addition, Kollas have become one of the most “popular” (well-known and culturally significant/valued/valuable/tokenized) Indigenous groups in the country and also the poster children of both tourism companies and human rights groups. Indeed, the song *Kolla en la Ciudad* (Kolla in the city), which describes the plight of a Kolla trying to survive in Buenos Aires, has become something of a protest anthem for Indigenous movements. I will explain this in further detail when I discuss the Kolla as cultural symbol in the next chapter.

The statistics I have just reviewed are taken from the national census of 2001. The very fact that this data can be located signals a gain in Indigenous recognition. This is because it has been a long struggle for Indigenous people to become officially acknowledged under state law and to fight for land ownership, bilingual education, and other rights granted under citizenship. However, even this data fails to tell the complete story, since it is plagued with the difficulties that are inherent in censuses. First, the census is based on self-recognition and self-divulgence. However, Indigenous peoples may hide their identity for fear of discrimination. Second, others may not choose to self-identify as Indigenous. Third, censuses can be full of flaws. People can be omitted accidentally because they were not at home at the time that the census taker was there. Another possibility is that

they do not fill out the census correctly. Given these variables, it is vital to remember that census data can be highly subjective and even manipulated. The problems with the census data show that Argentine identity is difficult to quantify. As Bartolome asks, Is identity measurable? Or is identity “fluctuating, historical and variable...partly due to the changing structure of inter-ethnic systems” (Bartolome 1987: 9)?

For these and other reasons it is difficult to talk about indigeneity as a comprehensive topic in Argentina. First, each Indigenous group in Argentina has its own culture, history, and visibility. This is related to broad differences in territory, language and levels of engagement as well as to inconsistent state policies and the Argentine government’s historical inability to define a systematic, enduring Indigenous federal policy. While the state’s official policies have shifted over time, in general the numerous bodies that oversaw Indigenous matters were highly paternalistic. These included *La Comisión Nacional de Protección al Indígena*, the Commission for the National Protection of Indigenous (1939) and the *Dirección de Protección al Aborigen*, Office of Aboriginal Protection (1946) (Martínez Sarasola 1992: 563-586).³⁹

The first antecedents of Indigenous recognition in Argentina can be traced back to El Malon de la Paz (The Raid of Peace) of 1946. This protest was precipitated by years of abuse by landowners who forced their Indigenous workers to work for

³⁹ For a complete discussion of these official bodies as well as other policies for Indigenous peoples enacted in Argentina see Carlos Martínez Sarasola’s comprehensive text, *Nuestros Paisanos los Indios* (1992).

little pay and under harsh conditions in the sugarcane fields (Valko 2009).⁴⁰Laborers, primarily Kollas, organized a march and walked the approximately 2,000 miles to present their grievances to President Juan Peron (Martínez Sarasola 1992: 589-590). As they marched, the protesters gained followers, including most famously, Atahualpa Yupanqui, a singer, guitarist, and folk hero,⁴¹ who was later thrown in jail since his joining of El Malon de la Paz was deemed an act of Communism. When they arrived in Buenos Aires, the protesters were at first welcomed by President Peron, who housed them in the *Hotel de Inmigrantes*, Immigrant Hotel, and even took them to a soccer game. However, he then ordered that they be unceremoniously shipped out of the city on a train in the middle of the night (Martínez Sarasola 1992: 589-590).

While El Malon de la Paz was about laborers' rights, it marks the beginning of Indigenous peoples' making demands for themselves. Indeed, today El Malon de la Paz is even referred to as La Marcha Kolla (the Kolla march). Pablo Costilla, who self identifies as Calchaqui and is a historian and tour guide at the ruins of Los Quilmes, explained that he sees El Malon de la Paz as a pivotal moment that paved the way for creation of future Indigenous institutions.

Para mi el Malón de la Paz fue una de las primeras marchas organizadas. Fue un antecedente de que los pueblos

For me, the Malon de la Paz was one of the first organized marches. It was the first evidence that the pueblos originarios nations could

⁴⁰ <http://www.copenoa.com.ar/A-67-anos-del-malon-de-la-paz-El.html>

⁴¹ For more about Atahualpa Yupanqui see Pablo Vila and Carlos Molinero's "Atahualpa Yupanqui: The Latin American Precursor of the Militant Song Movement" in "The Militant Song Movement in Latin America: Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina. (2014):163-193.

originarios podían organizarse y reclamar por sus territorios. A partir de ahí los pueblos comenzaron a reclamar por su territorio de manera organizada (Interview with Pablo Costilla, February 2016).

organize themselves and demand back their land. Since then, the first nations have started to make organized demands for their land.

These organizing bodies included the Centro Indígena, (Indigenous center) in 1968; Comisión Coordinadora de Institutos Indígenas (CIIRA), (commission for the coordination of Indigenous institutions) in 1971; Primer Parlamento Indígena, (the first Indigenous parliament) in 1972; and the Asociación Indígena de la República Argentina (AIRA), (Indigenous association of the Argentine republic) in 1976.

Increased Mobilization

The 1980s and 1990s brought more changes and increased mobilization of Indigenous peoples in Argentina. As state policy under Raúl Alfonsín, Argentina's first president after the "Dirty War" moved towards extending rights, Indigenous visibility became part of the discourse (vom Hau 2009). A new Indigenous law, *Ley de la Protección y Apoyo a Las comunidades Indígenas* (law for the protection and support of Indigenous communities) was passed in 1985, and ratified in 1989. This law stated that Indigenous communities should receive sufficient land for their needs and that this land should be protected. This administration also created the *Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indígenas* [National Institute of Indigenous Affairs, INAI] and allowed for bilingual education (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003).

These policy changes gave new voice and status to Indigenous peoples. Kollas and Diaguitas, Indigenous groups that had previously branded themselves as peasants or workers, began to identify themselves and make claims as Indigenous peoples (Briones 2005; Escolar 2007, 1995; Lazzari 2007).⁴² Other Indigenous groups, such as the Huarpes or Ranqueles, that had been thought extinct, came forward and filed for legal recognition (vom Hau 2009).

The 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1992 marked a moment of Indigenous awakening. Protesters around the world highlighted the fact that Columbus' arrival in 1492 was also the start of five-hundred years of genocide and oppression. This "Indigenous emergence" (Bengoa 2009: 7), surfaced in the midst of a Latin American-wide flurry of Constitutional reforms recognizing Indigenous cultural and land rights⁴³ and signaled that Indigenous people had found new strategies to make their voices heard (Barrientos 2012: 44).

In 1994 the Argentine constitution was amended, recognizing for the first time the 'ethnic and cultural pre-existence of the Argentine Indigenous peoples': it acknowledged the validity of Native communities' claims to land; it also guaranteed the right of Indigenous peoples to bilingual/intercultural education. Since then, Argentina has ratified the ILO Convention 169 (2000). It also created the *Instituto*

⁴² This again explains why El Malon de la Paz, previously discussed as a labor issue, is now referred to as La Marcha Kolla.

⁴³ Since the mid 1980s, many countries in Latin American changes their Constitutions: Brazil 1981, Colombia 1991, Paraguay 1992, Ecuador 1998 and 2008, <http://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/r27168.pdf>

Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y Racismo [National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism, INADI] in 1995.

In Argentina, one of these strategies was to incorporate Indigenous issues in the state agenda during the convening of the Constituent Assembly in 1994 for the purpose of amending the Constitution (ibid). This resulted in the addition, Section 75, paragraph 17 of the new Argentine Constitution which states the following:

To recognize the ethnic and cultural pre-existence of Indigenous peoples of Argentina. To guarantee respect for their identity and their right to bilingual and intercultural education; to recognize the legal capacity of their communities, and the community possession and ownership of the lands they traditionally occupy; and to regulate the granting of other lands adequate and sufficient for human development; none of them shall be sold, transmitted or subject to liens or attachments. To guarantee their participation in issues related to their natural resources and in other interests affecting them. The provinces may jointly exercise these powers (Barrientos 2012: 44).

These steps were taken in an effort to embrace a multicultural and multi-plural concept of nation⁴⁴ as part of the Latin American movement to uplift the position of those peoples who, though silenced, had always existed in this region (Barrientos 2012: 45). Unfortunately, these new laws and reforms granting Indigenous communities land rights have been slow to take hold and/or be enforced. As Barrientos concludes,

44

...the 1994 constitutional amendment (Section 75, paragraph 17) was only superficially implemented and a kind of “theatre of operations” recreated, possibly becoming, in what may be a risky hypothesis, another fiction that largely but not entirely guides the relationship between the Indigenous peoples and the state (ibid).

In addition, as sociologists Mathias vom Hau and Guillermo Wilde observe, the constitutional reform provided new provisions for Indigenous peoples to recuperate land, but it also limited their ability to access these rights (2009). This is because the constitution focused on Indigenous peoples living within local communities rather than on Indigenous groups, which prevented land claims across wide expanse or that potentially cross over national boundaries (ibid). In addition, the constitution did not guarantee Indigenous peoples rights to the resources on their recouped land or the governance to control those resources (ibid). As a result, Indigenous peoples and their lands continued and continue to this day to be threatened by the constant intrusion of investors and private enterprises (encouraged by the state).

The 2001 Census

Another important moment for Indigenous recognition in Argentina came in 1998, when Congress passed the Aboriginal Census Law 24,956, which required Indigenous monitoring to be included in the next national population census on the basis of self-recognition.⁴⁵ To do this, an “Indigenous variable” was included and a supplementary survey was added. Indeed, the 2001 *Censo Nacional de Población*,

⁴⁵ More recently still, Afro-Argentines were included in the 2010 census (Barrientos 2012). Statistically speaking then, these census changes have led the population of first peoples in Argentina to rise from zero officially on record, to 600,000 in 2001 to 955,032 in 2010 (INDEC).

Hogares y Vivienda (National Population, Household and Housing Census), was the first to include a question about Indigenous belonging.

Just as censuses can be a tool for the state to eliminate minorities, they have also become, in the current historical moment, a means for people to establish their presence, which in turn, sometimes leads to land claims. Indeed, as times change and particular groups gain recognition, censuses have begun to reflect the opposite trend of exclusion; rather, minority groups grow rapidly specifically because the numbers of people who actively choose to claim their heritage on censuses increases.

Recent years have seen a reclaiming of this power over representation by Indigenous peoples themselves, which has correlated with an explosion in Indigenous self-identification across the Americas. For example, in the U.S. from the years 1960 to 2000 the number of people who self-identified as Indian in North America has increased by four-hundred percent (Forte 2013: 4). Similarly, in Argentina the Indigenous population grew from 600,000 in 2001 to 955,032 in 2010 (INDEC).

An important question raised through these escalated self-identifications is how this increase in Indigenous populations can be explained. Is it due to increased birth rates or, as is more likely the case, to a rise in people who wish to self-identify as Indigenous? If it is the latter, then who has a right to make such a claim and based on what facts? This again raises the overarching question: who is an Indian, or what

does it mean to be Indigenous in Argentina? This issue of classifying and quantifying indigeneity made the Argentine census of 2001 controversial.

Argentine scholar Pilar Barrientos explains some of the problems with how the census was administered. First, the 2001 census included a follow-up questionnaire, which was administered if at least one member of a household self-identified as a member or descendant of an Indigenous people. The census taker was supposed to ask this question of everyone; however, according to Barrientos, who worked with the ECPI, some census takers omitted this question or automatically ticked the “No” category if the interviewee did not have the “phenotypic features that essentialize Indigenous people in Argentina” (Barrientos 2012: 47).

Another problem was that the question asked if the person was a member or a descendant of a select group of seventeen peoples. These peoples were the ones who had legally registered in 1998 with the *Instituto Nacional de Asuntos Indigenas-INAI* (National Institute for Indigenous Affairs). This detail is key since it meant that a person could only be recognized as part of the First Nations if he/she was a member of an Indigenous community that had legally registered with the state. So, in Argentina the state has ascribed to “itself the right to recognize who qualifies as Indigenous and who does not on the basis of an administrative procedure--the registration of communities in the Re.Na.C.I,” the *Registro Nacional de Asuntos Indigenas* (National Register of Indigenous Communities) (Barrientos 2012: 48).

Another area of concern specific to the 2001 census was how to understand the data of people who self-identified as Indigenous and lived in cities (about 50% of the population according to the ECPI). In Argentina, a community is recognized by the state if its members live as a group in a shared community. Yet, certain communities, the Kollas for example, have been dispersed throughout the country due to internal migration. As Barrientos concludes,

Indigenous identity may thus depart from its association with territory, as understood by the state, and be understood as a type of grouping that extends beyond its spatial reference and which has to do with cultural and linguistic links, feelings of belonging and bonds of solidarity (Barrientos 2012: 55).

In the end, Indigenous groups were divided about the results of the census; some saw it as detrimental, while others saw it as a tool for First Nations to make their presence legally quantifiable. Indeed, even within the same organizations, members were divided. As Barrios notes, some Indigenous organizations complained publicly that the survey acted as a filter to further reduce the population of First Nation peoples; yet, members from these same organizations were actively involved in the supplementary questionnaire design and implementation, and had even served as regional coordinators in the survey structure (Barrientos 2012: 47). This indicates that while some people saw the census as a filter, others saw it as a tool for reclaiming.

Argentine Indigenous Recognition in a Global Context

Indigenous awareness did not come out of nowhere in Argentina. Rather it was intricately connected to larger social and political movements within and outside of the country. These included Latin American Constitutional reforms, United Nations' declarations of the First and Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, as well as a renewed focus on human rights issues within Argentina. Finally, the Bolivian presidency of Evo Morales, first Indigenous president, served as inspiration for people to reclaim their Indigenous heritage.

A world focus on Indigenous and more broadly human rights was a major factor for Indigenous recognition in Argentina. This was ushered in primarily by the United Nations' proclamation of The First International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004). The purpose of this decade was to strengthen international cooperation to solve problems faced by Indigenous people in areas including human rights, the environment, and education and health. The theme for the Decade was "Indigenous people: partnership in action." The second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People was from 2005-2014.⁴⁶ Internationally and transnationally, advocacy groups became involved in protection of Indigenous rights (Brysk 2000). Indigenous activists in Argentina were able to leverage the precedent set by the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1994) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169

⁴⁶ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IPeoples/Pages/InternationalDecade.aspx>

(1989) to pressure the government to integrate legal principles to further Indigenous rights; these included a recognition of ethnic and cultural pre-existence, right to self-determination, and recovery of communal territories (Carrasco 2000).

Within a Latin American context, Indigenous mobilizations and policy changes in neighboring countries, particularly Peru and Bolivia, also served as catalysts for Indigenous recognition in Argentina. The 1980s saw massive Indigenous movements across Latin America as well as changes to most Latin American constitutions. This Latin American constitutional framework provided a model for a new multicultural state (Van Cott 2000). Finally, the rise of Evo Morales as the first Indigenous president in 2005 in the neighboring country of Bolivia also had a huge impact on public opinion about indigeneity in Argentina. Indeed, many of the people I interviewed who self-identity as Kollas, credited Morales with inspiring them to reclaim the term Kolla and to be proud of their Indigenous heritage (Contreras, Carlos. Personal Interview. June 20, 2015).

On a national level, two other major factors that increased Indigenous awareness in Argentina were a push for human rights awareness following the military dictatorship of the 1970s and the financial crisis in 2000, which spurred an increase in national rather than international tourism and a subsequent internal focus. One impulse behind the new awareness of indigeneity and the push for a corrective historical narrative about Indigenous erasure emerged in tandem with discussions about other groups that had been disappeared in Argentine history. In the aftermath of the military dictatorship of the 1970s throughout the Southern

Cone and much of Latin America, Argentina has become a hotspot for discussions about the disappeared. Indeed, the very term “*los desaparecidos*” (the disappeared used as a noun instead of a past-tense verb), which describes the thousands of (primarily young people) who were abducted by the military and never to be seen again, originates in Argentina (Taylor 2003).

Victims of Argentina’s “Dirty War” in the late 1970s and early 80s are the most famous example of people who were systematically disappeared. However, a closer look at history, literature, art, music, and other elements of popular culture reveal a much longer pattern of groups being erased from the annals of the Argentine past. These include Blacks and Afro-Argentines, multiple Indigenous groups, and even, as Susana Rotker’s work shows, White women who were caught in the conflict between Argentines pushing to expand their territories and Indigenous groups fighting to retain theirs and were kidnapped from their settlement homes and disappeared from history (Rotker 2011).

Another factor was the financial crisis in 2000, which spurred an increase in national rather than international tourism and a subsequent internal focus. In 2000, Argentina was crippled by a huge economic downfall; many people died, riots broke out, and the peso fell dramatically. People in both Buenos Aires and in Salta Capital expressed that the 2000 crisis, while economically tragic, brought an unexpected renewal of Argentine pride in their own culture. Folkloric musician Pablo Cesario, a resident of Buenos Aires, told me that prior to the crisis, the dollar was matched with the peso in value (1:1). This allowed Argentines a certain amount of affluence

when travelling abroad. Thus, as historically has been the case, most Argentines (including Pablo) vacationed in Europe. However, with the economic downturn, leaving the country became virtually impossible for Pablo, and he and many others began traveling within their own country. As Pablo explained it, being forced to stay within his own nation unintentionally helped him find a new appreciation for its culture(s). Thus, in his words, he began to reject the *porteño* (people from Buenos Aires) stance of always looking outward for confirmation, and instead began looking inward. This caused him to begin exploring his own roots and an Argentine cultural identity that was not bound up in a European connection. For Pablo, this meant traveling throughout the country, including particularly the northwest, where he saw prominent evidence of Indigenous cultures (Cesario, Pablo. Personal Interview. November 5, 2014).

Even within the northwest region itself, the economic shift had a similar impact. Ana Soler, an ethnomusicologist who lives in the city of Salta, told me that during the time of “*uno por uno*” (one dollar for one peso), she and her friends were economically stable enough that they could vacation by travelling throughout Argentina. However, once the economic crisis hit, they could only afford to travel locally. Thus, they began leaving the gaucho environment of Salta and visiting more remote areas like the town of Cachi. Like Pablo, Ana shared that this shift caused many people from Salta to begin to recognize and appreciate a culture more closely tied to Kollas and other Indigenous groups (Soler, Ana. Personal Interview. February 16, 2015).

In some respects, these changes have enhanced the position of Indigenous peoples in Argentina. In particular, a renewed focus on human rights has opened up the discussion about Indigenous peoples and made their existence more visible within Argentina. However, it is a process full of vicissitudes. During my time in the country, I witnessed and/or participated in multiple demonstrations, the need for which reiterated the fact that much progress is still needed in order for Indigenous peoples to be treated equally under the law and by society at large.

Continued Challenges

In 2015, two major protests took place in Buenos Aires. One was a gathering of Indigenous women from across the country held a day-long march to the Legislative Palace.⁴⁷ Here they organizers presented a proposal for the “Consejo de Mujeres de Buen Vivir” (Advice of Women of Good Living or Well Living), which would integrate Indigenous women more into the affairs of their communities by appointing two women advisors for each community.⁴⁸ This demonstration was monumental in that it highlighted the fact that Indigenous women have been silenced even more than Indigenous men, since they have been subjected to not only the systemic violence of the state, but also patriarchal oppression within their own communities.

⁴⁷ <https://www.laizquierdadiario.com/Se-realizo-la-primer-Marcha-de-Mujeres-Originarias>

⁴⁸ El Buen Vivir is an important movement in South America. See de Zaldívar, Víctor Bretón Solo. 2013. “Etnicidad, Desarrollo y 'Buen Vivir': Reflexiones Críticas En Perspectiva Histórica,” no. 95: 71–95

As a participant in the event, I noted the presence of people who represented a variety of concerns, protesting the presence of huge multinational corporations in Indigenous territories. They included environmentalist, educators, human rights advocates, and anti-neoliberal activists. Three of the most notable figures were historian Osvaldo Bayer, Nobel Prize winner Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, and one of the founders of Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo, a group who denounce the disappearance of their children during the Dirty War. The event concluded with a concert in which many artists including folklorists Peteco Carabajal, Che Joven, and Bruno Arias showed their support.⁴⁹ This event demonstrated a key aspect of the Indigenous movement in Argentina; it has grown through its solidarity and overlap with environmentalists, anti-neoliberal activists, feminists, artists (including musicians), and those who continue to search for justice after the Dirty War.

Another protest that took place in 2015 was that of the Quom people who held a 12-month protest in the center of Buenos Aires in 2015. Led by Felix Diaz, this group was protesting the violence and persecution that they were suffering in their home province of Formosa. They camped out on one of the cement dividers in the middle of 9 de Julio, the busiest street in downtown Buenos Aires, and demanded an audience with then president Cristina Kirchner.

President Kirchner did not grant them an audience, and during the presidential campaign of 2016, Diaz aligned himself and his cause with then

⁴⁹ This last artist, Arias was highly influential in my case studies and will be discussed further in chapters 2-5

candidate, now president, Mauricio Macri. Soon after Macri won, the protest disbanded. Shortly thereafter, in 2015, a landmark summit meeting was held in Argentina to discuss Indigenous issues.⁵⁰ However, the struggle continues; according to ongoing discussion with my contacts in Argentina as well as new reports, little progress seems to have been made since then. Indeed, according to the Indigenous World Report in 2017,

Argentina is currently facing a generalized context of regressive policies on human rights. Now, more than one year after the Mauricio Macri administration came into office, the policies of redress and of compliance with human rights in general are in a phase of setbacks. This particularly applies to Indigenous peoples, (2017: 246).

Most recently, in 2018, new protests broke out after Rafael Nahuel was killed by the military as he was protesting Mapuche peoples' land seizure.⁵¹

Obviously, the struggle for state recognition, rights to ancestral lands, and even freedom from violence and oppression is ongoing for Indigenous peoples in Argentina. This is again due to the what scholars Delrio, Lenton, Musante, and Nagy describe as the "hegemonic denial of diversity" such that...

Nowadays, although there have been important steps forward in the field of human rights, influenced by the recent judgement of perpetrators of the last military dictatorship, the state still denies the existence of genocide and the existence of crimes against humanity with respect to Indigenous peoples (2010: 146).

⁵⁰ <https://www.casarosada.gob.ar/component/djmediatools/?view=item&cid=41034&id=0&tmpl=component>

⁵¹ <http://www.resumenlatinoamericano.org/2018/01/25/argentina-el-dia-que-macri-ignoro-a-los-pueblos-originarios-las-madres-de-plaza-de-mayo-marcharon-por-rafael-nahuel-la-investigacion-avanza-entre-la-autoria-del-disparo-y-la-responsabilidad-de-bull/>

In fact, the conclusions from the Indigenous World Report in 2017 are disheartening. However, I conclude this chapter by pointing out one important respect in which Indigenous peoples in Argentina have gained ground and in which popular culture plays a crucial role: the breakdown of the Argentine White imaginary, its historical exclusion of internal Others and its denial of racial and ethnic genocide.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, I return briefly to two events in the history of eliminating Indigenous peoples' presence: the conquest of Los Quilmes and the Conquest of the Desert. Much like the famous Trail of Tears forced relocation and the tragic Battle of Wounded Knee in U.S. Native American history, the conquest of the Quilmes people and the Conquest of the Desert stand out in Argentine history as both examples of shared state policies of removal and/or extermination and as prominent moments of Indigenous suffering.

In addition, these two events were salient in my fieldwork, and were referenced in many interviews as well as within song texts. The multiple ways that the conquest of the Quilmes people and the Conquest of the Desert were framed by different people and texts I encountered in Argentina speak to a current understanding of the Indigenous experience in this country and the multiple narratives this has produced. As such, a discussion of these moments serves as a

lens through which to examine Indigenous history and contemporary memory in Argentina.

Multiple Narratives of Los Quilmes

Today, the term, Quilmes refers to three things in Argentina: an archeological site, a suburb of Buenos Aires (the location where the Quilmes were forced to resettle in 1536), and the national beer. All of these things are connected through the same tragic event, yet depending on who you ask, this is or is not palpably evident. Indeed, what I found was that how a person identified with Indigenous rights movements shaped how he or she understood this historical narrative.

There are three distinct narratives about Los Quilmes. In the first version, the Quilmes were conquered first by the Incas, then by the Spanish, and then were brought to Buenos Aires where they have since ceased to exist. The second version recasts the Quilmes as brave warriors who resisted first the Incan and then the Spanish occupation for years and were finally conquered and suffered unspeakable horrors during their forced relocation to Buenos Aires. In this version, the archeological site is the place where the Quilmes people *used* to exist.

Finally, the third version, like the second, frames the Quilmes as brave warriors who suffered during their forced relocation to Buenos Aires. However, in this narrative, not all Quilmes people were taken to Buenos Aires. Indeed, some people escaped and fled to the mountains where they stayed in hiding until years

later, when they came down and formed a community, whose members, today, manage the Los Quilmes ruins archaeological site.

Since it is on the tourist circuit, the Los Quilmes archeological site is best known by tourists, both international and national. The beer, on the other hand, is known throughout the country. Los Quilmes is one of very few beer brands in Argentina, since this country is famous for its wine and not its beer. Thus, everyone I met in Argentina was familiar with Los Quilmes beer although not everyone knew what the name refers to. However, a much smaller group was aware of the archeological site, and an even smaller population knew about any Los Quilmes residents alive and well today.

The suburb of Los Quilmes in Buenos Aires province today holds little relation to Los Quilmes archeological site. History books discuss the Los Quilmes tragedy, yet it is doubtful whether most Argentines connect this educational tidbit with the beer that can be found throughout the country. Indeed, some of the most paradoxical moments of my research were conversations with Argentines and non-Argentines alike, in which one or more people argued vehemently that there were no Indigenous people in Argentina, all while they were calmly sipping from their Los Quilmes bottle of beer. (This is similar to children in the U.S. who learn about The Trail of Tears in their history books and then dress up as “bad Indians” for Halloween or don feathered-mascot costumes for their sports games.)

Essentially, the final version of these narratives is true. It is not accurate that all of the Quilmes people were killed or were relocated. Indeed, today the

archeological site is owned and maintained by a small community of people who self-identify as Quilmes and who trace their heritage back to a pre-conquest era.

Pablo Costilla is a descendent of the Quilmes people, who lives in the Los Quilmes community close to nearby Amaicha. Costilla, who holds a university degree in history and is the secretary to the *cacique* (chief) of *Los Quilmes*, is a guide at Los Quilmes archeological site. Costilla sees his job as one of public education and redressing historical inaccuracies. Indeed, my first encounter with Costilla was very revealing, as he explained the history of his people and the archeological site to me. To Costilla, it is important that an intervention be made to rewrite history in Argentina since most books describe a complete annihilation of Los Quilmes people (Interview March 2016). Today, the Los Quilmes community proudly displays a sign that reads,

<i>Bienvenido: La ciudad sagrada de los Quilmes 09 enero 2008, Reivindicación de nuestro legado ancestral. Decreto 2731/ 142 Julio 2017.</i>	Welcome: The Sacred City of the Quilmes 09 January 2008, Claiming our ancestral legacy. Decree 2731/142 July 2017.
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This sign, posted at the entrance to the ruins, shapes the experience of the tourists who visit this site. It recasts the Los Quilmes massacre as less than a complete annihilation as it provides evidence of a thriving community that claims an ancestral legacy predating the Spanish and Incan invasions.

Desmontar el Monumento de Roca (Teardown Roca's Monument)

Similar to the multiple and ever-shifting narratives about Los Quilmes, the conversation has also changed regarding the Conquest of the Desert in recent years

as human rights concerns, and more specifically, those of Indigenous peoples in Argentina have come to the forefront. Just as Los Quilmes is now discussed as a genocide within certain circles, so too the Desert Conquest has been recast as a tragedy of Argentine history, rather than a war maneuver. With this reframing, heroes have fallen as well.

While in his day, General Roca was seen as a military leader, today many Argentines refer to him as a perpetrator of genocide, or a war criminal. With this shift, Roca's words of pride that "no Indian shall cross these pampas"⁵² have become a hallmark of his shame. Huge efforts have been made to eradicate Roca from the face of Argentine popular culture, both through tearing down monuments of him and removing him from the 100- peso bill (Bayer 2010: 8).

The genocides of Los Quilmes in Tucuman and of the Mapuche and Tehuelche in the South are emblematic examples of a general subjective violence against Indigenous peoples in Argentina. They are also foundational to an understanding of contemporary Indigenous identity and movements in Argentina. More specifically, they show how certain events and historical figures have been reframed as Indigenous groups have gained ground and presence in Argentina. This demonstrates, that "what has been remembered and what has been forgotten"

⁵² Julio A. Roca, presidential speech before the Legislative Assembly, 6 May 1884 (National Congress, daily report on sessions). Translation by Walter Delirio, Diana Lenton, Marcelo Musante, and Marino Nagy (2010: 139)

(Renan 1999: 56) is as important to the understanding of Los Quilmes and the Desert Conquest as are the facts themselves.

Powerful Narratives

In his book on violence (2008) Slavoj Žižek identifies three main types of violence: subjective (crime, terror); objective (racism, hate-speech, discrimination); and systemic (manifested and perpetuated through political and economic systems that are built on inequalities). He argues that while subjective violence is the most apparent and the most inflammatory, objective and systemic violence are perhaps more troubling because they are harder to recognize and take responsibility for. Further, he postulates that these three types of violence are inseparable and that, in fact, one begets the other.

In chronicling the historical subjugation of Indigenous peoples in Argentina, I use Žižek's theory to demonstrate that, while the subjective violence against them, including massacres, assault, and kidnappings, has been the most immediately painful, the more objective and systemic violence has also had long-lasting psychological impacts. In my fieldwork, I spoke with many Indigenous people who expressed to me the pain of not seeing themselves in history books, but rather reading about their extinction accomplished through "civilizing" (actually extermination) campaigns such as the Desert Campaigns (1878-1885) or the Gran Chaco Campaigns (1884-1917). In other words, these people were taught in school that they no longer existed (see also Barrientos 2012).

The pain of this erasure is profound and not to be minimized. However, this type of subjective violence may be one of the only things that popular culture can help ameliorate. As the examples about Los Quilmes and the Desert Conquest show, people can shift their understanding of historical events and allow for silenced narratives to be heard. The general populous in Argentina may not have control over the government, but at minimum they continue to refuse to subscribe to what Osvaldo Bayer refers to as "*La historia oficial*" (the official history), which obscures internal Others and genocidal histories. This is certainly the goal of many people I interviewed who either self-identified as Indigenous themselves or who stood in solidarity with Indigenous causes. This included those members of my case studies who used performance as a way of contesting the "official history" and remapping indigeneity back onto the national White imaginary.

Chapter Two

Argentine Icons: Gauchos and Kollas

Part 1. Gauchos

Cosquín Festival, Cordoba January 2014

It has been a long night, the third in which I have sat in the plastic chairs of the main Cosquín stage coliseum watching group after group of musicians and dancers competing. I am probably one of the only non-Argentines here tonight. The seats are mostly empty except for the participants themselves who also are the spectators, cheering on their friends when they themselves are not on stage. The contrast in audience engagement when dancers versus musicians perform is dramatic. It seems that complete respect is given to the dancers, while the majority of audience members resume talking, smoking, and drinking each time the music duos, ensembles, or soloists appear. This lack of deference for the musicians surprises me, and I gather that this event is more focused on dancers than musicians.

Another ballet number is announced. The announcer's voice booms out over the half-empty arena, "número cincuenta y dos Ballet Martín Fierro, 'De Caudillos y Montoneras'" Exhausted and cold, I sit up, pull my coat around me tighter, and diligently write down the name of this last group in my little notebook at the bottom of a long list of other ballets and performances that I have seen this night. As a newcomer to the folkloric world, it is difficult for me to distinguish one performance from the next; they all feature gauchos in heavy black boots and their female counterparts, the paisanas, in their long skirts, blouses, and long braids. Musically, I can tell a chacarera from a zamba, but that is about it. Convinced that this performance will look much like the others I have seen tonight, I tell myself that I will watch one, maybe two more acts, before I head to bed. After all, I have to be up for more interviews in just a few hours.

The stage lights come up slowly along with the sound of chirping birds. A group of men dressed as gauchos and women in long skirts, walk on stage, pick up long, wooden logs and begin to move with them in such a way that it appears they are building a makeshift cabin. From the far-left stage, another group of dancers walks on pushing a tall structure that looks like a watchtower in front of them. I sit up, noticing something different. These gauchos are dressed slightly differently than the majority of those I have seen so far. Where the other ones had on billowing pants and wide-brimmed hats, these dancers are wearing white cloths wrapped around their legs to form a type of loose pants. They have an additional, heavier looking cloth wrapped around their waists and tied in such a way that it forms a type of shorts over the other

white cloth. (Later, my friends, Gloria and Dario, explain to me that this is a southern gaucho style from the pampas, and that the pants are called chiripas.)

The music begins and a narrator's strong voice echoes out over the crowd. I strain to catch the words, but am only able to grasp the beginning part, something about "ser Argentino" (being Argentine). I make a mental note to review the recording later. The first number is a chacarera, and aside from the wooden pieces, this dance looks similar to other ones I have seen over the past few nights. The music consists of violin, guitar, and bombo, and the women and men dance in partners, their hands held high by their heads.

The song ends, and a trumpet suddenly rings out. The dancers hurriedly disassemble their makeshift structure and carry the wooden logs to the front of the stage where they stand the props vertically by their side to create a barrier or fence-like structure. As they do this, an unseen trumpet begins playing the melody to "Taps." (I instantly recognize this song from U.S. military movie scenes and wonder what role it has in this Argentine performance). All the dancers turn with their backs facing the audience and lift their right arms up in what appears to be a military salute.

Another chacarera (or perhaps a gato?) begins, and the women and gauchos again dance. A bell tolls from somewhere off stage, and then the dancers perform a zamba. I catch some of the lyrics of the song. They describe a woman who is deserted when her lover goes to war and fails to return. The woman remains single her whole life. The final lyrics of the song repeat "unos le dicen la montonera y otros la reservada" (some call her a mountain woman and others the reserved).

When the song ends, the gauchos (the men) run off stage left as the first guitar chords of the next song begin, and a horse neighs somewhere off in the distance. The women, left alone, group together. They crouch down in a circle facing outward and pointing their sticks out in front of them as if they were guns.

All of a sudden, four figures completely incongruent with the gaucho scene appear: Indians, or some strange representation of Indians. They are half clothed, wearing only short white loincloths and white boots; long black braids fall down their backs. These dancers dressed as Indians run on stage, whipping boleadoras (lasso type weapons) around their heads and hooting as they race toward the women. As they run on stage, I am immediately reminded of images from Disney's Peter Pan and the song "What Makes the Red Man Red?" Who, I wonder, are these Indians supposed to represent?

The women valiantly try and defend themselves against the Indian "invaders". They run around fleeing their pursuers, until, eventually, most are caught, and heaved onto their attacker's shoulder as they are carried away and off stage. The violence escalates as two final pairs battle. One of the women pushes her Indian assaulter off of her. He falls to the ground, scrambles up, and then brutally knocks the woman to the floor, dragging her a few feet before throwing her over his shoulder. A second woman tries to escape her pursuer by climbing the tower, but she is pulled down and also carried away off stage. This looks like a scene out of a Wild West movie.

In the next scene all the gauchos, and the remaining women, return. The men's arrival is heralded by trumpet fanfare. Another chacarera begins and the women and gauchos begin dancing. They are interrupted when the Indians, and their captive women, ostensibly trying to escape their captors, run back on stage. Surprised, the gaucho and women couples are driven off stage. More violence ensues, until the Indians eventually pick up the women and again carry them off stage. The ballet ends when the gauchos return to fight the Indians. They corner and capture one Indian. He stands with his arms and legs spread as if he is tied or being drawn and quartered within a wooden structure. He hangs his head; the gauchos kneel or stand defiantly, and the lights dim.

When I first began this research project, my goal was to focus on indigeneity and Indigenous performance in Argentina. Thus, I saw little connection between folkloric music and dance and my research. As a fan of one of Argentina's most famous folkloric singers, Mercedes Sosa, I had become entranced with the Argentine folkloric sound, particularly *zambas*, and hoped to study them; however, I failed to see a direct connection between this music and my dissertation research. Despite my initial intent to explore a different aspect of Argentine culture, indigeneity, I soon found that since folkloric music and its hero, the gaucho, were the dominant national symbols, they were also the cultural foils against which I would have to explore a shifting Indigenous discourse in Argentina.

The opening vignette of this chapter describes one of the first times that the importance of understanding Indigenous representations in relation to those of the gaucho became apparent to me. I was attending the Pre-Cosquín Competition, part of the National Cosquín Festival held in Cosquín, Córdoba, every year, a week-long celebration of folkloric culture, music and dance. At the festival, patrons attend

nightly concerts of major folkloric headliners while taking classes in dance and singing and attending lectures and seminars about folkloric culture during the day.

The Cosquín festival is preceded by a less commercial, yet equally important event: the Pre-Cosquín competition. Pre-Cosquín is like the Olympics of folkloric dancing in Argentina. Contestants begin preparing at least a year in advance and must make it through a series of elimination levels before being allowed to compete in the official competition. Those who win have the honor of performing their winning number during the actual festival in front of a huge live crowd and on national television.

Given the national prestige that is allotted to Pre-Cosquín winners, the ways that racial and national identity are performed on this stage and what role, if any, Indigenous people, or Indigenous performance, have on it is highly significant. After watching the ballet "*De Caudillos y Montoneras*," I began to consider the relationship between gauchos and Argentine Indigenous people that this act portrayed. The story had clearly set up the gauchos as the heroic protagonists and the Indians as the antagonists and invaders; the Indians were the bad guys who came and kidnapped the women while the patriotic military gauchos were out fighting for their country. In many ways, the act seemed to be showing a particular moment in history when Argentina was just becoming a nation and the many immigrants who had been enticed to Argentina with the promise of land were struggling to establish themselves on the new frontier. However, if this had been the case, it would have been the Mapuche and the Tehuelches fighting and capturing women. Instead, the

ballet showed four random men in loincloths and boots. Just as stories about North American cowboys and Indians lack historical specificity and omit an entire backstory that automatically cast the White settlers as the only ones with a legitimate claim to the land and thus as the victims of Indigenous raids, this ballet painted a similar picture of the Argentine settlers defending their territory from the “savage” Indians.

Even the amount of space that the gauchos occupied on the stage, in both numbers and in the physical space that their movements took, seemed to represent their claim to the land. The majority of the ballet focused on the gauchos and the *paisanas*⁵³ (female gaucho counterpart) staking out their territory. In contrast, when the Indians ran on stage, they made a beeline for the women, and except for the two who fought in pairs, they disappeared in a matter of moments. I found it curious that these protagonists did not have a dance number just for themselves. Was this because these half-clothed dancers would look odd dancing chacareras and zambas, dances of European origin? Was this quintessential Argentine repertoire out of their reach? In sum, was there a place for Indigenous expression within a folkloric setting?

As my research continued, I found different responses to this question. The more entrenched I became in Argentine culture, the more prominently I saw that

⁵³ Generally, gauchos are male. In dances, the male performers dress in wide pants, a button-up shirt and jacket, and a wide-brimmed hat. The female counterparts, the *paisanas* dress in long, flowing skirts and blouses. Outside of a dance context, women can also dress as *gauchas* in an outfit similar to that of the gaucho, only replacing a long, straight-cut skirt for pants.

the gaucho was a central figure, not only to a national agenda and *gauchesque* literature, but to folkloric performance as well. Therefore, while the gaucho is undeniably a national symbol, he holds different meanings and cultural capital for each individual. Indeed, for some people I talked to, the gaucho was less of a hero and more an enemy of Argentine indigeneity. For these people, another figure had taken on a symbolism that countered that of the gaucho and thus contested a homogenous “White” Argentine identity: the Kolla.

In this chapter, I analyze the role of the gaucho and the Kolla in Argentina and the cultural work of each one. I show that the contextualization of the gaucho in popular culture, through literature as well as music and dance, has helped to propagate Whiteness through performance in an enduring manner. I argue that gaucho performances, which continue to this day, serve to re-constitute and re-edify a White national image even as the Kolla figure has begun to appear alongside it.

After discussing the gaucho, I examine the role that the Kolla has played in furthering a newer agenda for a more diverse nation. The Kolla has opened up a small yet crucial space for Indigenous expression. I argue that just as performances of the gaucho can be seen as re-edifying whiteness, those that incorporate aspects of Kolla culture are making more visible an Indigenous presence in the folkloric world. Part of the success of the Kolla figure has been its ability to be tokenized as an Incan symbol. This has allowed proponents of indigeneity to usurp the Kolla as simultaneously an Argentine Indigenous symbol and one that articulates a pan-Latin cultural belonging.

A second point I make is that the lauding of the gaucho as an unabashedly masculine trope has helped to characterize Argentina as masculine. Professor of gender, women, and sexuality studies Amy K. Kaminsky explains that Eurocentrism in Argentina has elicited a strong identification with Europe and since European political, religious, and economic structures have historically been in the hands of men, Argentina's alignment with this superpower has enabled the country to also be coded as masculine (2008: 19). Building on the feminist theorists Mary Daly, Simone de Beauvoir, and Sherry Ortner, Kaminsky argues that a strong gender bias towards men, "frees femininity and all things associated with 'woman' for use as a metaphor for further otherings '(2008: 19). The idea that the conquered and colonized nations of Latin America (also Asia, and Africa) serve as the feminine counterpart submissive to the masculine imperial powers of Europe and the U.S. is a common concept in literature and scholarship (see Breinig 2016; Biagini 2000; Sandoval Sanchez 1999). Another trope connected to a feminized Latin America is that of the "untamed, irrational Indian, close to nature...against which rational, purposeful competent masculinity is measured" (Kaminsky 2008: 20; Hull, Scott, and Smith 1982; Frye 1983). Argentines, then, through identification with Europe set themselves apart from the rest of Latin America as less feminized and less Indigenous. Thus, I argue that investment in the gaucho as a cultural figure is tied to a lingering need for Argentines to establish themselves as fiercely masculine, European, and un-Latin American.

By contrast, just as the gaucho has helped to solidify a masculine image in Argentina, the *Kolla* has allowed for a more feminine and Latin American perspective to emerge. I make this argument fully aware of the danger of reinscribing the tendency to feminize indigeneity. However, the emergence of the *Kolla* as cultural icon has placed an indisputably matriarchal figure, the Pachamama (mother earth), if not on par with, then close to the level of the masculine gaucho. Furthermore, as I will show in chapter three, some contemporary musicians are using *coplas*, (genre of music), the music associated with *Kollas*, to challenge patriarchal dominance and gender violence in society today.

I begin this chapter by describing some of the regional tensions in Argentina and the ways that they play into very different conceptions of what it means to be Argentine in distinct regions of the country and who/what cultural symbols are used to represent this Argentine-ness. I use Mercedes Sosa as a lens to begin and conclude with a discussion of the gaucho as seen in Buenos Aires versus in Salta. From here, I provide a historical overview of the gaucho, beginning with the antecedents of the term gaucho and ending with shifts in national recognition of this figure as he moved from villain to national hero in the eyes of the elite. Within this section, I draw parallels between the iconizing of the Argentine gaucho and that of his North-American counterpart, the cowboy. From here, I analyze the role of popular culture in recasting the gaucho as the emblem of White national identity. This begins with a discussion of *gauchesque* (gaucho) literature and the important influence of José Hernández' *Martin Fierro* (1879) in solidifying the gaucho as a non-

Indigenous and non-Black masculine figure. I then move to a section about the gaucho as folkloric icon, including historical references to the gaucho as a musician and the undeniable indexing of the gaucho as folkloric icon today, particularly in Salta. I conclude the first half of this chapter with a look at how and why Salteños, historically exuberant about their pride of being gauchos, have begun to shift their opinion slightly to also include the notion that Salta is also the gateway to Andean culture, and how this in turn has opened up a new cultural space for the Kolla.

In the second half of this chapter, I focus on the Kolla, beginning with an anecdote from my fieldnotes to show the growing prominence of the tokenized Kolla figure in folkloric music culture today. Next, I provide a historical overview of the Kolla, tracing the roots of this Indigenous group back to the Incas and their brief reign in Northern Argentina as part of the *Collasuyu* (Inca territory). Next, I discuss how the Kolla became a tokenized figure of tourism, starting in the 1930s and into contemporary times. This includes a discussion of the folklorization of the Kolla demonstrated in the dance “El Humahuaqueño,” also known as “El Carnavalito.” In the final section, I explain how the Kolla has been reclaimed politically, socially, and culturally. I conclude this chapter with a brief review of why the gaucho and the Kolla, both of whom have been used to map political and social agendas, continue to hold contradictory yet important meaning today. This leads into chapter three, which focuses on the cultural ground that Kollas have gained, and how this is reflected and constituted through the popularity of their music: coplas.

Distinct Interpretations of National Icons

Argentina is often spoken of as a divided land, meaning that the political, economic, and cultural weight of the nation's province and capital by the same name, Buenos Aires, far outweighs that of the rest of the country (McGann 1966).⁵⁴ Although Buenos Aires was the least important of the Spanish crown's outposts due to its distance from the silver mines in Peru and upper Peru (MacLachlan 2006: 1), ironically, today one may even consider that the province "is the Argentine nation" (McGann 1996: 9).⁵⁵ Buenos Aires province, the largest in the country, dominates in both physical size and in population with 13,076,300 people, 2,891,000 who live in the city of Buenos Aires. This is out of a total national population of 44,648,670.⁵⁶ Since independence, Argentina has been divided as two different visions of the nation developed. In addition, the majority of the immigrants who arrived between 1853-1930 and 1947-1952 (Germani 1994: 166) settled in Buenos Aires, which again lends to the nation as a whole being European. Buenos Aires elite were of the opinion that the nation could only succeed if its intellectual, political, and economic resources were rooted in Buenos Aires; the rest of the nation disagreed. Thus, the nation split into those who believed in centralized control from Buenos Aires and those who wanted to continue the tradition under the Spanish crown of minimal state intrusion (MacLachlan 2006: 3). As a result of this split, Buenos Aires

⁵⁴ Buenos Aires has also played a crucial role in Argentine politics, such as the 1983 national election of Raúl Alfonsín. See Richard J. Walter (1985).

⁵⁵ Of course, I argue that part of this perception comes from scholars tendency to solely focus on Buenos Aires, which is a trend I break with in this dissertation.

⁵⁶ <http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/argentina-population/>

developed independently of the rest of the nation, forming its own national characteristics including its own heavily Italianized accent and dialect, *lunfardo* (McGann 1966: 94-95), as well as its own cultural emphases and interpretations of national icons.

While the gaucho and the Kolla are national icons, popular understanding and opinion about these figures has been shaped by regional context. From an outside perspective, much of these regional nuances have been blurred through the process of iconizing or even exoticizing these figures. This means that these figures carry distinct cultural currency not only from one region to another, but from within and to outside Argentina as well.

However, this blurring of certain nuances and a generalizing of these icon's importance are not solely relevant to the gaucho and the Kolla. Rather, it is often the case that popular understanding of a country's cultural symbols looks different from a perspective from outside of the country than from on the ground, and that even within the same country, the meanings of these symbols shift. To show how these shifts play out on the ground, I will use the voice of Argentina *nueva canción*, (new song) the inimitable Mercedes Sosa, as a cultural lens.

Mercedes Sosa: A Cultural Lens

One of the most famous figures of Argentine culture is Mercedes Sosa, a talented singer and musician who in international circles is most known for her leftist political beliefs and her performance of protest music (*nueva canción*). Most

commonly associated with the song movement known as *nueva canción* (new song), which was also known as the *Movimiento Nuevo Cancionero* (New Songbook movement) in Argentina, this pan-Latin musical style emerged in the late 1950s and '60s with the aim of combining traditional song forms with sophisticated poetry and social themes (Karush 2017: 73-74).

Although primarily a cosmopolitan movement, *nueva canción* artists sang songs that highlighted the position of the marginalized sectors of society: the poor, the rural—and often Indigenous peoples. Lyrics were sophisticated; messages of protest were proclaimed through subtle articulations that incorporated complex metaphors and poetic imagery, rather than through bold, brash statements. *Nueva canción* artists sang songs, such as Victor Jara's "*El Arado*" (The Plough), which idealized agrarian life and its peasants, who survived off the sweat of their brows, and Violetta Para's "*Gracias a La Vida*," (Thank you to Life), which gives thanks for all the simple things in life.

Nueva canción emerged out a type of *indigenismo* in which musicians incorporated Andean Indigenous instruments, such as *kenas* and *sikus/zampoñas* (pan pipes) into cosmopolitan music genres. Ethnomusicologist Fernando Rios traces the nativist style of music found in *nueva canción* to its roots in venues mainly frequented by the middle-class and the elite in La Paz (Bolivia) Santiago (Chile) and Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Paris (France) (2012: 9). He argues that the Andean *conjunto* (*quena-zampoña-charango-guitar-bombo*), which is generally presented as a village custom from the Andean Indigenous highlands, is actually

rooted in urban, cosmopolitan settings. (ibid). Rios further posits that, contrary to popular belief that nueva canción artists brought this music with them to Europe when they went into exile in the 1970s, in actuality, artists from Buenos Aires who knew little of Andean culture brought a type of stylized Indigenous Andean music to Paris years earlier in the 1950s (2008:146). His work shows first, that what we think of today (and as I will show) what many Argentines index as Indigenous music, characterized by kenas and sikus, is really a form of urban folkloric-popular music (2012: 9).

The Movimiento Nuevo Cancionero and its founders, including Sosa, combined elements of this nativist trend with an already established folkloric repertoire. Sosa was born in Tucuman and started out as a folk singer, originally performing for official events organized by the Peronist government that promoted folkloric music in schools and sanctioned the amount of foreign songs radios were allowed to play (Chamosa 2012: 258; Karush 2017: 145-146). However, as historian Matthew B. Karush states, in the early 1960s, Sosa rose to stardom through reinventing herself as an embodiment of indigeneity that appealed to both an international, (Europe and the United States) and a Latin American audience. Sosa drew on the earlier wave of Buenos Aires musicians who “packaged their art to appeal to the primitivist sensibilities of European audiences” as well as on contemporary trends in North American folk music (Karush 2017: 143).

As Karush notes,

by locating an essentialist indigeneity at the heart of Argentine national identity, Sosa had also connected the country to the rest of Latin America. In this way, she enabled Argentine young people to reimagine their nationality and their Latin American-ness (ibid).⁵⁷

In addition to recasting herself as an icon of indigeneity, Sosa also grew more militant as a performer (Molinero and Vila 2014: 208).⁵⁸ Along with the other Movimiento Nuevo Cancionero and nueva canción artists, Sosa's protest music put her in danger, and in the midst of the "Dirty War" she fled to Europe where she lived in exile for three years. Upon her return, Sosa underwent another transformation; she expanded her repertoire and began collaborating with artists across genres and nationalities from rock artists of the *rock nacional* movement such as Charly Garcia and Sui Genesis, to Leon Gieco, and later still, Abel Pintos and Soledad Pastorutti. As Karush concludes, this transformation enabled Sosa to "bring together disparate communities in the name of building a socially just, democratic society" (2017: 143). Through this Sosa was elevated to the status of national icon, and around the world, Sosa's name is synonymous with protest music.

Given her fame as a radicalized singer, I had assumed that everyone in Argentina would think of Sosa, as I did, as a musical activist. However, what I found ethnographically changed my opinion. I realized that for many Argentines, Sosa was

⁵⁷ Of course, reinventing herself as Indigenous does not mean that she did not have Indigenous roots. Indeed, scholars such as Rodolfo Braceli have written of her Indigenous heritage. Even her nickname "La negra" indicates this. For more on this and a complete bio see Braceli, Rodolfo. 2012. *Mercedes Sosa La Negra*. Buenos Aires : SUDAMERICANA.

⁵⁸ Pablo Vila and Carlos Molinero provide a detailed analysis of Sosa's militant trajectory based on her changes in song repertoire. See Pablo Vila and Illa Carrillo Rodríguez. 2018. "A Brief History of the Militant Song Movement in Argentina" in *The Militant Song Movement in Latin America: Chile, Uruguay, and Argentina*:

more of a folk hero than a symbol of protest, and that how she is viewed varies regionally within the country. To understand the role of folk music in Argentina and how that portrayal shifts depending on one's perspective as a foreigner or as a local Argentine, it is useful to compare the relative popularity of Sosa's version of the nueva canción "Gracias a la Vida" with that of the Argentine folk classic, "Balderrama."

One of the most internationally famous nueva canción songs is "Gracias a la Vida." This song was written and composed by Chilean folklorist Violetta Para, but Sosa's recording of this song landed her the biggest commercial success of her career and helped solidify her as the "voice of the voiceless"⁵⁹ throughout Latin America and beyond. "Balderrama" is a zamba and a much-loved folk classic composed by Gustavo Leguizamon with lyrics by Manuel José Castilla. This song also became part of Sosa's classic repertoire; it was even featured in the 2008 movie *Che*.

My ethnographic research revealed that "Balderamma" is by far the more celebrated of these two songs within Argentina. Indeed, I never heard "Gracias a la Vida" performed live, whereas "Balderamma" was a given in almost any *peña* (music venue) or *guitarreada* (musical jam) I attended. In Salta, in particular, "Balderamma" is practically a local anthem since it describes one of the most famous (and thus, expensive) peñas in Salta Capital. Additionally, "Balderamma" was composed by Salta native, Gustavo Leguizamon (affectionately known as "Cuchi"),

⁵⁹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/05/arts/music/05sosa.html>

whose fame extends across the country. The lyrics also describe an Argentine-specific reality, and make reference to both local northwest and national terminology, including a bombo (folkloric drum) and a *baguala* (a type of regional singing). The song further describes an honored regional pastime of participating in a guitarreada, singing song after song, followed by drink after drink, until the dawn greets the musicians. Finally, “Balderrama” is a *zamba* (music genre) and thus part of a folkloric repertoire.

Conversations with my research subjects revealed that not only was Sosa seen differently from an outside perspective, but also from one region of Argentina to the next. In general, musicians’ thoughts about Sosa in Buenos Aires matched my previous understanding of her, that she was “synonymous with struggle, resistance, and freedom.”⁶⁰ However, the further I got away from Buenos Aires, the more people spoke of Sosa as a folk musician, rather than as a leftist figure. In Tucuman, Sosa’s birthplace, the singer was highly revered. However, I was surprised to encounter people in Salta as well as in the National Cosquín Festival who, while acknowledging her prowess as a singer, did not particularly like Sosa’s style. A few people even shared that Sosa did not deserve the prominent recognition that she held over other artists since she was simply a musician and had never composed her own music. Thus, the ways in which Sosa was discussed and the level to which she

⁶⁰ <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/05/arts/music/05sosa.html>

was associated with the political left as well as elevated overall as an artist shifted along regional and national lines.

The way that Sosa was viewed in Buenos Aires as opposed to in Salta was shaped by a broader discourse about Argentine identity that further informed which genres were popular in which areas of Argentina. In general, folkloric music is more popular and ubiquitous in Salta, and the overall interior, than in Buenos Aires.⁶¹ In Buenos Aires, walking down the street one could hear *rock nacional*, rock in English, techno, and even tango, but randomly hearing folkloric music or coming upon a folkloric performance in this city was a rare occasion. This is not to say that folkloric music was impossible to find, but it required researching where a particular group or artist would be playing or searching out a *peña* to attend. In contrast, in Salta, folkloric music emanated from most storefronts, the windows of passing cars, and the many *peñas* that abound in this city. However, beyond the differences in popularity of folkloric music in Salta versus in Buenos Aires, I also found that the genre itself was associated with distinct meanings from one place to the other.

In Buenos Aires, indigeneity or Indigenous awareness is often folded into a broader category of music from the interior, or the provinces. The average everyday *porteño* places more emphasis on Argentina's relationship with Europe and even with the U.S. (although the former relationship is characterized more by admiration and the latter more by hostility) than with the country's Indigenous populations.

⁶¹ When I refer to Buenos Aires here I mean Buenos Aires Distrito Capital, not the larger province, which is also included in discussions about the interior.

However, in scholarly and folkloric circles people took a keen interest in looking to the interior to learn more about what it meant to be Argentine.

As explained in chapter one, this desire to look inward as a nation instead of following the Argentine trajectory of looking outward to other nations appeared to be precipitated by the economic crisis of 2001. As one interviewee Pablo Cesario explained, “during the one to one period (when the peso was equal to the dollar) no one wanted to travel within Argentina; everyone wanted to go to Europe or Miami. But after the crisis no one could afford to leave the country. So, people started travelling to the interior.⁶² That’s when we started to realize that we didn’t know ourselves, we didn’t know our own country” (Cesario, Pablo. November 10, 2014). Pablo now travels to the Northwest, especially to Jujuy every summer and particularly during Carnival time, which as I will explain is significant given that Carnival is the main time for traditions that are coded as Indigenous revitalization.

This perception that the true folklorists and the true Argentines were located in the interior was a narrative that I heard from many folklore musicians, dancers, and event organizers in Buenos Aires. This message was so prominent that it almost juxtaposed porteños with their authentic Argentine counterparts, placing the latter over the former in highly idealized and exoticized language. It also in some cases led to a well-intentioned but problematic tendency to characterize all Argentines as Indigenous. However, in Salta, while folkloric music was popular, it was not

⁶² Argentina is often spoken about in a binary that separates Buenos Aires from the rest of the country, el interior.

inherently associated with a leftist and Indigenous inclusion agenda. Rather, folkloric music was much more tied to a gaucho identity and a traditional criollo culture.

It was for these reasons that Mercedes Sosa was more revered in Buenos Aires than in Salta. First, her image as a leftist protest singer matched that of the folklorists in Buenos Aires who similarly saw themselves moving against the status quo. Second, her fame as a singer of Indigenous origin made her representative of the Argentina that they did not know (the authentic interior).

Given the lack of popularity of folkloric music in Buenos Aires, and on the advice of club owners and local musicians who told me that if I wanted to hear this country⁶³ music I would have to leave the great cosmopolitan metropolis and travel to *el interior*, I headed north. In the provinces of Tucuman, Salta, and Jujuy, I did find a much greater emphasis on folkloric music. In Salta in particular, the gaucho folkloric identity was strong, and the main entertainment strip was lined with peñas (music venues) where people danced to zambas, *chacareras*, (music genre) and *gatos* (music genre) from midnight to dawn.

In travelling to the Northwest, I discovered that, just as was the case with tango, folkloric music, and Mercedes Sosa, there was another national symbol whose meaning shifted with regional context: the gaucho.

⁶³ I am not referring to the genre of American country music here

Regional Tensions and Shifting Meanings of Gauchos

One of the most prominent symbols of Argentine identity is the gaucho. In basic terms, a gaucho is a South American cowboy, and it holds national importance in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Gauchos are known for their equestrian skills, ability to raise and herd cattle, and reputation for being fierce and rugged, since they originally roamed free, living off the land and the cattle that they slaughtered (often illegally). Like their North American counterparts, gauchos have taken on a mystique representative of a nostalgia among Argentines about a “pre-civilized” era in their country’s history as well as a prominently masculine stereotype.⁶⁴

However, unlike in North America, where the cowboy is associated with one region and sect of the population, in Argentina, the gaucho’s cultural influence extends across the entire nation. This figure is displayed on postcards and tourist knick-knacks and in dance and music performances across the country. However, as Latin American literature scholar Katherine Lehman observes, the gaucho and the North American cowboy have both been celebrated as national heroes, yet the cowboy has never been blamed for the ills of the country as the gaucho has (2005: 150). In addition, the gaucho, although “ambiguously mestizo...does not ‘represent’ women, urban workers, upper or middle classes, or Indigenous peoples; in other words...this figure represents a small part of the population” (Lehman 2005: 154). Again, there is an obvious parallel between the “white cowboy mythology” (Slatta

⁶⁴ See for example the use of the cowboy in Marlboro ads to promote these cigarettes as manly products.

1990: 203-204) and that of the Europeanized gaucho. Given the complex and contradictory interplay of constructions around race, ethnicity and class embodied in the gaucho, despite its national appeal, this icon holds different meanings for different people and within distinct regions of Argentina.

In Buenos Aires, the gaucho is largely considered to be a mythical figure, a trope to be deployed in tourist shows and stamped on coasters, rather than a flesh and blood human being. One might encounter people who speak with pride of the Argentine *gaucho* but have little personal connection to this figure within a non-folkloric context. During my time in Buenos Aires, I saw only one person, other than those who were performing on a stage, and thus acting out a historical role, dressed as a gaucho (in the typical harem-like pants, buttoned up shirt, poncho, and wide-brimmed hat). This was on a bus to Lujan, an area within Buenos Aires province, but about two hours outside of Buenos Aires city (*Distrito Federal*). With the exception of this one example then, until I travelled to Salta, I had never seen a gaucho outside of a performative context.

Most tourist performances focused more on the male gaucho and featured solo *malambo* (type of dance) performances, as opposed to ones with men and women couples (dances like *chacareras*). I remember the first gaucho performance that I saw in Buenos Aires. I was having lunch with a friend in a restaurant in La Boca, a touristy part of the city known for its quaint multi-colored buildings and tango shows. During our meal of steak, potatoes, and empanadas, the restaurant patrons were treated to two dance performances. The first was a sultry tango dance

and the second was a bombo performance by a bearded man with large pants that billowed to the sides, a wide-brimmed hat, heavy black boots, and a buttoned-up shirt. The performer played his bombo using first two long sticks and then two ropes with balls on the end. These, he explained, were *boleadores*, which gauchos a long time ago used to use to catch emu and other prey on the pampas.

The performer then engaged in a dance, stomping his feet and jumping high in the air. He often landed on one bent foot, a move that miraculously did not break his ankle. This dance, he explained, was a *malambo*. Finally, a woman (*la paisana*) with two long braids, a large billowing skirt and ruffled blouse joined the gaucho. They performed a circular partner dance in which each held their hands high by their ears and snapped as they moved, rapidly exchanging places. I recognized the music as a *chacarera* and learned in this moment that the dance was similarly called a *chacarera*.

This gaucho and paisana, in their special dress, stood out in Buenos Aires amidst all the busy cosmopolitan people dressed in business suits and other professional wear. However, I soon found that, the gaucho, while a touristic spectacle in Buenos Aires, was an everyday sight in other parts of the country, for example, in Salta and Jujuy. There, the gaucho was seen not as a relic of the past, but as the protagonist of folkloric music. This folkloric music was popular and palpable not only in tourist shows, but in the streets, taxi cab rides, individual homes, and many *peñas* in the *interior* (country).

Being Gaucho in Salta

Overall, the biggest indices of Salta identity are the gaucho and the gaucho folkloric musician/dancer. Salta is known throughout Argentina as a hub of gaucho culture and folkloric music and dance, and while the gaucho exists throughout Argentina, gaucho pride in Salta is particularly strong. In Buenos Aires, it is rare to see a gaucho dressed in full gaucho attire with gaucho pants that balloon out at the bottom, known as *bombachas*, (or sometimes a skirt for the females) a *facha*, a type of thick belt, a tailored jacket, a large brimmed hat, and heavy black boots. However, in Salta this attire is considered fancy and is worn in ceremonies, festivals, and official events in a comparable manner to a tuxedo in the U.S. This is stated quite clearly on a plaque in the cultural center, Gaucho de Guemes, that reads, "Here, the gaucho attire is regal". People also take great honor in establishing firm connections to the land and a solid know-how of working that land, cultivating crops, and most importantly, being able to ride, care for, and even break a horse. This desire to establish oneself as part of the land is particularly important in people who have relocated to urban settings and thus must re-edify themselves as "authentic" gauchos rather than as "fake" ones who wear the outfits but don them as a type of costume.

The ultimate model for gaucho-ness in Salta is General Guemes, who is admired both for being a hero of independence and for being of pure Spanish heritage. Guemes was born of Spanish nobility on Argentine soil; this makes him a true criollo. The term criollo refers to the first generation of noble Spanish heritage

born on Latin American soil. This term in Argentina is now used conterminously with Salteño, gaucho, and White. Yet, Guemes is still the original criollo: a label that earns him much respect in Salteño eyes. However, Guemes was also a loyal Argentine who made the decision to revoke his noble heritage and stand with his Argentine countrymen against the Spanish crown. Thus, in addition to being a fierce fighter, Guemes is admired for being a patriot and showing loyalty to his new country, Argentina (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 231).

Guemes' popularity in Salta cannot be overstated. Every 17th of June, Salta commemorates the death of Guemes over a twenty-four-hour period. First, they hold an all-night vigil as members of the prestigious Los Fortines Gauchos de Guemes guard his monument and many other people spend the night singing folkloric songs around campfires. In the morning, other fortines (clubs), gather from around the province to participate in a parade that demonstrates their gaucho identity through dress and equestrian skill. The signature Salteño red and black poncho worn in this event is said to have originated with Guemes and his men (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 233).

While Guemes is a hero with god-like status in Salta, in the rest of the country, he gets only a courteous nod and at most a one-sentence mention in the history books. This is a point of contention for Salteños who believe that Buenos Aires did not express proper gratitude to Guemes and to Salta for expelling the Spanish during the war for independence. In addition, this means that Guemes symbolizes for the elite in Salta, the loss of the privileged mercantile position they

held during the colonial era (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 231). Finally, Guemes represents the historical tension and ideological divide between the rural provinces of Argentina and Buenos Aires (Lehman 2005: 151), since he was a Federalist general who criticized the intervention by the elites of Buenos Aires in the internal affairs of the provinces (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 232).

In Salta, then, as opposed to in Buenos Aires, a gaucho is not a myth, but rather a living, breathing figure as well as a powerful local trope. Indeed, shortly after my arrival, I came to realize that the Buenos Aires notion of the gaucho as a mythical figure did not apply in Salta; I made the mistake of referring to gauchos as remnants of the past and was severely reprimanded. My acquaintance, Felipe Usandivarius, explained that gauchos lived by a strict code and held God, the nation, and family in the highest regard, and in that order.

I also learned that, even within Salta, gaucho means different things for different people. Some people claimed gaucho status because they knew how to work the land; others who claimed this status were elite landowners or urbanites who did not perform these types of physical labors. Indeed, other “gauchos” did not even own horses, but because the gaucho is indelibly connected to his horse both literally and metaphorically, these urban gauchos would rent horses to take part in gaucho parades.

In order to understand how and why the gaucho holds such contrasting importance in one region versus in the other, it is useful to examine the history of this figure and the many twists and turns that its representation has undergone

over the course of Argentina's history. This process begins with the gaucho being condemned for his status as a mixed-race outlaw, moves through his extinction on the plains, continues through multiple political appropriations, and concludes with the raising up of the gaucho as national icon. Along the way, the historically lower class and mixed-race gaucho becomes Whitened and Europeanized in order to hold the title of patriot and national figure.

Historical Antecedents of the Gaucho

The gaucho, like other iconic figures previously mentioned, has come to represent much more than the sum of its parts and has been enshrouded in hyperbole and myth. Indeed, so powerfully has that myth taken hold that the gaucho of today is quite distinct from that of its historical predecessor, and significant debate exists about the exact ethnic, cultural and social background of this figure.

Many polemics and politics surround the debates around the social origins and birthplace of the gaucho as well as the history of the term itself. As historian Richard W. Slatta remarks, over time, scholars of Arabic, Andalusian, Basque, French, Gypsy (*Roma*, emphasis mine), Hebrew, Portuguese, Quechua, Araucanian and even English origin have made claims to the etymology of the word gaucho (Slatta 1983: 8).

As Slatta further elucidates, scholars fall into two distinct camps regarding the origins of the gaucho: Hispanists and Americanists. Hispanists stress either the Andalusian, Spanish or Arabic roots of the gaucho. For example, in 1902, Ernesto

Quesada claimed that gauchos were “Andalusians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, transplanted to the pampa” (Quesada 1902: 258-259, 265 quoted in Slatta 1983: 7). These analyses extend to the gaucho’s clothes, and mannerisms as well as his music and poetry. Indeed, in 1886 Federico Tobal argued that “everything in the gaucho is eastern and Arabic” including his customs, fraternal bonds and even in the “simplicity and democracy” of his music (Tobal 1886 quoted in Slatta 1983: 7). This observation coincides well with comments that I often heard from practitioners of folkloric dance and music in my field research about the Arabic influence in gaucho dress. As one of my dance teachers, Mathias Guanuco, explained, “*La bombacha, los pantalones del gaucho, como son anchas y flojas, vienen de los Árabes*” (The bombacha, the gaucho’s pants, are wide and loose and come from the Arabs) (Guanuco, Mathias. Personal Interview. 25 July 2015). Guanuco’s explanation of the gaucho dress being connected to the Arabs again points to his emphasis of the Spanish heritage on gaucho culture, since the Arabic influence via the Moors occupation in the 700s A.D. still influences modern dress and architecture (Fuchs 2009: 60).⁶⁵

On the other side, Americanists view gauchos as less of an old-world import and instead see them as products of a unique New World frontier environment. Some Americanist scholars highlight the mestizo origins of the gaucho and trace them back to a specific Indigenous group. For example, Vicente Rossi uses

⁶⁵ For more on Arabic influence in Spanish culture see Fuchs, Barbara. 2009. *Exotic Nation: Maurophilia and the Construction of Early Modern Spain*. Philadelphia, Pa: University of Pennsylvania Press.

etymological evidence that the term gaucho originated in the Guarani words *huachó* or *huachú* to argue that gauchos can be traced back to the Guarani warriors of the Banda Oriental (the “east bank” of the river), or present-day Uruguay (Rossi 1921: 20-21, 24-30 quoted in Slatta 1983: 8). Scholars also cite the gaucho’s use of the Indian *boleadoras* and his addiction to mate, (a South American tea) to support the Indianist argument (ibid).

Few scholars discuss or have written at length on the presence of Black or Afro-Argentines gauchos, yet history shows a high probability that there were some.⁶⁶ During the colonial period, Buenos Aires was one of the ports in Spanish America that the French Guinea Company was authorized to use, and over the following nine years they brought an estimated 3,500 slaves through Buenos Aires (Rock 1987: 42). Historian David Rock notes that most of the slaves were sent to the *interior* (ibid); however, again as explained in Chapter One, due to lack of national census data surveying Blacks until 2010, there is little written on this matter.

Concentrating his study on Buenos Aires, historian George Reid Andrews writes that in 1778 thirty percent of the population in the city (7,256 out of 24,363) was Black, and by 1838 this number had increased to 13,967 (1980: 4). However, by 1887, only half a century later, the population of Blacks had dropped from a quarter of the city’s people to only 2% (ibid). Most scholarship attributes this decline to a combination of military conscription, a yellow fever epidemic, the end of the slave

⁶⁶ There have also been accounts of North American cowboys of African descent :Nat Love, Isom Dart, and Bill Pickett (Farris Thompson 2005: 92).

trade, and mestizaje (Reid Andrews 1980: 4-6). In contrast, Reid Andrews argues that the “obscuring, be it intentional or unintentional of the role of the Afro-Argentines in their nation’s history” through a lack of focus on Afro-Argentine commanding officers and the existence of Afro-Argentine’ mutual aid societies, has also contributed to their disappearance (Reid Andrews 1980: 6).

A similar argument can be made about the presence of Afro-Argentine gauchos: that they were simply overlooked. Slatta notes the high numbers of Black slaves who joined the military, but then, along with many Whites, deserted. He contends that “Politicians erroneously cited massive battlefield deaths among black patriots that supposedly reduced Afro-Argentine numbers sharply; in fact, desertion accounted for most of those missing in ranks” (1983: 11). Creole language scholar Ana Cara-Walker notes that Black workers on the pampas were initially slaves who became gauchos (1983: 111), and art scholar Robert Farris Thompson posits that the *payada* (a poetic duel between two guitarist singers) is derived from African musical contests (2005: 93). Indeed, one of the most famous *payadores*, (musical duelers) Gabino Ezeiza was of African descent (ibid). Gauchos mixed blood heritage, both Indigenous and Afro-Argentine, made them less than reputable in the eyes of the elite. That is of course, until popular image of the gaucho shifted, and in turn the mixed-race heritage was omitted.

Gauchos: Shifting Image

Gauchos in colonial Argentina were initially seen as mestizos and criminals. They were thought to be the offspring of Indigenous mothers and Spanish fathers. The *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (the Spanish Language Dictionary) characterizes the first gauchos as mestizos and migratory horsemen.⁶⁷ In the eyes of the Argentine elite, gauchos were also seen as criminals since they often participated in cattle theft and smuggling. In fact, the first official mention of the gaucho in Argentina appears in a complaint lodged in 1774 by government officials in reference to cattle thieves in the Banda Oriental (present-day Uruguay) (Slatta 1983: 9). In time, these renegades developed into a distinct social group: the gauchos of the Rio de la Plata frontier (Molas 1968).⁶⁸

Antipathy between urban and rural populations played an important role in defining the gaucho's identity. To the urban cosmopolitan of Buenos Aires, the *gaucho* or *montonero* held the nation's progress ransom with his frontier primitivism and violence (Kaminsky 2008; Slatta 1983: 13). In his book, *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarism* (1845), Domingo F. Sarmiento, Argentina's president from 1868 to 1874, and a key intellectual in its nation-building process, described this conflict as one between urban civilization and rural barbarism. To Sarmiento

⁶⁷ <http://dle.rae.es/?id=J0i39JT>

⁶⁸ In *Historia social del gaucho* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Marú, 1968), Ricardo Rodríguez Molas provides a thorough study of the gaucho in Spanish which established a new focus on gauchos as social versus ethnic/racial class.

and his followers, gauchos represented barbaric military might of rural federalist caudillos who kept the backward military chieftains in power.

Indeed, in instructions to independence hero General Mitre, Sarmiento famously encouraged violence against the gauchos, writing “Do not try to save the blood of gauchos. It is a contribution that the country needs. Blood is the only thing they have in common with human beings”⁶⁹ As Argentina grew, and as immigrants began to arrive in droves, the gaucho lifestyle became more and more precarious. Changes to land ownership increased ranchers’ political power. In addition, under changing European market demands, the production of cattle-based goods (tallow, hides, and meat) became commercialized, and by the early 1800s, random slaughter of cattle had been replaced by mass production within *saladeros* (salted-meat processing plants) (Slatta 1983: 5). Ranchers also began diversifying into wool production, replacing cows with sheep. This new export brought the advent of *frigorificos* (modern meat-packing plants) by the 1900s (ibid). All of these changes further alienated gauchos and exacerbated their status as criminals since it turned them into enemies not just of individual ranchers, but rather of the country itself and its meat-packing business. The Argentine elite took steps to eliminate gauchos through devising laws that protected landowners and through forcing gauchos into debt slavery and military conscription (Slatta 1983: 6, 93). By the 1880s, the gauchos of the Argentine pampas had ceased to exist as a distinctive social group

⁶⁹ Sarmiento, Domingo F quoted in Leroy R. Shelton “The Gaucho in the Works of Sarmiento” pp. 47

(Slatta 1983: 6). Of course, this position, while calmly stated by scholars, does not account for the fact that “rural Argentines still identify strongly with his independent stance, proclaiming themselves inheritors of his legacy” (Lehman 2005: 150). Thus, while the gaucho of the pampa became a figure of the past, the myth of the lawless gaucho became an integral part of Argentine culture.⁷⁰

At the same time that the fierce, renegade gauchos of the pampas were being eliminated, popular opinion about these figures began to shift. One important change came about through the war for independence from Spain, fought from 1810 to 1816. Gaucho cavalrymen, many forced into the military, together with Black slaves enticed by the promise of freedom, played a major role in the defeat of the Spanish (Slatta 1983: 10). One of the major heroes of Argentina, José de San Martín, known as the liberator of South America, in two separate correspondences, referred to the valiant patriot forces as gauchos (Slatta 1983: 11). Through this, some of these gauchos were enshrined as heroes and public opinion began to change-- although not unilaterally--transforming the gaucho from criminal to war hero; this was particularly true in Salta and the northwest.

However, even as the gaucho was becoming laudable in some circles, he remained unworthy in others. The Porteño creole elite, when publishing San Martín’s messages in the official *Gaceta Ministerial*, replaced the phrase gaucho

⁷⁰ As Kathryn Lehman explains, “The first contested arena one encounters with respect to the gaucho is that of academic scholarship versus popular culture: each provides a definition (contrasting with the other’s) of the primary social text that defines this figure, one based on written and oral texts of the nineteenth century, the other based on the romantic legends that continue to celebrate his independent stance (Lehman 2005: 151).

patriots with peasant patriots. Thus, as Slatta concludes, to the Argentine elite, gauchos continued to be characterized unfavorably and as unworthy of being patriots (ibid).

This moment marks a historical division still palpable between Salta and Buenos Aires today and helps clarify why the gaucho is portrayed so differently from one region to the other. This is because, essentially, people in Salta credit gauchos with winning the war for independence and those in Buenos Aires do not. Perhaps, if Guemes had been recognized on a national scale, Salteños would not identify with this figure so strongly. The fact that they do solidifies the important status of the gaucho and being of White or pure-Spanish descent. Guemes is portrayed in images as having pale skin and light-colored hair, which sets a standard that is difficult for most Salteños who aspire to be criollo.

In the wake of independence, the country became divided between two groups: the Federalists and the Unitarios. The Federalists were in favor of the new nation consisting of a loose uniting of largely autonomous provinces. They believed in an “organic” *Argentinity*, national identity that naturally occurred in its gauchos and in caudillismo (Kaminsky 2008: 104). In contrast, the Unitarios supported a strong central government. They believed that the nation could only succeed as a White, European country. Neither group made space for an Indigenous presence, but rather both were intent on removing the native populations from Argentine territory and historical consciousness (ibid). Both groups also appropriated the gaucho at distinct times to serve their respective national projects.

First, the gaucho was evoked as the symbol of populism under General Juan Manuel de Rosas (1835 to 1852), who was credited with the Federalist takeover of Buenos Aires. The gaucho's association with Rosas further maligned him in the eyes of the intellectual elite. During the Rosas period, the term gaucho also became synonymous with paisano and referred to all rural residents of the pampa (Slatta 1983: 12).

In the 1880s, the gaucho symbol was appropriated once again, this time by the Unitarios, the elite. This was part of a campaign by rural Argentines who, fearing that their way of life was being endangered by urbanization and by a new wave of European immigrants in the 1880s, claimed status as progenitors of a "true" Argentine culture, not through their connection to an Indigenous or even mixed-race heritage, but rather through that of the gaucho (Bletz 2010: 96; Lehman 2005: 163).

Through the elite's appropriation, the "real" gaucho, meaning the true gaucho of the pampas that had been driven into extinction, was now replaced by a romanticized version that embodied a nostalgic reclaiming of the "lost Argentine past." As Slatta notes, "The same elite that had waged a war against the gaucho now enshrined him in Argentine mythology" (Slatta 1983: 6; Lehman 2005: 163). This new and romanticized gaucho was created not only through political rhetoric, but more pervasively, through popular culture, in particular, the cultural movements of *criollismo*, gauchesque literature and folkloric music and dance. Through these

cultural forms, the gaucho highlighted Spanish heritage and masculinity, while it downplayed Indigenous roots and femininity (Rowe and Schelling 1991: 31-39).

Whatever the gaucho's actual historical antecedents, the figure of the gaucho has been useful as a cultural space for many different groups to map their agendas onto. Although initially disparaged as the mixed-blood Spanish and Indian scourge of the nation by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, Argentina's seventh president, over time and through the development of political rhetoric, this began to change. Thus, despite scholars' claims about the Indigenous /mestizo origins of the gaucho, in the long run, the Hispanist view has largely won out (Slatta 1983: 8), and today, this figure is upheld as an icon of a White European Argentina. As we shall see, this has had an enduring effect on shaping Argentina's national imaginary and cultural productions.

From Politics to Popular Culture: The Gaucho as White Icon

One of the primary means by which the gaucho became an icon of popular culture in Argentina was through literary depictions that accompanied, or paralleled, the elite's romanticized political rhetoric. Gauchesque literature, most notably the novel *Martin Fierro* (1879) by José Hernández also played a crucial role in shifting the image of the gaucho. Hernández's text provided a sympathetic perspective to the gaucho, showing how he was a victim of modernization, and not, as previously proclaimed in Sarmiento's text, the enemy of it. This sympathetic

portrayal of the gaucho transformed him from renegade to national hero, ensuring his prominent place in the Argentine national imagination.

In addition to transforming the gaucho from criminal to folk hero, gauchesque literature also helped to solidify the elite's efforts to Whiten the gaucho, thus making him a suitable national icon. Gauchesque literature negatively portrayed Indigenous peoples and callously eliminated them from the Argentine imaginary. Amy K. Kaminsky, professor of gender, women, and sexuality studies and global studies, observes that the Indian character in the poem of *Martin Fierro* is completely dehumanized; he lacks empathy and a moral compass, treating his women and his captors with brutality. He is also not capable of understanding concepts of honor, loyalty, or friendship. Kaminsky further argues that this portrayal of Indians in *Martin Fierro* as the Other provided justification for the destruction of Indians [which was currently taking place as part of the Desert Conquest under Roca] in their person and culture (2008: 16). Thus, she concludes, "The (putatively White) gaucho, as the national hero of the Conquest of the Desert, into which he was pressed loses his mestizo identity" (ibid).

Latin American literature scholar Katherine Lehman argues similarly that just as the autochthonous culture was villainized as barbaric, in order to impose the supposed boon of a civilized-European culture, non-Europeans and second-generation Argentines who shared close contact with Indigenous peoples were also denigrated (2005: 152). Some of these settlers who lived on the frontiers were horsemen and gauchos, categories which became lumped together, and who at

different moments in history fought against, coexisted and procreated with Indigenous peoples. As Lehman concludes,

This ambiguous set of relations accounts for the disparagement of [the gauchos] culture by urban writers and also provides explanation for the popularity of the gaucho figure among rural communities who realized that the urban population depended for their survival on the gaucho soldiers conscripted to defend them against neighboring states and Indigenous warriors, just as they later depended on the gauchos as ranch hands who worked in agriculture after they were forced to give up their nomadic lifestyle in the last decades of the nineteenth century (2005: 152-153).

Since the national rhetoric did not acknowledge autochthonous culture, the more that the gaucho became the symbol of the country, the more he had to be divested of any non-White heritage, including, not only Indigenous but Black as well.

As the gaucho in *Martin Fierro* became White he also lost any traces of Black heritage along with an Indigenous one. At first, the text appears to acknowledge the mixed race of the gaucho, since Fierro encounters a Black gaucho. Yet, Fierro antagonizes this man for no apparent reason, insults his partner, likening her to a cow, and eventually kills the Black gaucho. Kaminsky posits:

It is possible to read this startling episode as a textualization of the overwrought response to Blacks by white Argentines... as it is nothing more or less than... a claim to superiority and a provocation to fight, with the result of extirpating Blackness from the space of the quintessential Argentine, the gaucho. If *Martin Fierro* is the song of Argentine national identity, then the elimination of the Black man, also a gaucho, also making a claim to occupy the same social space as Fierro, is a fair mirror of Argentine society's rhetorical, and real, suppression of its Black population" (2008: 113).

In this way, *Martin Fierro* served a similar goal of the Primer Censo Nacional mentioned in the previous chapter, in that it ideologically contributed to the

genocide of Indigenous peoples (and Blacks) through expunging them from the popular imagination.

The Gaucho as Masculine Trope

In addition to becoming a marker of Argentine culture the gaucho also came to serve as an unabashedly masculine trope. This helped characterize Argentina as masculine, a stance that was important to avoid being placed in the same category as the rest of the colonized (and thus feminized) Latin America. Despite the fact that settler women were always present in rural areas, little attention has been paid to them in either scholarship or literature. Indeed, both Slatta and Lehman go so far as to describe gauchesque literature and culture as misogynistic, adducing the gaucho's belief that if "women rode horses the animals would become weak and useless" (Slatta 1983: 65; Lehman 2005: 153).

Again, the book *Martin Fierro* served as the perfect vehicle by which the gaucho was stripped, not only of any Indigenous or Black heritage, but of any maternal inheritance as well. Kaminsky posits that since the gaucho was thought to be the child of a Spanish father and an Indian mother, through excising the Indigenous heritage, Hernandez also eliminated the maternal from this figure (2008: 16). She writes, that in *Martin Fierro*,

The Indian mother withers away in what the deeply conservative and patriarchal Federalists would hail as the autochthonous Argentine. Just as they balk at the suggestion that Argentina is an Indian country, they deny that it is a feminine one, or an immature one. Masculinity, whiteness, and virile adulthood are the threads that will be woven together into the fabric of Argentina" (2008: 116-117).

Lehman makes a parallel argument, that the mythical gaucho in poetry converted into a national hero, served as a slate upon which ideological visions could be mapped. In particular, the portrayal of the gaucho as a single man, free from the entanglements of wife and family, who chose or was forced to fight Spaniards and Indigenous, made him an ideal figure to be appropriated by both champions of patriotic independence and by those who promoted anti-establishment movements (2005: 153). Thus, as the gaucho was stripped of all non-White and maternal characteristics, so too was he re-edified as a fiercely masculine trope fit for a national icon.

Gaucho as Folkloric Icon: Embodying Whiteness and Masculinity

Before the influxes of European immigration, beginning in the late 1880s, the gaucho was seen as the enemy and barrier to national progress. Now he had become the salvation to save an “authentic” Argentina from being overwhelmed by that same progress, part of a larger movement to rescue Argentine culture and traditions from the “threatening” absorption of an immigrant way of life. Out of this desire to return to the old Argentina, a new social and cultural trend of criollismo was born.

Criollismo put a huge emphasis on Spanish heritage, as it identified seventeenth-century Catholic Spain as the cradle of criollo culture and spiritual anchor of Argentine civilization (Chamosa 2010: 14). The term criollo was originally used to refer to the first Argentines who were of pure Spanish ancestry. However,

during this period the term criollo came to be a marker to distinguish Argentine-born descendants of the pre-immigration population from immigrants, colloquially called gringos. It also distinguished criollos from Argentine elites (Germani 1994: 165-172). Thus, it was that academic folklorists, who surfaced in the 1890s, made it their quest to preserve criollo cultures, which they saw as endangered folk societies and their customs. In the 1910s, a new trend began in which the image of the rebellious transgressive gaucho was replaced by one of an obedient and hardworking paisana who served landowner and fatherland (Chamosa 2010: 196).

Through this process, the terms gaucho and criollo came to be somewhat inextricable. Also, the culture of the more rural, pre-immigration Argentines (the criollos) came to hold great importance. This included *manifestaciones espirituales* (spiritual manifestations) ceremonies, dances, games, as well as material ones, like artesanía and dress (Chamosa 2010: 9).

Criollismo helped the Northwest to claim a new cultural authority. The association between gauchos and folk music can be traced back to the pre-independence era. In the 1770s, a guidebook written by Alonso Carriño de la Vándera refers to *gauderios* (another term for gauchos) as idle youths who play the guitar “very badly” and sing “out of tune,” dress in “ragged underclothes and worse outer garments,” skillfully wield lasso, bolas, and knife, and live primarily on handouts. He continues, “in Tucumán gauderios tell tales and sing ‘obscene verses’ accompanied by ‘badly-strung and un-tuned guitars’” (1802: 54-55 quoted in Slatta 1983: 10).

However, it was during the criollismo and folklore movements that this music came to be associated with an endangered and “authentic” Argentine culture.

The focus on the gaucho as the antithesis of a foreign and European immigrant identity marks a key difference in the way that folk projects were formed throughout much of the rest of Latin America in comparison to that of Argentina. Many national folk projects in Latin America, shaped by mestizaje and indigenista thought, elevated Indigenous cultures (albeit through often problematic representations), and integrated them into the national imaginary. However, this was not the case in Argentina. As Chamosa explains,

the overall demographics of the country, the prevalent ideologies of the time, and concrete conditions imposed by financial sponsors of research led folklorists to adopt an ideological approach that was the midpoint between mesticista intellectuals in Latin America and more reactionary European approach to local culture” (Chamosa 2010: 15).

At the same time that European influences were foregrounded and solidified in the folkloric gaucho, Indigenous ones in turn were either downplayed or outright denied. In his 1954 seminal guide to native (meaning folk) dances, Pedro Berruti, a paragon of Argentine folk music and dance, makes special note that Indigenous people, with the exception of the Incas, have had almost no influence on Argentine folk genres (2012: 7). Indeed, in Argentina, Indigenous music has historically been presented as either non-existent or as the antithesis of a folkloric tradition. Thus, in addition to being part of a nationalist agenda, Whiteness was further legitimized through the performance of the gaucho. As Argentine folkloric culture became centered on the figure of the criollo or the gaucho, particular emphasis was placed

on the Northwest region; this helped Salta to establish itself as a hub of authentic gaucho folkloric culture.

The Folkloric Musician in Salta

Hand in hand with their pride in being gauchos, Salteños are also highly invested in their image as folkloric musicians and take great pride in having produced some of the most renowned folkloric performers of the day. Indeed, upon entering Salta, one of the first things that a tourist sees is a monument honoring Los Chachaleros, a folkloric group that was prominent in the 1920s, and is credited with popularizing a Salta-specific folkloric style of music. It is also apparent in the numerous billboards and advertisements lining the city's stone-cobbled walls and inviting tourists to Salta's tourist district, or strip, a long street called El Balcarce, which is lined with peñas, or folkloric music venues.

El Balcarce peñas boast folkloric acts including a musical group and dancers, the latter of whom are always dressed in full gaucho regalia. An apex of gaucho folklore in Salta, El Balcarce is an important tourist destination and creates fame for Salteños musicians throughout Argentina. Employment in the El Balcarce district also seems to be a rite of passage for many up and coming musicians and dancers who aim to make it big someday outside of Salta. Veteran performers who now run their own *academias folclóricas* (folkloric dance schools) often share stories of abuse and artistic exploitation that they suffered in the days of El Balcarce and dismiss the place as a tourist trap where “real Salteños do not go” (Guanuco, Mathias. Personal

Interview. 25 July 2015). Young artists, meanwhile, work long hours as expendable performers in one of the Balcarce's nightly folkloric shows. While these artists may aim to run their own schools, or participate in regional festivals, for many the most accessible route is through finding work in the many peñas on the El Balcarce strip and thus entering into one of Salta's biggest industries: the tourist market (Rámos, Andres. Personal Interview. March 2015).

While primarily tourists and Salta residents with disposable incomes frequent the Balcarce peñas, the gaucho-folkloric identity extends far beyond this public realm. Most people know how to play the guitar and sing, and it is common in a dinner or any other social event for people to break out a few bottles of wine and a couple of guitars to transform the night into a *guitarreada* or a folkloric jam session lasting until dawn. Folkloric repertoire is vast, and most people know songs rote. Thus, music is not delegated to the professionals or the select few in the room who are formally trained, but rather is open for all to participate.

There are also fewer high profile entertainment options for locals who do not wish to pay exorbitant tourist prices and see standardized versions of their favorite folkloric songs, but rather wish to participate in the music making themselves. Locals may attend smaller clubs and restaurants, generally built with open-air architecture that allows for crowding around large tables and producing spontaneous concerts. In the home and in these informal events, no particular attire is required. In this way, the gaucho and the gaucho-folkloric persona permeate almost every space, both public and private of Salta life. Since the gaucho is a

national symbol of Argentine identity and has been embodied in the folkloric dancer and musician, Salta thus promoted itself as a locus of authentic Argentine culture to tourists around the world. Although the gaucho attire and identity are the strongest symbols of Salta, the Kolla has also gained importance over the past fourteen years as Salta has repositioned itself as part of the Andean world.

Before moving into the second half of this chapter and a more in-depth discussion of the Kolla as national symbol in Argentina, I conclude my discussion of gauchos with a look at how and why, Salteños, historically exuberant about their pride of being gauchos, have begun to shift their opinion slightly to also include the notion that Salta is also the gateway to Andean culture. This process has taken place in relation to social and political changes as well as to reemphasize Salta's importance as a tourist destination. Culturally, what this identity shift has meant is that the people most associated with Andean culture, Kollas, have also begun to hold a more prominent place in Salta's imaginary as emblems of Salteño Andean belonging.

Resituating Salta as Andean

Three events helped place Salta on the map as a locus of Andean culture: the declaring of *La Quebrada de Humahuaca* as an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003; the establishment in 2012 of the MAAM, *El Museo Arqueológico de Alta Montaña*, (the archeology museum of the high mountain); and the declaration of the *Qapaq Ñan* (the Inca Trail) as UNESCO National Cultural Patrimony in 2014.

In 2003, UNESCO declared La Quebrada de Humahuaca, a narrow and arid mountainous valley that contains archaeological evidence of prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities of the Inca Empire and the of the fight for independence in the 19th and 20th centuries, a World Heritage Site. This declaration brought tremendous attention to the Northwest region of Argentina and increased tourism to the area exponentially.⁷¹The UNESCO World Heritage Site declaration also created an interest in all things Andean (Coleman-Macheret 2014: 14). Since Salta has a larger airport than Jujuy, the adjacent province, and is also a logical stop on the route to La Quebrada de Humahuaca, this interest in all things Andean also impacted Salta and local tourism.

Another important development was the establishment in 2012 of the MAAM, the archeology museum of the high mountain. The sole exhibition of the MAAM is *los niños de Llullaillaco* (the children of *Llullaillaco*), the mummified corpses of three Inca children. Believed to have been buried as part of a ritual sacrifice, these mummies were discovered in 1999 frozen and in impeccable condition in the mountains close to the peak of the Llullaillaco volcano in the east of Salta, an area known as Tolar Grande, and were brought to Salta Capital.⁷²

⁷¹ Unfortunately, the UNESCO declaration also initiated a process of gentrification in which real estate prices jumped so dramatically that many families were forced to sell to wealthy non-locals and were displaced from their homelands.

⁷² <http://www.maam.gob.ar/index1.php#>

The fact that these children were unearthed and taken to the city is a controversial subject,⁷³ and I spoke with many of Indigenous descent in Salta who were of the opinion that this act was tantamount to unburying their grandmother and incredibly disrespectful. However, despite this, today the MAAM is one of the top tourist attractions in Salta. In addition, the curator, Katyia-Bajia, has promoted Andean culture through organizing events like *Inti-Raymi* celebrations and through teaching Quechua classes.

The final official proclamation that helped solidify Salta's position as a place of Andean culture was the UNESCO declaration in 2014 of the *Qapaq Ñan* (the Inca Trail) as National Cultural Patrimony. Also known as the Main Andean Road, and running from Ecuador to part of Argentina, this network of roads over 23,000 km in length connected ceremonial, administrative, and production sites constructed over 2,000 years of pre-Inca Andean culture.⁷⁴ This cultural patrimony is shared between Argentina, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador.

In 2014, under governor Juan Manuel Urtubey, Salta government created *La Unidad de Gestion Provincial Qhapaq Ñan Sistema Vial Andino* (Provincial Management Unit of Qhapaq Ñan Andean Highway System) an organization that promotes the conservation, enhancement, and cultural property involved in the Inca Trail.

⁷³ For a discussion about this type of controversy see James [Sá ké] Youngblood Henderson, (2012) "The Appropriation of Human Remains: A First Nation's Legal and Ethical Perspective" in *The Ethics of Cultural Appropriation* p. 55-71.

⁷⁴ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/qhapaqnan/>

In explaining the importance of this act, Urtubey emphasized that Salteños should be proud of their Indigenous (Incan) ancestry.

Porque los salteños debemos saber hacia dónde vamos, sabiendo quiénes somos y desde dónde venimos. Esto es ponernos en valor. Revalorizar nuestra cultura y nuestro origen para saber lo que somos capaces de hacer...⁷⁵

Because we Salteños should know where we are going, knowing who we are and where we come from. This is to make us valuable, revalorize our culture and our origins in order to know what we are capable of,...

In his speech, Urtubey further implied that having an Inca heritage positioned Salta in a place of grandeur.

Esta acción tiene que ver con amar a nuestra gente, nuestras montañas y nuestra cultura, con recuperar la memoria histórica de una civilización importante como lo fue la cultura inca. Desde hace muchos siglos nuestros ancestros quisieron para nosotros un futuro de grandeza y esa es hoy nuestra obligación moral.⁷⁶

This action is about loving our people, our mountains, and our culture and recuperating the historical memory of an important culture like that of the Incas. Many centuries ago our ancestors wanted us to have a future of grandeur and this is now our moral obligation.

It is doubtful that Urtubey would have given such a speech if the site in question were that of one of the less popular Indigenous groups in Salta, such as the Wichi or Guarani. However, as a great civilization, the Incas were an acceptable group to which Salteños are encouraged to relate.

The declaring of *La Quebrada de Humahuaca* as an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003; the establishment in 2012 of the MAAM, and the declaration of the Qhapaq Ñan (the Inca Trail) as UNESCO National Cultural Patrimony in 2014 have

⁷⁵ <http://turismo.salta.gov.ar/contenido/1310/el-camino-del-inca-declarado-patrimonio-de-la-humanidad-es-de-los-saltenios-y-herencia-para-el-mundo>

⁷⁶ <http://turismo.salta.gov.ar/contenido/1310/el-camino-del-inca-declarado-patrimonio-de-la-humanidad-es-de-los-saltenios-y-herencia-para-el-mundo>

brought prestige to Northern Argentina in general and has helped Salta reposition itself as a site of Andean culture. This has also promoted those who are seen as descendants of the Incas: the Kollas.

Part 2. Kollas

While the gaucho has long been a symbol associated with Argentina, over the past twenty years, a new figure has been gaining both social and cultural importance: the Kolla. Just as the gaucho has gone through multiple transformations and has been elevated from the scourge of the nation, the Kolla has had a more recent, yet similar trajectory. However, while the gaucho is tied to the notion of a post-colonial yet pristine and pre-modernized pampas, the Kolla is tied to a pre-colonized, Incan identity. Just as the gaucho was a figure onto which distinct national agendas could be mapped, the Kolla has also acquired a slightly amorphous meaning that can be appropriated in particular ways. Thus, as the national perspective shifts to recast Argentina as a multi ethnic nation, the Kolla holds huge cultural capital as a symbol of this new national identity.

The Kolla is a figure of touristic importance and is displayed, similarly to the gaucho, on tourist souvenirs, posters, and postcards. The Kolla has also become inextricably tied to two other symbols of a particularly Andean Indigenous identity: the *wiphala* (flag of Indigenous solidarity) and the Pachamama. The wiphala is a multicolored flag, reminiscent of pre-colonial Inca standards, that represents Indigenous solidarity throughout the Andean region, and the Pachamama (literally,

“mother earth” in Quechua) is an Andean deity of Inca origin, who embodies mother earth. Both the wiphala and Pachamama are invoked in performances and ceremonies that are framed as Indigenous or as in solidarity with Indigenous struggles.

Part of the success of the Kolla figure, therefore, has been its ability to symbolize Incan identity. This has allowed proponents of indigeneity to usurp the Kolla as simultaneously an Argentine Indigenous symbol and one that articulates a pan-Latin cultural belonging. Thus, the Kolla has been reframed in such a way that this figure encompasses much more than a select Indigenous group. Rather, the Kolla has come to represent another side of Argentine identity that up until recently has remained hidden: Indigeneity. However, as is often the case with appropriated figures, this has also opened the door for a level of empty multiculturalism in which changes only occur at a cultural level and policies are not implemented to change Indigenous peoples’ lives in concrete ways.

Again, Cosquín, although this time the actual festival, not the competition, provided a backdrop on which I witnessed a popular embracing of the Kolla as an Indigenous icon.

Cosquín, January 2014

As the lights begin to brighten, we hear a powerful trumpet-like sound. Yet, it is not as brassy sounding as a trumpet. The stage comes into focus to reveal a group of male musicians in the center and four players with long thin tubes protruding from their mouths. These are erques, an Indigenous wind instrument native to the northern Argentina region. Bruno Arias, dressed in green t-shirt, purple pants, sneakers, and a multicolored scarf tied around his neck, which I recognize as the wiphala pattern, steps forward and greets his enthusiastic crowd. The arena is packed, audience members are up on their feet, waving large wiphalas and shouting and clapping in approval. I have never heard this musician before, but I can tell he is very popular with the Cosquín crowd. Arias, who has a fairly pale complexion and dark black hair that hangs loosely by his chin, steps forward. He shouts out "Buenas Noches Cosquín! Maimara, Tilcara presente" (Maimara, Tilcara is a town in Jujuy. So, Arias is acknowledging and claiming his Jujuy identity in this moment to the Cosquin crowd.) Arias crosses to the front of the stage, bows, and then turning, rejoins his musicians on the center of the stage.

The erque players continue to play their tritonic melody, as they walk towards the front of the stage. About a minute and a half into the erque solos, the other musicians feather in. First, I hear a few arpeggios on the charango and then the guitar chords begin. The guitarists then silence the guitar strings, so all that can be heard is the sound of their hands hitting the strings, with no pitches. This creates a percussive sound. Arias shouts "uno, dos, tres," (one, two, three), and the entire band comes in. The main melodic part is carried by two flute players, one a quena and the other a transverse flute. They play the opening riff. The man playing the quena also has a set of sikus hung around his neck. After the main melody has repeated twice, he plays a series of notes on the sikus very quickly.

Arias who plays the guitar, approaches the microphone and the instruments seem to reach a frenetic crescendo and then drop suddenly to allow Arias' voice to ring out clearly. The first verse begins. All around me in the crowd people are waving wiphalas and singing along at the top of their lungs.

For the second verse, the sikus and flute players come back in. At this point, from stage left, two figures dance their way onto the stage. They have broad feathered headdresses and are dressed in black outfits decorated with multicolored symbols and patches. Each carries a long, cylindrical drum which they hit as they hop from one foot to the next. I am not sure who these dancers are.

Arias gets to the chorus of the song and sings "Cada doce de Octubre" He pulls the microphone away from his face and points it toward the crowd. The arena resonates with the crowd's voices, "Que festeja la gente?" The cameras, which are connected to drones and flying around above the crowd, focus on a select few audience members, who appear in the huge screens on either side of the Cosquín stage. Three people lift up a cardboard sign that says Tilcara and smile broadly into the camera. As I learn during my time in the Cosquín Festival, this is a normal practice for audience

members in the front rows to hold up huge banners proclaiming their hometowns and provinces. These banners block other audience members' view of the performers, but no one around me seems to mind. The instruments—the bombo, electric guitar, charango, keyboard, quena, sikus, and flute—continue sounding out. Arias shouts into the microphone "Hayaya Pueblos Originarios," and the crowd cheers. An electric guitar solo begins. The flute player has begun playing shakshas (percussion instruments made of goat hooves), which he has slung around his neck. Arias returns to the microphone and begins speaking slowly, reciting the lyrics in a clear, strong voice. He pauses emphatically between phrases. "La ciudad me duele cuando entono el himno porque en sus estrofas no encuentro mis hermanos." (The city hurts me when it sings the hymn because in its phrases I don't see my brothers) I miss the next line, but catch the one after "y mis ojos puneños tan indios no entienden." (and my punenos (refers to a region called La Puna) eyes so Indian that they do not understand) He then shouts out to the crowd, imploring them to reply. "Hermanos! (brothers!) Cada doce de Octubre, Que festeja la gente?" (Each 12 of October, what do we celebrate?)

The audience sings along loudly, repeating this line again and again as the instrumentalists continue to play with high energy. The crowd sings along at top volume with Arias as he repeats "Que festeja la gente?" They wave wiphalas, large brimmed hats, ponchos, banners, and pañuelos (handkerchiefs) in the air high above their heads. Again, it is obvious that people love Arias. The music ends with the last final cry of que festeja la gente? The instruments come to a crescendo, a final climax, and then cut out all together.

The scene described above is the performance of "Kolla en la Ciudad" by one of Argentina's rising folkloric stars, Bruno Arias. Arias grew up in the small town of El Carmen in the province of Jujuy, where he learned to play folkloric music. After winning the prestigious prize of *El Consagrado* in the pre-Cosquín competition in 2013, he moved to Buenos Aires to pursue his career as a musician. Although originally a folkloric musician, over the years Arias has incorporated more and more songs related to Indigenous belonging in Argentina. He has been responsible for bringing particular Indigenous figures and their plights to center stage through inviting musicians and activists onto major public stages like that of Cosquín as well as through singing songs conveying Indigenous support. In this way, Arias has

increasingly become a symbol of Indigenous solidarity and has helped bring this agenda into the public sphere in a musical context. At the time of this performance in 2014, I was not familiar with Arias, so I was surprised by the sudden shift in atmosphere when he took the stage, when all of a sudden everyone around me was waving wiphalas and shouting out “hay, yay, ya” and “Pachamama”.

Arias’ performance of “Kolla en la Ciudad,” described in the excerpt above, was the first time that I heard this song in Argentina, but it was definitely not the last. Over time, I came to recognize “Kolla en la Ciudad” as something like an Indigenous-solidarity anthem, since people played it often in spaces where they were either protesting Indigenous mistreatment or were standing in Indigenous solidarity.

“Kolla en la Ciudad” describes a person (a Kolla) most likely from Jujuy, or perhaps Salta, who has come to live in Buenos Aires, but who feels lost there and speaks nostalgically of his/her roots. The opening phrase begins with the narrator relaying, as if from the past, how they ended up coming to the big city in the first place. They say that, tired of being a tourist spectacle and of living in misery, they will sell their last piece of land and abandon his/her traditions to make a life for *themselves in Buenos Aires*.

*Venderé la última tierrita de colores,
Cansado de ser la diversión para
turistas,
Basta de socavones y de cosechas
magras,
Junto con la miseria dejo mi
Pachamama.*

*I will sell my last little plot of colorful
land
Tired of being entertainment for tourists
Enough of washouts and bad harvests
Along with misery, I leave my
Pachamama*

The narrator continues, saying that when they arrive in Buenos Aires at the bus station, *el Retiro*, they will have to trade their ancestral language of Quichua for Spanish. In order to get even a menial job as a garbage worker or a construction worker, they will have to start wearing city clothes and adopt a Porteño accent. They will live in the *villas* (slums of Buenos Aires), and no one will care about their past or where they are from.

<i>Llegaré a Retiro y cambiaré mi idioma,</i>	I will arrive at the Retiro (central bus station in Buenos Aires
<i>Quichua de mis parientes de Iruya y Pozuelos</i>	Quichua from my relatives from Iruya and Pozuelos
<i>Seré un inmigrante que no tendrá memoria</i>	I will be an immigrant without memory
<i>A quién puede importarle de donde provengo.</i>	To who will it matter where I come from?
<i>Mudaré mi poncho por ropa ciudadana</i>	I will exchange my poncho for city dress
<i>Y con tono porteño encontraré trabajo</i>	And with a Porteño accent, I will find work
<i>Seré un albañil, seré un basurero,</i>	I will work in construction, or as a garbage man
<i>Seré una sirvienta sin pucará ni lanas</i>	I will be a servant without money
<i>Iré desde mi villa al bar de los domingos</i>	I will go from my slum to the bar on Sundays

Up until this point in the song, “Kolla en la Ciudad” tells a common story, one of an immigrant to a new city who feels completely alone and who learns that hiding their origins and adapting to the new place is a necessity. Thus, they stop speaking their native tongue, change their dress, and overall, do their best to assimilate into the new dominant culture. In this case, the migration is regional, from the rural to urban; however, the cultural alienation that the Kolla in this song feels is not unique. What the song does emphasize though is the perceived division between Buenos

Aires and the rest of the country. The song shows that, although Buenos Aires is part of Argentina, people from the interior still feel out of place because their Andean culture is so distinct from the Buenos Aires Italian-immigrant one. Thus, the narrator says they have to play the sikus to know they exist.

<i>Y soplaré mi sikus para saber que existo</i>	And play my sikus to know I exist
<i>Mientras otro paisano chayando todo el sueldo</i>	While my countryman is wasting his pay
<i>Recordará su origen al frente de un espejo</i>	He will remember his roots in front of the mirror

At the chorus, the song takes on a different feel and moves into a more blatant protest as the narrator says that the city (Buenos Aires) hurts them because they cannot see their brothers, those martyrs who have fallen, in the verses of the national anthem. This line is a critique of a historical reality in Argentina in which Indigenous and Blacks, who fought for independence and were conscripted in many civil wars and yet, were once again rendered invisible, their sacrifice not recognized in nationalist symbols.

<i>La ciudad me duele cuando entona el himno,</i>	The city hurts me when it sings the hymn
<i>Porque en sus estrofas no encuentro a mis hermanos</i>	because in its phrases I don't see my brothers
<i>Los mártires caídos por la tierra y la simiente</i>	The martyrs, fallen on the earth and seed
<i>Y mis ojos puneños tan indios que no entienden</i>	And my puneños eyes so Indian that they do not understand

In the final lines of the chorus, the narrator poses a question, “*¿Cada doce de Octubre, que celebra la gente?*” “Each October 12th, what do the people celebrate?”

This last line refers to October 12th, known in the U.S. as Columbus Day. In

Argentina, the name has gone through multiple revisions, from *Día de la Raza* (day of race) to *Día de la Diversidad* (day of diversity). Whatever the name, the point the author of “Kolla en La Ciudad” is making is that this marks the beginning of the European colonization of the New World and the subjugation and genocide of its native peoples across two continents. For Indigenous peoples, they see October 11th and the anniversary of their last day of freedom. Thus, the song calls into question a history that celebrates cultural, social, and physical genocide.

¿Cada 12 de octubre que festeja la gente?

Every October 12th, what do people celebrate?

Although specifically about a Kolla, this song has also been used to reference a broader Indigenous identity that extends beyond just that of the Kolla. Written by two history professors, Nestor Gea and Sergio Castro, “Kolla en la Ciudad” was first made famous by Ruben Patagonia, a Mapuche musician whose music is primarily about protesting the genocide of his people in the South of Argentina, on his CD *Volver a Ser Uno* in 1999. Patagonia’s version is distinct from Arias’. He begins the song by singing a copla with a melody from la Puna, a region in the Northwest. Next the percussion begins and Patagonia’s first verse is accompanied only by this percussion. On verse two, the sikus and guitar come in. In Arias’ version, the quena and flute players repeat a phrase throughout the song, and the instrumentation overall is quite busy. In contrast, in Patagonia’s version, the voice takes prominence, and the instruments sound like they are softly supporting the singer and emphasizing certain lyrics. For example, when he sings “Y soplaré mis sikus,” the

sikus can be heard more clearly. Patagonia, like Arias in the Cosquín performance, places emphasis on the line about not seeing his brothers in the national anthem, by speaking these words slowly and articulately. He is also a very emotive performer, and you can hear the anguish in his deep, slightly gravelly voice when his voice breaks as he utters these lines. During this section of the song, a new instrument enters: a mouth harp. In Argentina, the mouth harp is believed to be an instrument that has replaced a traditional Wichi one; therefore, Patagonia's use of this instrument broadens the song to extend beyond a musical association with only Kollas.

Given the history of the Andean ensemble, the primary instruments in this song, (quean-zampoña-charango-guitar-bombo), and its relationship to a Buenos Aires tradition of reimagining Indigenous Andean highland music (Rios 2012), it is interesting the manner in which certain instruments like the sikus are presented. Indeed, the line "*Y soplaré los sikus para saber que existo*" (And I play the sikus to know I exist) uses these wind instruments as a way to index this exact Andean highlands and Indigenous identity. Further, since the authors of the song are not Kolla or even from Jujuy, "Kolla en la ciudad" seems somewhat reminiscent of the Andean Paris trend in that it is a projection of an Indigenous reality that has come to signify indigeneity in the popular imagination.

One could even argue that adoption of the song by Patagonia, a Mapuche, and by Arias, a phenotypically White middle class Jujeño, is a political move, much like that of Sosa years before, to situate themselves within a broader Latin American

discourse of Indigenous belonging. For Arias, in particular, his acceptance as the current voice for Indigenous solidarity may be contingent on his association with Jujuy, his home province, (generally thought to be the most Andean of all Argentine provinces). This Indigenous belonging is in turn demarcated by Arias' move from a typical folkloric repertoire of zambas and chacareras to *cuecas*, *carnavalitos*, *sayas* and political protest songs, like "Kolla en la Ciudad" laden with Andean instruments.

I began this chapter by describing a ballet performed in the Pre-Cosquín competition in which the "Indigenous as invaders and savages" trope was prominent. Since, Arias' performance of "Kolla En La Ciudad" was on the same stage and about a week later, it provided an interesting contrast. Where the identity of the Indigenous figures in the Pre-Cosquín dance had been vague and generalized, Arias' song was giving a name to an actual Indigenous group from Argentina. He further used specific symbols to tie his performance to an Indigenous identity: shouts of Pachamama and the waving of the wiphala.

Yet, I felt somewhat skeptical of the implications of the audience members around me who were shouting out enthusiastically "*que festeja la gente*" and waving their wiphala flags around. Were they actually in support of Indigenous reform? What if that meant losing land and valuable resources to Indigenous peoples or losing their prominent status as a country distinct from the rest of Latin America? Were they informed about the things they were proclaiming: 12 de Octubre, the meaning of the wiphala, the flag they waved around, or even the Kolla people themselves? In other words, who was this "Kolla en la ciudad?" Was it

representative of a real person, tied to a concrete Indigenous identity, or was the Kolla en la ciudad simply a symbol, a token of diversity? Was this public embracing of the Kolla a sign of social change or was it just another example of the “permitted Indian”⁷⁷ (Hale 2002; Tucker 2011).

As I came to realize throughout my time in Argentina, through multiple conversations, and after conducting further historical research, none of these questions had simple answers. The song “Kolla en la Ciudad” means different things for different people,⁷⁸ and even the figure of the Kolla itself has different meanings for different people. On the one hand then, the Kolla being placed front and center on this stage signals a new cultural discourse in Argentina that is opening up a space for Indigenous expression. On the other hand, it acts as an echo of a Latin American indigenista tendency to claim the Indigenous group most closely connected to the ancient Incas. As I will now show, the representation of the Kolla in Argentina is multifaceted and highly nuanced, tied to a historical exoticization of this figure as well as to more recent political developments.

Kolla: A Historical Overview

Kolla or Colla comes from the word *Collasuyu*, a region of Inca territory. As explained previously in chapter two, the Inca empire, called Tahuantinsuyu, was

⁷⁷ See Hale, Charles R. 2002. “Does Multiculturalism Menace? Governance, Cultural Rights and the Politics of Identity in Guatemala.” *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34: 485-524.

⁷⁸ The different meanings that people ascribe to “Kolla en la ciudad” is demonstrated in discussions about this song’s use in a political protest and for the case study Huayra. I will discuss these in chapters 3 and 4.

vast and extended over most of South America. With the capital at Cuzco, the Inca empire was divided into four distinct sections or territories: *Cunti-suyu*, *Chinchay-suyu*, *Anti-suyu*, and *Colla-suyu*.⁷⁹ The final section, Collasuyu, included Peru south of Cuzco, the altiplano of Bolivia, and the northern sections of Chile and Argentina. Kolla, the first part of Collasuyu, thus refers to people who come from this vast territory.⁸⁰ As such, Kolla encompasses groups from northern Argentina who existed before the Incas and were conquered by them and became part of their empire, such as the Diaguitas, Omaguacas, and Atacamas. It also encapsulates Aymara- and Quechua-speaking groups from Bolivia.⁸¹

Kollas are connected, both historically, and in popular imagination, with the Northwest region of Argentina particularly Jujuy and parts of Salta. The Incas invaded this region in 1480, and since then this area has been characterized as Andean (Shumway 1993: 9-10). After conquest, the highlands of Jujuy and Salta were part of the trading route of the Spanish who travelled between Alto Peru and the Rio de la Plata region, of present-day Buenos Aires. After the highlands of Jujuy and Salta were enveloped into the colonial system at the end of the seventeenth century, the Spanish brought in foreign crops and animals from Europe and replaced local systems of management with land ownership (Reboratti 1996, 54-

⁷⁹ Cunti-suyu was from Cuzco south and west to the South Sea; Chinchay-suyu was from Cuzco to the north and west; Anti-suyu was from Cuzco to the east; Colla-suyu was to the South, Southwest, and Southeast and extended down to parts of Chile and Northern Argentina (de Gamboa 1907: 132).

⁸⁰ Nicholas J. Saunders traces the word Coya back to the Incas. He notes that the emperor, the Sapa (unique) inca had a practice of marrying his full-blooded sister, known as his Coya (2000: 32).

⁸¹ Carlos Martínez Sarasola writes that Kollas are a group derived ethnically from Diaguitas, Omaguacas, Apatamas and Quechua and Amaira from Bolivia. (1992: 440-444).

55). Following independence, the Northwest was primarily controlled by *caudillos* (rogue rebel leaders).

As a result, Kollas were dominated, first by the Incas, then the Spanish, and finally, those Argentines who took control after independence. As Shumway notes, while the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest were not subjugated to the atrocities of the Desert Conquest, they suffered in other ways, primarily because their way of life was completely transformed (Shumway 1983: 9-14). Without the governance of the Spanish crown, Indigenous exploitation increased as there were no longer labor laws to protect them (Occhipinti 2002: 327). Later, in the twentieth-century, many Indigenous people from Jujuy and Salta were incorporated as the main labor in the sugar cane fields and factories. Their abuse by bosses was flagrant and led to the 1946 *Malon de la Paz* march mentioned in the previous chapter. Over time and in the face of being forced to give up many of their traditions, including dress and language, Kollas were either assimilated completely into the dominant culture or took their practices underground.

Kollas as Tokenized Figure in Tourism

Paradoxically, even though Kollas were forcibly incorporated into mainstream culture, they were later singled out as a symbol of a pre-cosmopolitan and “authentic” Argentina that had been preserved from the onslaught of foreign immigration in the nineteenth century. As Argentine historian Oscar Chamosa explains, dating as far back as the 1930s in Argentina, Buenos Aires has been

perceived as a city of immigrants, while the Northwest including Salta, Tucuman, and Jujuy, were seen as a hub of an “authentic” and endangered Argentine culture and peoples. In efforts to promote what Chamosa describes as “heritage tourism,” for tourists from Buenos Aires and other Argentine cities, travel writers, photographers, and journalists highlighted historical sites including colonial churches and towns that were restored to look more colonial than they actually were. They also promoted local festivals, religious ceremonies, and Carnival celebrations (Chamosa 2010: 56).

This meant that while the gaucho continued to be evoked as the icon of a “pure” pre-independence Criollo reality, the Kolla became the symbol of an even older Argentine primordial culture, one that preceded the Spanish conquest. As the Indigenous group thought to be direct descendent of the Incas, Kollas became the symbol of a highly exoticist campaign that dominated tourist iconography, and were prominently displayed in postcards, tourist brochures, and magazine covers. As Chamosa concludes,

The dark-skinned inhabitants of these areas, including Kollas and mestizos (or criollos) of mixed race origins, became part of the tourist attraction itself, precisely because they represented a visual and cultural contrast with the wealthy, “modern,” and light-skinned Argentine tourists (2017: 53).

The promotion of the Kolla as a tourist icon did not translate into a respect for the actual Kolla peasants that inhabited the northwest. Rather, as Chamosa shows, the same tourist images that encouraged the embracing of the nation’s diverse populations, also determined the boundaries of what White Argentine

tourists saw, which contributed to broader ideas about which people were part of the nation and which were part of the landscape (2017:57). In a way then, even as Kollas were being singled out as the symbol of Argentine culture, rather than this placing them more centrally within the boundaries of Argentine national belonging, it further removed them from this ideological context, except perhaps in one context: “El Carnavalito.”

Folklorization of the Kolla in “el Carnavalito”

The Kolla, at least symbolically, has historically had a role in folkloric music since certain dances, thought to be of Inca derivation, have been included in the standard folkloric repertoire. Among these are included the *cueca*, derived from the *zamacueca* and, even more well-known, *el carnavalito*. Around the same time that Kollas were becoming the poster children of a primordial and “authentic” culture through tourist iconography, they were also being immortalized through one particular folkloric representation: “El Humahuaqueño,” also known as “*el carnavalito*” or even “*el baile Kolla*” (the Kolla dance).

This song, known throughout much of Latin America as well as in more widespread international contexts, is arguably one of the most popular songs in Argentina. In fact, Argentine ethnomusicologist Ruben Perez-Bugallo even describes it as a national popular hymn (2008: 7-9). In addition to being heard in festivals and *peñas* year-round, this song is also part of the musical repertoire that is generally

taught in folkloric dance classes. In this context, it is often referred to as the Kolla dance.

I first heard this song when I attended a folkloric Peña in Buenos Aires. After dancing other folk styles including chacareras, zambas, and gatos, the night finally concluded with “El Humahuaqueño.” I did not know how to dance el carnavalito, but I soon found myself caught up as the woman next to me locked arms with me and pulled me through the gauntlet of other dancers who held their arms high as we passed under them. Later, when I began taking folkloric dance classes in Salta, I was again taught this dance. In both instances, when I asked where this song was from and what it was about, I was told that it was about carnival and that it came from el norte, meaning one of the Northernmost provinces of Argentina, Jujuy (ibid).

In fact, this is a cultural misconception. As Argentine ethnomusicologist Ruben Perez Bugallo explains, “El Humahuaqueño,” far from being a song of northern origin, is actually a projection or invention of what a northern song would sound like as envisioned by a Porteño, a person from Buenos Aires. In 1941, Edmundo Zaldivar, a Porteño composer, was commissioned by the directors of Radio El Mundo to write a song with a “northern air.” Their aim was to create a song that would inspire a renewed interest in *musica criolla* (creole music) loosely understood as music of the *interior* (rural areas). Zaldivar, who had never travelled to northern Argentina, modeled his new northern genre after a Bolivian huayño, but as Bugallo notes, this new type of huayño was not culturally correct as it lacked a tritonic sound (2008: 7-9).

Producer Joaquin Perez Fernandez incorporated this carnavalito as Zaldivar had coined the new genre, into his ballet and introduced it to audiences around the world. Following this international popularity, the song El Humahuaqueño was adopted in Argentina by rural, peasant orchestras and also by Carnival comparsas with such success that it soon became impossible to convince the Argentine public that this was not part of a traditional Andean repertoire. Moreover, Bugallo emphasizes that in addition to creating a genre, Zaldivar also codified a fictitious instrumentation through the lyrics of his opening stanza. The composer, who had never seen a carnival celebration himself, combined three instruments that would never be played together in this celebration: an erke, a somewhat obscure Andean Indigenous instrument mentioned previously, along with a charango and a bombo.

<i>Llegando está carnival, quebradeño mi cholitai</i>	Carnival is arriving, quebradeño (of the Quebrada) my girl (from the country)
<i>Llegando está carnival, quebradeño mi cholitai</i>	Carnival is arriving, quebradeño my girl
<i>Fiesta de la quebrada, humahuaqueña para bailar</i>	Celebration of the quebrada, Humahuaqueña to dance
<i>Fiesta de la quebrada, humahuaqueña para cantar</i>	Celebration of the quebrada, Humahuaqueña to sing

In 2008, Perez-Bugallo concluded that while you would be hard pressed to find an Argentine who had not sung these exact lines... “erque, charango y bombo carnavalito para cantar” ...it would be significantly more difficult to find an Argentine who knew what an erque actually was” (ibid).

Despite its urban origins, with which many Argentines are familiar, “El Humahuaqueño” is used again and again to refer to Kollas and to place them within

the context of an “authentic” Northwestern culture. In folkloric dance classes, I was taught to bend over at the waist as part of dancing Kolla, a choreography I saw echoed by everyone from little kids to professional dancers on the Cosquín stage. What was notable to me was that as I danced “el carnavalito,” due to the bent over posture, I ended up looking at the ground the entire time. In a performance context, this felt strange as it cut off all connection with the audience. This body language also felt humble and subservient, words that fit with the historical depiction of Kollas as peasants who worked for gaucho land owners. This positioning of the body also contrasts highly with that of the other Argentine folkloric dances, which are characterized by a straight back and high posture. Ruth Hellier-Tinoco reminds us that body movements and positions in dance are not innocuous.

[Folkloric] [p]ractices are intrinsically and often inextricably connected to people, particularly in dance and music contexts where notions of embodiment are clearly essential to notions of signification. It is in this realm that “folklore” may be considered to be a power technique or “power in action” (Foucault 1982: 219). In Mexico, there is an indexical correlation between “folklore” and “Indigenous peoples.” Such classification and classificatory processes are part of a complex web of power relations in which there is a romantic valorization of artistic practice of the diverse people labeled as “Indigenous” while the people themselves continue to live in marginalized and repressed situations. The predominance of a romantic, idealistic, “folkloric” image of such peoples is diffused and perpetuated through the use of music and dance as control (Hellier-Tinoco 2015: 47-48).

This quote illustrates a form of indigenismo that takes place through performance.

As explained earlier, the Argentine folkloric identity has not been tied to an

Indigenous figure. However, I still felt it significant that all of the Spanish dances

were performed in an intense upright position, shoulders back, head high, and chin up, while only the “Indigenous” dances were performed with bent posture, an embodiment of Andean folklorization.

To think of the carnavalito as Andean is not completely illogical, because Zaldivar modeled this genre after a Bolivian huayno; therefore, it could be argued to be of a (far-removed) Andean derivation. However, El Humahuaqueño is not only performed as a Kolla cultural expression in folkloric acts. Rather, as I will explore further in chapter 5, it is also often used to frame Pachamama ceremonies and other Andean events, in both public and private spaces. In particular, it has been incorporated into many touristic contexts to this day.

The Reclaiming of the Kolla

The Kolla as tourist icon and symbol of an ancient Inca heritage has been reinvigorated throughout Argentina and now, more than ever before, is invested with great cultural capital. Year round in Salta, tourist agencies promote trips to La Quebrada de Humahuaca, an UNESCO Patrimonial Heritage Site that promise to “dig deep in our souls and [in which] the Pachamama spirit will stay with us long after the journey is over”⁸² February (Carnival) and August (the month of Pachamama) both mark a huge influx of tourists to the area and the city goes out of its way to welcome visitors with billboards and posters advertising events of “*pueblos*

⁸²https://cdn.adventuretravel.biz/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/say_hueque_salta_and_jujuy_trails_of_the_pachamama_psa.pdf

andinos,” (Andean peoples), and events like Pachamama ceremonies, that are held throughout the province.

I found in my research that to some people in Salta, to this day, being Kolla was synonymous or interchangeable with being Bolivian. Others I spoke with shared that growing up, the word Kolla was an insult, and so they denied any recognition of this identity. It has only been recently, after the 1994 Constitutional reform, and more significantly, in a post-Evo Morales world, that they have become willing to claim that part of their identity.

Claiming Kolla identity has been difficult for many people because it goes against centuries of prejudice and the need to hide an Indigenous identity. Lanusse and Lazzari explain that historically, the Kolla was characterized as “stingy and dishonest,” and being called Kolla was a pejorative slur. In addition, the Kolla was thought to be from Bolivia and therefore not only classified as an “Indio” but as a foreign “Indio” as well. Thus, the Kolla was barred from a Salteño sense of belonging and also from a larger Argentine one as well.

The year 1994 marked an important moment in Argentine Indigenous history as it ushered in the Constitutional reform discussed in chapter one, which for the first time recognized the existence of pre-colonial peoples in Argentina and granted land rights to those who could prove Indigenous identity. As anthropologist Laurie Occhipinti demonstrates, this put Kollas, the second largest Indigenous group in Argentina, in a potentially powerful position since it meant they could recoup

land that had been sequestered over decades of colonial and post-colonial occupation.

After the 1994 Constitutional Reform, the position of the Kollas started to change. People who had previously found it disadvantageous to proclaim themselves as Kolla, now suddenly found the opposite. However, as Occhipinti highlights, claiming to be Indigenous in Argentina automatically puts one in a position of having to prove one's authenticity. This is an especially huge burden on Kolla people for multiple reasons. First, as one of the mostly highly assimilated of Indigenous groups in Argentina, they struggle to prove their authentic Indigenous heritage (Occhipinti 2002: 341). As a result of centuries of state pressure, Kollas have lost many of their customs. Further, given that they are a mix of many Indigenous groups that were in the region prior to the Inca takeover, it is difficult for them to trace their history with specificity.

Occhipinti, in her research on Iruya, an area of the highlands of Salta, demonstrates "that how being Kolla is imagined and lived varies markedly" even within one town (Occhipinti 2002: 328). She asserts that for Kollas there is no collective memory; through forced assimilation or to ward off prejudice, they have lost both the visible markers and strong internal sense of identity. Thus, Kolla individuals are "actively engaged in the process of recapturing memory and history, searching for ancestry" (Occhipinti 2002: 326). Building on Jeffrey Gould's research on Indigenous memory in Nicaragua (1998: 3), Occhipinti makes a compelling argument that "the memory of oppression and marginalization may serve to define

and unite a specific Indigenous people more than material culture, language, or remnants of tradition” (2002: 326). Thus, she argues that, while being Kolla may mean different things to each individual, all Kollas are united by a shared history of marginalization and subjugation.

As Kollas have begun to shed some of the stigma previously attached to them, they have taken on political roles and have also become part of a symbolic Argentine patrimony. However, as Occhipinti concludes “to some extent, this [Kolla] identity has been politicized, “invoked by urban migrants and pan-Indigenous political organizations - ironically, both groups that rural residents often feel have lost their genuine connections to the community” (2002: 338).⁸³ In light of these recent political turns, the need for the inhabitants of the Argentine interior to be characterized as part of an authentic Argentine culture that is both relatable and consumable by those in Buenos Aires has grown significantly. During her administration (2007-2015), former president Cristina Kirchner, known for her heightened nationalist stance and her policies to isolate and strengthen Argentina’s economy through placing strict tariffs on foreign imports, made a special trip to Jujuy to participate in a Pachamama ceremony.⁸⁴

Not to be outdone, during his political campaign, current president Mauricio Macri also took special pains to participate in a Pachamama ceremony in Jujuy. He

⁸³ For an example of this read about Milagro Salas and her arrest in 2016
<https://www.telesur.tv.net/english/news/Argentinas-National-Meeting-of-Women-Backs-Milagro-Sala-20171017-0007.html>

⁸⁴ <https://www.lagaceta.com.ar/nota/554636/politica/jujuy-cristina-participo-ceremonia-dia-pachamama.html>

ended his campaign in La Quebrada de Humahuaca and even asked the Pachamama for “*sabiduría y fortaleza para conducir al pueblo Argentino por el buen camino*” (wisdom and strength to guide the Argentine people in a good path).⁸⁵ It is worth noting however, that despite this display of cultural competency, neither of these political figures has followed through on promises to improve the situation for Indigenous peoples in Argentina. Despite Indigenous issues [or iconography] in Argentina coming to center (or at least side) stage, they remain primarily relegated to the margins of an empty/representative multiculturalism.

Today, more than ever, the Kolla as cultural symbol is ubiquitous in the northern provinces. In Salta, tourism increasingly emphasizes enticing options for opportunities to participate in “authentic” Indigenous (Kolla) events. Thus, today Salta welcomes visitors with not only advertisements for gaucho and folkloric music experiences, but also with a barrage of Kolla related symbols including Pachamama stores, invitations to Pachamama ceremonies, and even a *Kolla* figure on the city billboard.

The presentation of the Kolla on this billboard is significant. The Kolla depicted here is not a photograph, a well-formed image, but rather an empty silhouette showing a “smiling *Kolla*” with his mountains and his llama. In its vagueness, the Kolla image plays into broader stereotypes of the “happy, simple” Kolla and suggests a sense of intangibility and distance, which leads the viewer to

⁸⁵ <https://www.infobae.com/2015/11/19/1770959-mauricio-macri-le-pidio-sabiduria-y-fortaleza-la-Pachamama-conducir-al-pais/>

question if this Kolla is a figure from our present, our past, or even an imagined past. Thus, this billboard plays into broader tropes of primitive authenticity and the picturesque Andeanism that anthropologists and ethnomusicologists have been so heavily critiqued for perpetuating (Starn 1991: 45). The Kolla figure, in this billboard and other tourist items, is both somewhat dehumanized and exoticized. On the one hand, it shows broad recognition of the Kolla as an integral part of the Argentine Northwest, and not, as previously thought, Bolivia. On the other, it succinctly illustrates the way that the Kolla has become a tokenized figure to encourage tourists to take part in an attractive and passive indigeneity, one that has no impact on policy.

Conclusion

Neither the figure of the gaucho nor the Kolla can be easily classified. Rather, due to the complicated history of each, and the ways that they have been manipulated and recontextualized time and again to represent a White European Argentine and an Indigenous (or at least criollo) one, has allowed for them both to be used as blank slates upon which people can map particular ideologies of what it means to be Argentine. Indeed, both the gaucho and the Kolla have been framed as relics of a “lost” Argentina. The gaucho is tied to a pre-colonial and recently post-independence Argentina thought to be pure since it preceded the influx of foreigners from mass migration. The Kolla on the other hand is part of a movement

to reclaim a pre-colonial existence, one that is firmly tied to a romanticized Inca civilization.

The recent national embracing of the Kolla figure, however nebulous, indicates a cultural acceptance of a particular narrative of indigeneity, which should be construed as a positive change in Argentina. However, the Kolla is once again a group closely tied to an Inca heritage, which by default excludes the many Indigenous groups in Salta province who do not identify with or were not conquered by the Incas. This elevation of an Indigenous Incan descent to the exclusion of extant ones mimics indigenista trends throughout Latin America.

Given a long history in which the Kolla has been used to promote the Northwest, we can see the current prominence of the Kolla on billboards and tourist brochures as simply an extension of this historical exoticism of the region. However, it is important to recognize that the stakes of these exotic constructions in which Kollas and Andean culture are reified as components of an ancient Argentina have changed. The co-optation of a Kolla identity by politicized and pan-Indigenous groups has also transformed particular cultural practices into cultural capital for social and economic gain or for tourism. Certain practices, long hidden from public scrutiny, such as Pachamama worship, suddenly were brought into the open. As I will explore further in the coming chapters, these practices have become both vehicles by which Kollas can prove their ancestral belonging and tools for both local and national political agendas.

Chapter Two

Framing of Coplas: Indigenous?

A basic premise of this dissertation is that the cultural figures in Argentina are shaped as much by the contexts in which they are presented as by the genres that they employ in their performances. For instance, the *gaucho* (Argentine cowboy) is not inherently White and European, but has been cast that way in the interests of political and social agendas. In this chapter I focus on another genre most closely associated with *Kollas*, (Indigenous group) the *copla* (*music genre*), and the ways that it too has been shaped to represent an Indigenous part of Argentine culture. This is not to say that coplas are not part of an Indigenous tradition; as I will explain later in this chapter, coplas bear unmistakable markers of Andean Indigenous music. However, coplas are also part of a Spanish tradition inherited from the colonial powers and, as such, are essentially a *mestizo* (mixed race, generally Spanish and Indigenous) genre. In this chapter, I focus on how coplas sometimes appear more or less Indigenous and “authentic,” depending on the ways that the performances are framed.

In his book *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (1974), sociologist Erving Goffman proposes that it is the framing of any event or social interaction that ultimately informs the perception and interpretation of the event. He argues that humans unconsciously adopt and adapt particular frames to guide us in understanding the world around us. Using the metaphor of a picture

frame, which he refers to as *laminations*, Goffman demonstrates how each frame adds another layer of meaning onto the original picture (1974). The application of frame analysis is most evident in mass media, where a headline can completely change the reader's interpretation of an event or image. A perfect example is the recent coverage of Syrian refugees across different media platforms. Fox News and CNN tend to frame the refugee crisis in terms of fear, emphasizing the dangers that the refugees bring (some may even be terrorists in disguise). On the other hand, NPR's coverage focuses more on the plight of the refugees themselves and gives an overall more individualized perspective and the ways in which they are welcomed, or not welcomed in some cases. Depending on which media one subscribes to, a person's attitude toward the crisis may be drastically different.

Frame analysis can also be applied to performance; the way that a performance is staged influences the way that a viewer understands said performance. In my analysis of coplas, I apply Goffman's frame analysis theory. To me, a cultural outsider, the music of *copleras* (copla performers) often sounded the same from one event to the next. In fact, I even heard the exact same verses being sung at a variety of shows. My perception changed once I began studying how to sing, play, and compose coplas myself, as I learned how to distinguish one *tonada* (melodic and rhythmic combination) from the next. My appreciation grew once I understood the significance of the lyrics in an individual copla.

However, even before I had developed my ear, what I did notice was that the different contexts in which coplas were sung seemed to influence audience

receptions. More specifically, different contexts connoted varying degrees of solemnity and authority ensconced in the framing of how Indigenous or authentic coplas were perceived. The framing of copla performances included dress, the ceremonies that copleras were officiating (staged and not), and perhaps most significantly, the words with which the performers were introduced. The virtual picture frames of the copla performances shifted when they moved from national to local, tourist to private, and traditional to contemporary arenas.

In analyzing the copla, I return once more to Ruth Hellier-Tinoco's idea of performism, meaning that a performance extends beyond what is presented in that moment (2011: 4). Combining Hellier-Tinoco with Goffman, I posit that the framing of coplas is essential to an understanding of the genre, but also that this framing goes beyond the actual performance and is informed by ideologies and political and social agendas. This means that in some events the copla is presented as a traditional practice devoid of modern cosmopolitan influences, whereas in other contexts, coplas are part of a fluid tradition and express a malleable sense of identity that even includes contemporary social critiques.

During my research in Argentina, in addition to studying privately and even composing a few copla verses of my own, I attended numerous copla performances. Depending on the contexts in which each was played, the framing of the music and the event shifted. For example, in a *rueda* (a circular communal music practice), the same *tonada* or melody would be repeated for hours as different people offered different verses and the group mimicked them. In Buenos Aires, coplas were often

used in music played at protests, and I even had one encounter with a *coplera* (musician who performs coplas) who called herself the “Lady Gaga of folklore.” In addition, I saw small performances in which my teacher and his group Los Baguales del Norte would sing coplas in unison, rather than in a call and response fashion, when they were officiating a formal ceremony such as a municipal *Pachamama* celebration. In this last setting, the person who introduced them, generally a member of the tourist bureau, would often make a comment about coplas being the root of Argentine culture.

In this chapter, I argue that the revitalization of copla performance for tourists as well as on the national stage is directly connected to a renewed interest in indigeneity and multiculturalism in Argentina. In particular, the copla has become part of a demonstration of tradition that is central to Kollas proving Indigenous status by being the culture bearers of an ancient, ancestral heritage directly connected to the Incas. There is truth to this progeny; indeed, scholars trace the origins of the copla drum to a prehispanic past (Pérez Bugallo 2008: 42). However, what I am focusing on in this chapter is less whether or not the copla is Indigenous and more on how and why it is presented as “authentically Argentine” and often Indigenous within different performances. While the other case studies in this dissertation are about specific groups, this chapter is more broadly about coplas themselves, and I draw on multiple settings and interviews. After providing essential background information on the copla, I detail four major frames within which I analyze the copla: nationalism, tourism, folklore, and contemporary social

criticism. First, I describe a performance on the Cosquín National stage to show the ways that coplas are imbued with language to convey authenticity and a primordial belonging on a national level. I then discuss coplas in local settings in Salta and examine events that were framed for tourist consumption. Within this context, I discuss how certain events that are marketed to tourists simultaneously serve a social function in that they provide a meeting place for people who have come to live in the city of Salta and are able to revisit their traditional practices in annual events throughout the year. My next section focuses on coplas within a folkloric setting. I then move to a discussion of ways that the copla tradition is being adapted to a contemporary context through examining two women copleras who are using coplas to express social commentary about gender constructions, racism and gender violence. Returning to a national frame, I conclude with a brief look at coplas being used in protest marches in Buenos Aires.

Coplas/Bagualas

Coplas are a genre of music that involve singing and drumming. A *coplero/a*, one who performs coplas, typically plays a small round, double-sided drum called a *caja* while singing a four-verse strophic phrase. Coplas are a subset of a broader musical genre called *baguala*. In 1944, Argentine musicologist Carlos Vega classified the *baguala* types as including: *joi-joi*, *tonada*, *vidalita*, *copla*, *arribeña* and *baguala* (1994: 120, 1956b:247). In my research, however, the most common word used to describe these various genre types was *copla*. In addition, according to my *copla*

teacher, Severo Báez, baguala referred only to a specific *tonada*, or combination of melody and rhythm. For this reason, I use the word *copla* and *copleras* to refer generally in this chapter to the genre Vega identifies as baguala.

All subgenres of this music share certain characteristics. The typical instrumentation for a *copla* is a *caja* (a small round drum that is stretched with cow skin on either side). The origins of this drum date to a precolonial era, and the instrument is featured in manuscripts like Guaman Poma about Inca practices. One of the unique characteristics of the *caja* is the *chirlera* or *charlera* (a long metallic cord strung across the back skin of the drum), which is used much like the strings on a snare drum to create a rattling sound. Most commonly, the *chirlera* is made from metal, such as a guitar string; however, when I worked with El Bagualero Vasquez, an accomplished *bombo* (a bass drum) and *caja* maker, to construct my own *caja*, he showed me how to twist multiple strands of hair taken from a cow's tail to create the *chirlera*. According to Argentine folklorist Leda Valladares and Argentine musicologist Rubén Pérez Bugallo, the size and style of the *caja* varies from one region to the next. For example, in the province of Santiago del Estero, the instrument, called a *caja Santiagueña* is small (30 centimeters in diameter) and lacks a *chirlera*, giving it a dry and dramatic sound. In Jujuy and parts of Salta, its diameter is larger (20 centimeters in diameter) and the sound it makes is deeper (Valladares 2000: 32; Pérez Bugallo 2008: 44). In all cases, the drum is likely a descendent of small hand drums (also known as the *tinya* farther north in Peru and Bolivia) that have been played to accompany singing throughout the Andean region since pre-

colonial times; notably, it is the only known instrument that was played by women in the Inca period.⁸⁶

The *caja* is the instrument most commonly used in coplas, but not all copleras use this instrument. In the Chaco, a region of the province of Salta, copleras either sing acapella or with the accompaniment of a violinist. Also, in other regions, such as in Iruya, La Puna, and the Quebrada de Humahuaca, people play an aerophone known as a *flautilla jujeña*. This is a vertical flute between 30 and 40 centimeters in length, made of sugar cane. It resembles a *quena*, except for that the mouth piece, as opposed to being flat on the top, has two prongs. To play the *flautilla jujeña*, one inserts these prongs into their mouth and blows (Goyeña 2000: 49). I only ever saw this instrument played in a *rueda*, a circular musical gathering, in which the musician played the *caja* with one hand and held the *flautilla jujeña* to his mouth with the other.⁸⁷

The other major instrument of the copla is the voice. A copla refers to a strophic form adapted from Spanish poetry in which four verses of eight syllables are sung or spoken in pairs. The verses rhyme in such a way that lines 1 and 3 and lines 2 and 4 match (ABAB). For example, one of the first coplas that Báez taught me had the following rhyming scheme.

⁸⁶ See for example Guaman Poma de Ayala, Felipe. 1993 [1615]. *Nueva Coronica y Buen Gobierno*, v. 1. Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica. P. 241.

⁸⁷ The combination of the *caja* and the *flautilla jujeña* is found throughout the Andes and in Europe. The exact origins are unclear, which again leads to the idea of a mestizo or mixed musical heritage.

*Voy a cantar una copla
Pa' que le canta cualquiera
El día que yo me muera
Cantara mi calavera
El día que yo me muera
Cantara mi calavera
(Báez, Severo)*

I am going to sing a song
So that anyone can sing it
The day that I die
My skull will sing it
The day that I die
My skull will sing it

The copla rhyming scheme can be found in other musical genres throughout Latin America, for example, in *son jarocho* (Sheehy 1979); however, what makes Argentine coplas unique are the vocal acrobatics. Argentine ethnomusicologist Enrique Cámara de Landa explains the vocal technique particular to coplas, in which the singer often alternates rapidly between head voice and chest voice in addition to adding a series of vocal ornamentations known as *el kenko*, which in *Quechua* means “sinuous” or “serpentine” (2001: 25). Another highly praised vocal skill of a *coplera* is the ability to switch quickly to a high pitched falsetto and sustain this sound with potency. This style is more popular in the region of the Chaco and in parts of Tarija, Bolivia (ibid). While each individual has his/her particular intonation, tonadas, or melodic and rhythmic combinations, are generally reflective of particular regions. Therefore, for those with insider cultural knowledge, one can tell where another person is from based on their specific interpretation of a song.

Improvisation is central to the *coplera* tradition, and though one may hear the same verses repeated, each individual has his/her particular form of intonation, switching of vocal registers, and melodic melismas that make their version unique. For this reason, while I was able to learn the melody and words of the first copla Báez taught me, it took much longer for me to accurately imitate his vocal timbre

and the rise and fall of his voice on particular syllables. Even more challenging was picking up on subtle ways in which he was able to make multiple words fall as one or two syllables, as in for example the following copla.

<i>Venite, venite</i>	Come here, come here
<i>Deja de llorar</i>	Stop crying
<i>Yo soy buenito</i>	I am good
<i>Te voy a consolar</i>	I am going to console you
<i>Te voy a consolar</i>	I am going to console you

In the last two lines, in order to make “*Te voy a consolar*” fit with the melody, my teacher blended all of the sounds “*te voy a con*” into three syllables such that it sounded like “*tevoy(a)con.*”

Coplas in Argentina are typically sung in Spanish; indeed, all the ones I heard were. However, as Cámara de Landa points out, *Quechua*, which the Incas imposed on the conquered Indigenous groups of this region and which the Spanish later used to materially and spiritually defeat these same groups, appears sporadically in coplas in the form of a single word or sometimes as a complete verse (2001: 25).

Finally, the melodic tonalities of coplas are tritonic and typically in a major triad, although sometimes, in the regions closer to Tarija, they are performed in minor tritonics (ibid). Argentine and Uruguayan musicologist Isabel Aretz has shown that the use of a trifonic system appears within the music of other Indigenous peoples of the American continent (Aretz 1952:115) and so, as Cámara de Landa concludes, this tonality is not unique to the baguala/copla. In addition, there is no proven existence of that particular system of tonalities in the European countries that were part of the Hispanic colonization (Cámara de Landa 2001:25).

Thus, the survival of these tritonic songs are vestiges of a pre-Hispanic musical culture (Camára de Landa 2001:26). In addition, there are similarities to a song genre, the *harawi*, that dates back to Inca times. The *copla*, like the *harawi*, is a tritonic musical tradition and tends to have a strong female presence (Ritter 2012: 329-331). Another similarity is the prominent phrase ending in which the performer of a *copla* or a *harawi* sings “a high ‘ay yah!’ or ‘yahoo!’” (ibid). Thus, *coplas* are *mestizo*, a combination of Spanish-European and Indigenous-Argentine characteristics, with strong ties to an Inca past.

Most likely because of their documented prehispanic roots, in my research, I found that *coplas*, more than any other genre in Argentina, were the most associated with Indigenous revitalization. *Coplas* were often presented in political and social events in which the organizers were invested in creating an Indigenous setting and as such were framed with exuberant speeches about how authentically Argentine this music was. In these settings, *copleras* were also often presented within a nationalistic framework in which the Argentine’s tendency to romanticize their European roots was replaced by a desire to frame themselves as American (meaning Latin American).

In general, I observed that the further one got from the source, meaning the region where *coplas* were originally played, the more forceful the narrative about *coplas* representing a lost Argentine Indigenous culture became. A prime example of this was the *copla* performance of Mariana Carrizo and her fellow *copleras* at the Cosquín Festival in January 2014. At the time, I was unfamiliar with *coplas*, so the

way that Carrizo was introduced led me to believe that, first, coplas had a long and respected history on national stages, and second, that coplas, far from being just a genre of music, were highly spiritual—one could say almost magical.

Performance on the National Stage

Cosquín Festival, Cordoba, *January 2014*

As is customary, the evening begins around 10:00 with the portly announcer, draped in a Cosquín black and white poncho calling out exuberantly “Aqui Cosquin!” Then, another announcer, an older gentleman with grey hair, presents the opening act, Mariana Carrizo, a famous copla singer from San Carlos, Salta.

Aquí con la chaya que nos devuelve que por si hiciera falta una vez más, la noción de que vivimos en tierra americana. Fuerte palabra americana chaya, que viene del verbo de chayar o mojar o fecundar la tierra. Y eso es después de todo el carnaval donde se enciende las coplas que tomamos de España. Tal vez eso ha sido la derrota más grande del conquistador. Con su propio idioma el Americano Argentina construyo una baguala, la tonada, los cantos convencionales y maravilloso.

Here the *chaya* (the celebration) reminds us once again, as if [such reminders] were lacking, the notion that we live on American land. A strong American word, *chaya*, that comes from the verb *chayar*, or to water or fertilize the earth. And this is, more than anything, the Carnival where the copla, which we took from Spain, rises. Perhaps this has been the greatest defeat of the conqueror, that with their own language the Argentine American created a baguala, the melody, the conventional and marvelous songs.

The announcer’s speech framed the way this performance was understood by the audience, as it was laden with rhetoric full of both a heightened nationalism and a potent primordialism. First, he used the word *American* no less than three times, highlighting the fact that Argentina is part of Latin America. He also implied that the copla is a genre of not only resistance but triumph as well, since, as he said, it shows the defeat of the Spanish conquerors through their own music being transformed

into an Argentine national style. In this way, while he acknowledged the Spanish roots of the copla, the announcer was also setting the genre apart as uniquely Argentine. It is notable here that the announcer, in this proclamation, was not aligning an Argentine identity with a European one, as has typically been the case in Argentina.

To solidify that the copla is not Spanish, but is indeed Argentine, the announcer then reminded the audience of two important details. First, the copla is anonymous, a fact which places it firmly as a traditional practice of the countryside. Next, he mentioned that the instrumentation, the *caja*, is synonymous with another instrument known by the elders as *tinya*. Finally, the announcer took his acclaim of the copla a step further by placing it, not only as a national treasure, but also as an ancient and mystical one. Thus, he concluded, the copla can “spark life and banish death.”

Anonimo. Nadie se sabe quien es el autor de las coplas que nos acompañen además con un instrumento fuertísimo Americano también a que llamamos caja. Y los antiguos llamaban tinya. Hoy coplas para encender la vida, muchachas y muchachos de Cosquín parar exorcizar la muerte y alejarla como si alejarla a tormenta. Hoy hay coplas en la comienza, comandada como siempre ella, nos mandan por una mujer maravillosa a que hemos visto proclamar como reina aquí en Cosquín. Nuestra musa, Mariana Carrizo

Anonymous. No one knows who the composers are of the coplas that accompany us today. In addition, with a powerfully American instrument that we call the *caja*, and the elders called *tinya*. Today, coplas to spark life, ladies and gentlemen of Cosquín, to exorcise death and banish her as if to banish a storm. Today, for our opening we have coplas, brought to us as always, by a marvelous woman who we have seen proclaimed the queen here in Cosquín. Our muse, Mariana Carrizo!

The long introduction ends. The crowd applauds loudly. The stage lights brighten to reveal a simple setup. Six figures stand in the center of an otherwise empty stage; each

holds a caja, and a couple also carry flutes and instruments made of cow horns. The large screen in the background (present in all the shows) has nothing but a photograph of a person playing the caja, his/her face shrouded in shadows. There are no other instrumentalists on stage. The main performer, Mariana Carrizo, a young woman with two long braids, entwined with what looks like white spirals of paper, draping down her shoulders to her waist, dressed in a simple yellow dress approaches the microphone and begins to perform. She plays the caja with two sticks, holding one on either side; with her right wrist, which is slung through a small loop at the top, she holds the small drum steady. She opens her mouth and begins to sing in a strong and lilting voice.

*Hoy es el día de cantar
Va a comenzar la cosecha
Hoy es el día de cantar
Va a comenzar la cosecha
Una cosecha de copla
que esta noche se siembra*

*Today is the day of singing
The harvest is about to begin
Today is the day of singing
The harvest is about to begin
A harvest of coplas
That tonight is planted*

Carrizo's voice carries over the silent and expectant crowd breaking the otherwise naked soundscape of the huge auditorium. Her singing is expressive, and she undulates the "ah" sound on words in different places within the first, second, and third line. Another coplera on stage calls a grito or shout into the microphone; "yee-woo-hoo" he emits gleefully. Carrizo smiles and begins her second verse.

*Buenas tardes, buenas noches
¿Cómo están? ¿Como le va?
Me presento en esta rueda
Sin ninguna novedad*

*Good afternoon, good evening
How are you? How goes it?
I present myself in this circle
Without novelty*

After Carrizo finishes her verses, a man to her left begins to play his caja, which has the words "La Quiaca" (a region of the Northwest) painted in the center on it. With his right hand, he holds both the drum and the beater as he plays in a rapid triplet pattern. With his other hand, he lifts a thick horn (an erkencho) to his lips and blows. The man is dressed in a white button-down shirt covered by a dark poncho. He wears a large brimmed white hat, with what appears to be flowers and grass (I later learn this is basil) sticking out of the brim and flowing down his neck. When he finishes his short solo, another man plays a smaller erkencho. It has a much lower pitch than the first one, and the sound is softer. The caja this man holds has the words "copleras esa luz" written on its skin.

All six of the musicians begin to play a rapid rhythmic beat in unison, shifting slightly from one foot to the other and swaying to the music. I see Carrizo adjusting the

microphone for the next coplera, an older-looking woman. This woman holds her caja up high by her head as she begins to sing.

*Qué lindo es el verano
cuando llega carnaval
Qué lindo es el verano
cuando llega carnaval
Pero es más lindo Cosquín
Cuando empieza el festival*

How beautiful is the summer
When Carnival arrives
How beautiful is the summer
When Carnival arrives
But Cosquín is more lovely
When the festival begins

An older man steps forward and performs his copla. Then Carrizo sings once more.

*Cante, cante compañera
Y no se me quiera callar
Cante cante compañera
Y no se me quiera callar*

Sing, sing friend
And don't make me be quiet
Sing, sing friend
And don't make me be quiet

Carrizo's performance turned out to be a display of many different copleras from across the northwest region of Argentina. About twenty minutes passed as one by one, more copleras filed on stage and performed their songs. Each person had his/her unique style of playing the caja as well as their individual *tonada*, or melody. The copleras had strong accents and used many regional terms with which I was not familiar. For this reason, I found it hard to catch the meaning of the lyrics. One thing I did notice though is that the majority of the performers made mention of where they came from; this was either incorporated in the verse itself or in how they began their recitation prior to singing. I noticed many differences from one individual's performance to the next. Some of them recited their verses first and then sang them. Some melodies were more strident; others were soft; some musicians played with two beaters, others with one; some rhythms were complex, others were simple. Each singer had his/her own melodic melismas and style of enunciating. Finally, the

lyrics were also quite contrasting, from lively verses about past lovers to songs that quite prominently declared where the singer was from.

This first half of the copla performance followed a typical presentational format in which each musician sang his/her individual *tonada* by first reciting the words and then singing them. The way that each *coplera* presented him/herself by announcing where they were from was also more typical of a performance setting meant for outsiders, since, for those with the cultural knowledge, a *tonada* in itself can serve as a regional moniker. A *coplera* will be able to recognize where another *coplera* is from solely based on listening to their *tonada*.

The performance comes to a lull. Carrizo raises her left arm high, gesturing to the line of copleras to her right, and the crowd erupts in enthusiastic applause. The mood changes now as Carrizo ushers an older woman, dressed in a white poncho and a black, wide-brimmed hat, to the microphone. The woman begins to sing in a soft, high pitched timbre.

*Pachamama santa tierra
No me comas todavía
Déjame seguir cantando
Y mi pena olvidando*

*Pachamama sacred earth
Do not eat me yet
Let me continue singing
and forgetting my sorrows*

At this point, other men and women walk on stage and begin constructing what appears to be a small altar. It is difficult to see, but it looks as if this small tower is made of rocks. More people file on stage, waving large flags (one I recognize as the wiphala). A woman circles around the altar, holding a small vessel with smoke, which she blows onto the construction.

The difference between this copla performance on a national stage and that of a copla *rueda* (copla circle) perfectly demonstrates ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino's theory of presentational versus participatory music making characteristics (2008: 23-65). In a traditional copla-rueda setting, a call and response is typical. In

addition, while there may be people from different regions, a *rueda* normally revolves around one or two main *tonadas*. In particular, traditional ceremonies, such as the offering to the *Pachamama*, embody more participatory than presentational styles of playing.

This last section of the performance mimicked a traditional, participatory setting in that the musicians staged an ancient ceremony, a *Pachamama* offering, also a participatory ritual. In chapter two, I explained that *Pachamama* ceremonies have been incorporated into many tourist venues and are part of the biggest attractions in the Northwest for visitors from Buenos Aires and abroad. At the time of the Cosquín performance, I had not yet seen a *Pachamama* ceremony, yet, I could tell that this was an offering of some kind. It struck me as strange that a spiritual act would be part of a performance. However, over time I came to see it as the folklorization of the Kolla on stage. Indeed, it seemed that the incorporation of the ceremony was meant to add to the “authentic” nature and the primordial mystique of Carrizo’s show.

The copla performance comes to a conclusion when Carrizo leads the group in two final verses signaling the musicians’ imminent departure.

<i>Vamonos compañeritos</i>	Let’s go my friends
<i>Que vengan otros</i>	So, others can come
<i>Vamonos compañeritos</i>	Let’s go my friends
<i>Que vengan otros</i>	So others can come
<i>Que nos sobran las caricias</i>	That we have plenty of the affection
<i>Que nos han hecho a nosotros</i>	That they have given us
<i>Ya me voy, Ya me estoy yendo</i>	Now I am going, now I am leaving
<i>De su presencia ya dejo</i>	I take my leave from your presence
<i>Ya me voy, Ya me estoy yendo</i>	Now I am going, now I am leaving

*De su presencia ya dejo
Si quiera para recuerdo
Mi corazón se les dejo
Si quiera para recuerdo
Mi corazón se les dejo*

I take my leave from your presence
If you would like as a remembrance
I leave you my heart
If you would like as a remembrance
I leave you my heart

The erkencho sounds out one last time, and then the copleras take a bow. The crowd in Cosquín is highly appreciative of this performance. All around me, people have jumped to their feet to give a standing ovation. Others wave their wiphalas wildly in the air. A second announcer, a woman this time, urges the crowd to applaud more. She thanks Carrizo again, mentioning that there were “one-hundred and twenty copleras” in this performance. I find it telling that she only bothers to mention Carrizo by name, while the other one-hundred and twenty musicians remain anonymous, since this contributes to the idea mentioned earlier that the copla is inherently anonymous. Finally, to close, the announcer echoes the sentiments of the original presenter:

*...aplaudiendo un espectáculo genuino
que nos lleva a descubrir la tierra, a
mirar el paisaje y encontrar el alma.*

...applauding a genuine, or unique,
show that allows us to discover the
earth, see the landscape and find the
soul.

This final reminder of the copla’s “pure and authentic” connection to the Argentine land, that allows people to “discover the earth, see the landscape, and find the soul,” perfectly encapsulates the exoticism and primordialism inherent in the framing of the copla as the ultimate and most genuine relic of Argentine culture.

Reframing the Frame: A Closer Look

It turned out that the performer I saw in Cosquín, Mariana Carrizo, had caused a stir when she first performed on that stage fourteen years earlier and won the *premio sagrado* (sacred prize). According to Carrizo, this is because coplas belonged to a sector of society that the average Argentine did not want to acknowledge. Or perhaps, as Chamosa observed, the people in this sector could simply be seen as part of the landscape of the Northwest (2017: 57).

Hace 25 o 30 años atrás, cantar una copla era casi impensable en un escenario por una cuestión de que era un canto de la población que estaba en las orillas de la población campesina y eso no cabía adentro los formatos de espectáculos en este tiempo (Carrizo, Mariana. Personal Interview. July 12, 2015).

25 or 30 years ago, singing a copla on a stage was almost unthinkable because it was a musical style that came from the population that was on the periphery of the peasant population, and this did not have a place within the stage formats of the time.

Carrizo was born in Angastaco, a small town located in the Valles Calchaquies. When she was five years old her family moved to San Carlos, a town near Cafayate, a place famous for its wineries, in Salta Province. Here people commonly sang coplas, yet Carrizo's parents did not understand her desire to do so. So, as Carrizo explained, she had to find her own way. At age 8, she first performed on stage. After moving to the Salta capital, as a young woman, she became more successful, and in 2004 she performed in the Cosquín Festival where she won the *Premio Consagración* (consecrated prize).⁸⁸ This acclaim launched Carrizo's career, and in that same year, she released her first album titled *Libre y Duena*.⁸⁹ Since that time, Carrizo has played in many festivals around the country and internationally and remains a regular staple at the Cosquín Festival.

The copla has increased in popularity over time, and in addition to being well-researched by musicologists, folklorists, and ethnomusicologists, coplas have been featured on popular rock albums, like the aforementioned compilations with Leda Valladares. However, Carrizo still feels that the copla is often overlooked and

⁸⁸ This is the same prize that Bruno Arias won and that launched his career.

⁸⁹ <http://www.marianacarrizo.com.ar/biografia/>

that historically Argentine's propensity to measure itself in reference to all things European has overshadowed any affinity for the copla or any other aspect of Indigenous culture.

Entonces, por ejemplo, estas expresiones musicales en ciertos momentos, en ciertas épocas era separada de la música de que la sociedad consideraba buena música, ¿no? Entonces, era considerado como nada

So, for example, these musical expressions in certain moments, in certain eras, were separated from the music that society considered good music, right? So, they were considered worth nothing.

Here, Carrizo is not specifically talking about the copla, but rather about what today are folkloric standards: *zambas* and *chacareras*.

La que primero desprendieron y fueron integrándose con los bailes del salón y luego haciéndose popular, abriéndose más el abanico fueron la zamba, la chacarera, los valeses.

The first that took off and were integrated in the salón dances and then later became popular, opening up more possibilities, were the *zamba*, *chacarera*, the waltzes.

Yet, Carrizo still stresses that even today there remains a strong tendency among Argentines to adopt European culture and claim a European identity, while simultaneously ignoring their own. Thus, an Argentine dance troupe may proudly dance a *pericón*, a European salon dance, and present it as their national dance.

Aun así, por ejemplo, acá en Argentina o a mí me tocaba a veces ir a lugares fuera del país que por allí hay ballet que por mi lo hacen inconscientemente y sin... desmerecer su arte de ballet, pero hay mucha gente que hace ballet y lo hace sin conciencia. No tienen la conciencia lo que están llevando, pero presentan un pericón que es una danza europea de salón como una danza nacional. (Carrizo, Mariana personal interview July 2015).

Even still, for example, here in Argentina I have sometimes had to go to places outside of this country and, well, there might be a dance troupe, for me they do it unconsciously, and without....(How can I explain it to you?) without devaluing their art as dancers, but there are many people who do this dance and without awareness. They do not have the awareness of what they are bringing, but they present a pericón, which is a European salon dance as if it were a national dance (of Argentina).

From this conversation with Carrizo, I understood that, for her, the copla was special because it was traditional music from the Northwest of Argentina, which had always been rooted in the most marginalized populations. She was proud to be bringing this music to a broader audience and defending her culture. Yet, she was highly skeptical of outsiders who learned this music and then performed it elsewhere, using it to convey an identity of which they were not a part. Carrizo's comments show that, even as the copla is promoted as true Argentine culture in some circles, in others, a long history of lower-class and non-white associations with the genre continues to make it less popular than folkloric and other styles of music.

Nationalization/Retraditionalization

This performance on the Cosquín stage, again, speaks volumes to the way that the copla is seen in the national popular imaginary. It is apparent through the framing of Carrizo's performance that the copla is meant to represent a static, ancient Argentine culture.

This framing follows anthropologist Beatriz Caiuby Labate's theory of retraditionalization or hypertraditionalization. In her studies of the use of Ayahuasca (a drink made of Amazonian plants) in Peruvian shaman rituals, Labate observes that those from outside of the culture tend to have more strict guidelines for how the ceremony takes place, while cultural insiders tend to be less rigid. As Labate explains, foreign Ayahuasca converts or new South American urban practitioners tend to place,

a strong emphasis on the "traditional" rules of vegetalismo, while native and mestizo practitioners sometimes relax or relativize aspects of tradition and criticize such orthodoxy. Those seeking a more orthodox identity purge Catholic elements present in some variants of vegetalismo, such as saints' images or references to the Virgin Mary or Christ of the Icaros (2014: 187).

In a similar manner, those who are not native to the copla tradition often place more emphasis on its "traditional" presentation, thus emphasizing its mystic potential and connection to a romanticized Indigenous figure of the past.

Indeed, after talking with Mariana Carrizo, I began to see the discrepancies between what was promoted on a national stage and the actual history of the copla in Argentina. If my descriptions of a copla performance were limited to a national one, like that of the Cosquín show described above, the reader might easily leave this chapter with the impression that coplas, and the people who play them—Kollas—have a long history of national pride in Argentina. After seeing this performance, one might think that the copla has always held this important place in Argentine folkloric culture. However, returning to Goffman, this single frame would be

misleading. Indeed, what I heard from my interview with Carrizo as well as with other copla practitioners in Salta was that, had I arrived twenty-five or thirty years earlier, I would not have had the opportunity to hear a copla performed at a public ceremony, not to mention on the national Cosquín stage.

At the same time, the way that Carrizo and her fellow copleras were presented on the Cosquín stage as culture bearers of an ancient tradition is not unique. Argentine folklorist Leda Valladares, who is admired throughout the nation for her research and her collecting of coplas throughout the Northwest, similarly spoke of coplas in terms of their raw emotion and connection to a pre-Hispanic past. For Valladares the *vidala*, a type of baguala or copla, is equivalent to the North American blues. Thus, she writes,

La vidala tiene una carga que es carne del espíritu, suma de orfandades y desnudeces de las voces rugosas y desamparadas que la cantan, de la caja que la envuelve en su clima de presagio, de sus transidas palabras, de su alta tensión musical. Los cantores nadie, los anónimos y llagados cantores de la tierra, lastiman el aire con vidalas eternas que, a golpes de caja, nos ponen a la intemperie con nuestro baldío a cuestras (2000: 215)

The vidala has a burden that is flesh of the spirit, sum of orphans and nakedness of the rough and unparalleled voices that sing it, of the caja that surrounds it in its climate of omen, of its harsh words, of its high musical tension. The nobody singers, the anonymous and wounded singers of the earth, pierce the air with eternal vidalas that, with blows of the caja, put us out in the open with our futility on our backs.

While Valladares was responsible for bringing the copla to a Buenos Aires public and is highly revered in Argentina, her descriptions of the music tend to exoticize coplas and their origins in problematic ways. For example, in establishing that the copla is a mestizo genre she writes,

Queda dicho: la copla es una forma española pero el giro poético nos pertenece, tiene un contenido que se relaciona con el paisaje y el modo de sentir del indio que cantaba en su lengua (2000: 33).

To be clear, the copla is a Spanish form, but the poetic style belongs to us; its content relates to the landscape and the way that the Indian who sang in his language felt.

It is clear that Valladares wants to stress the Indigenous characteristics of the copla, but by referencing *the way that the Indian felt*, this musicological observation comes across as though she, the researcher, can imagine what the Indian (a nameless figure) felt. Similarly, when discussing the origins of the baguala and the *vidala*, Valladares says,

Baguala y vidala pertenecen a un mundo secreto en el reino de las canciones folclóricas. Desprenden una experiencia de raza y una fuerza de siglos. Las bagualas son furias. Las vidalas son penas, lamentos de amor el "mal pago" de los sentimientos, ceremonia de las raíces trémulas. Ambas son cantos llorados que braman y gimen en los Valles Calchaquíes (2000: 19).

Baguala and *vidala* belong to a secret world in the realm of folk songs. They release experiences of race and a force of centuries. Bagualas are furies. The *vidalas* are sorrows, laments of love the "bad payment" of the feelings, ceremony of the trembling roots. Both are crying songs that roar and moan in the Calchaquies Valleys.

To be sure, the vocal technique of the copla can feel visceral and raw, and again, while the above description is highly poetic and figurative, it brings to mind exoticist portrayals of Indigenous music found in for example, the world music boom of the 1980s (see Taylor 1997; Feld 1996). Indeed, Valladares' albums *Grito en el Cielo* (1989) and *Grito en el Cielo II* (1990) in which she showcased her collected music and collaborated with famous rock musicians including Fito Paez and Leon Gieco, coincided with the world music phenomenon.

My point in highlighting these descriptions is to show that, long before Mariana Carrizo's debut in Cosquín in 2014, the copla was known to people throughout the nation and even internationally; however, it was also presented within the powerful framing of a genre that has been rediscovered and is in need of rescuing: a pre-Hispanic, Indigenous gem. Today, this characterization of the copla as a "pure and authentic" genre continues to be the dominant one in popular imagination. In addition to promoting coplas as primordial culture on the national front, this particular framing of the genre carries over to another context in which cultural production is often judged based on how "authentic" it is: the world of tourism.

Frame 2: Coplas and Tourism

In their article, "*Pachamamismo o las ficciones de (la ausencia) de voz*" Laurence Cuelenaere and Jose Rabasa posit that the "cult" of the *Pachamama* particis a way for Latin Americans to counter Western intellectual hegemonies through claiming a universal Indigenous deity. Thus, they argue that the *Pachamama* tradition has been usurped for political and tourist purposes (2012). As evidence, they point to the use of the words *Madre Tierra* in the 2010 Bolivian constitution as well as the numerous times that this deity is mentioned in tourist literature that promotes mystical experiences in "la cosmovision andina" (Andean cosmovision) (2012: 186). To an extent I agree with this analysis since, as discussed in chapter II, the Kolla has become a tokenized figure in Argentina, and in Salta, the

promise of participating in an Andean/Kolla event is a huge tourist draw. This participation also tends to go together with coplas since they are traditionally played in *Pachamama* ceremonies and at Carnival, both of which attract tourists. In fact, each summer thousands of tourists from Buenos Aires and other Argentine cities flock to the northern regions of Salta and Jujuy for an “authentic” experience of the *Interior*, or the country, in which they partake in local festivals, carnival celebrations, and rituals like *Pachamama* ceremonies.

However, I reject Cuelenaere and Rabasa’s position that *all* forms of *Pachamama* worship are part of a tourist agenda and the further assertion that perhaps *Pachamama* worship is not a valid Indigenous cultural tradition. This understanding of *Pachamama* worship in northern Argentina casts the tradition as evidence of white appropriation. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Kollas, more than any other Indigenous group in Argentina, have been highly integrated and have lost much of their traditions or have simply kept them very well guarded from the public eye. For me to agree with Cuelenaere and Rabasa’s assessment then would be to take an intellectual position in which I reiterate the need for Kollas to prove their ancestry; this position would further contradict much of what I have argued in this dissertation about the ways in which identity and indigeneity should be understood. Thus, while I acknowledge that *Pachamama* traditions have become incorporated into a tourist agenda, I also choose to believe the participants in my research who shared that, they had only recently (in the last 20 years) begun practicing *Pachamama* celebrations in public in Salta capital, since the stigma of being

Indigenous, and particularly Kolla, had begun to be replaced with pride and a process of recovering their whole identity. *Pachamama* ceremonies have a long history in the Argentine Northwest region, but they have only recently been revitalized and placed within a new context that has moved them from the realm of private and personal to that of a public and politicized one. As such, it has become vitally important for these ceremonies to be imbued with symbols of cultural belonging, symbols to which a broad Argentine public can relate and that further, convey a sense of cultural authenticity. These symbols include everything from the food, the dress, the posters on the walls, the dance, the monetary exchanges, and—of course—the music.

Pachamama Ceremonies and Coplas

Perhaps the most important day annually for people in Salta, and one of the biggest tourist draws, is August 1st, the day of the *Pachamama*. On this day, one can smell incense in the air; it billows over the city like a thin fog. This is from the *saruhamario*, the event in which people air out and “cleanse” their houses with incense. While technically it is only the first of August that is the holiday, throughout the entire month people hold ceremonies for the *Pachamama*. As explained in chapter II, these ceremonies are also a huge attraction for tourists and one can attend and take part in a ceremony almost every weekend and even on some weekdays.

As a tourist draw, *Pachamama* ceremonies are part of a signifier that is read as Kolla and is promoted for tourist consumption. During February and March (Carnival) and during August (the month of *Pachamama*), private parties as well as tourist agencies and the municipality of Salta contract copleras to play during ceremonies. Severo Báez, my copla teacher, and his group, Los Bagualeros del Norte, perform all over the region during the month of August. Indeed, it was nearly impossible to schedule a lesson in this time. The musicians are called upon to perform coplas and, often, to run the ceremonies as well.

When *Pachamama* ceremonies were sponsored by the local municipality or office of tourism, particular markers of “authenticity” were evident. First, they were officiated by someone of Indigenous descent, more specifically, Kolla. At the very least, people who were dressed as Kollas were part of the ceremony. Second, during the actual ceremony, copleras would perform. Returning to Labate’s theory of retraditionalization, in tourist contexts, a strong emphasis on the “traditional” rules meant that coplas were always present as markers of Indigenous authenticity (2014: 187).

Most official *Pachamama* ceremonies followed a similar format. The event would begin with a person of status—the head of the tourist bureau, the mayor of the town, or the president of a local association—saying a few words thanking everyone for coming and briefly explaining that the ceremony for the *Pachamama* was a time-honored tradition in the Argentine Northwest. They would then introduce the ceremony officiants, a shaman, or often one of the copleras. The

copleras would begin to sing and the ceremony would commence. Depending on the size of the venue, other musicians would sometimes be present or there would be a loudspeaker with recorded music. The song that was almost always played was “El Condor Pasa.” In most cases, a pit would already have been dug in the ground. This would be lined with bottles of soda and alcohol as well as foods, like bread and empanadas, and a bowl of coca leaves. All participants and spectators would be invited to make an offering to the *Pachamama*. As they stepped forward, the officiant would hand them a small glass of a beverage. The person would drink half of the beverage and then pour the second half into the pit. They would then choose whichever food items and coca leaves they wished to give as an offering. This part of the ceremony could continue for hours or even the full duration of the event itself.

Coplas in official ceremonies or for tourism would be sung in a presentational style. Though improvisation is highly valued in this art form, I often heard the same verses repeated from one ceremony to the next. One copla that I heard frequently was a variant of the one from Carrizo’s performance in the Cosquín Festival.

*Pachamama santa tierra
No me comas todavía
Mira que soy jovencita
Quiero dejar la semilla
(Severo Báez)*

*Pachamama sacred earth
Do not take me yet
See that I am young
I still want to have children (literally
translated as “leave my seed”)*

The month of *Pachamama* is winter in Argentina. It is a cold month, full of dust storms and other treacherous conditions that bring sickness and sometimes death. People say that if you can make it through August, then you will live another

year. They connect this power directly to the *Pachamama* whom they ask to protect them. This is also why it is crucial that they honor the *Pachamama* on August 1st and give her offerings. For this reason, many coplas sung during this season express not only a desire to honor the *Pachamama*, but also to make a plea that they will continue living and will make it to the next Carnival.

*Yo soy como el mes de agosto
Traigo viento y remolino
Me pasa el año cantando
Como piedra de molino
Me pasa el año cantando
Como piedra de molino*

I am like the month of August
I bring wind and gusts
I spend the year singing
Like a stone in a grinder
I spend the year singing
Like a stone in a grinder

*Pachamama santa tierra
Que no me lleven los males
Yo te estoy esperando
Pa' vivir en los carnavales
(Severo Báez)*

Pachamama sacred earth
Don't let the bad things take me
I am waiting for you
To live in carnival (time)

Of course, not all *Pachamama* ceremonies were available for tourist consumption and not all of them involved coplas. People held ceremonies in their backyards and other private settings. For some families, August also represented a time of reunion, since children who now lived in Buenos Aires would return home for the celebration. I cannot speak to all events involving a *Pachamama* ceremony, and my scope here is limited to Salta; but I did attend a large variety of these events over the course of my research including two *señaladas* (cow and goat branding ceremonies common throughout the Andes) on the outskirts of the city; ceremonies in friends' houses, including that of another case study, Huayra; and a *Pachamama*

ceremony held about six hours to the east of Salta city in a remote region called Tolar Grande.

Some of the distinctions between one ceremony and the next were subtle. For example, some people stuck cigarettes in the side of the *pozo*, or pit, while others saw this as contradictory, to be putting carcinogens into the earth. Some ceremonies, usually not ones that were intended for tourists, incorporated animal sacrifice. Another fascinating thing I saw was when people mixed the practices of *Pachamama* with that of the Virgen de Urkupiña from Bolivia. In this latter tradition, participants create tiny-size replicas of things that they hope the virgin will grant them for the coming year; this could be a house, money, visa, car, or even a baby. So, when people mixed these two traditions, they threw these items into the *pozo* as an offering to the *Pachamama*. This mixture of cultural practices also speaks to the extent that the Kolla identity has historically been combined with a more generalized Bolivian one to the extent that many Argentines, such as those mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, use the words Kolla and Boliviano interchangeably.

Another distinction I noticed was that the music differed from one *Pachamama* ceremonial context to the next. Though foregrounded in many public events, coplas were also present in private and personal ones. However, significantly, not all of the events had coplas, or they were only performed in a participatory manner, not a presentational one. In Tolar Grande, the location I attended that was the most far removed from the city, music was broadcast through

a speaker and included popular *huayños* like “Ojos Azules,” *cumbia*, and even Bolivian *caporales* (a popular dance style with roots in the Afro-Bolivian community), but no coplas. In the first *señalada* I attended, coplas were performed, but only after the ceremony had concluded, which lasted from mid-afternoon until around 9:00 in the evening. This was not done in a formal manner, but rather each person spontaneously sang a verse when they felt inspired to do so. At the *Pachamama* ceremony I attended at the home of a middle-class woman in the city, I observed that this ceremony had been mixed with that of la Virgen de Urkupiña, and that, as a result, *caporales* dominated the soundscape.

It makes sense that coplas would need to be present in *Pachamama* ceremonies for tourists, since both the practice of honoring the *Pachamama* and coplas are thought of as Andean. Yet, as my research shows, coplas did not have to be performed for a ceremony to hold significance to those participating in it. Argentines celebrating *Pachamama* ceremonies have incorporated musical forms, and other aspects that hold meaning for them, into the tradition.

Coplas for Carnival

Perhaps an even more important period of tourism in Salta, and in the greater Northwest, is Carnival. Beginning in January and lasting until March, these summer months in Argentina are a time of festivity, as they are in most of Latin America as well as parts of Europe and the U.S. Significantly, the beginning of the calendar year is also when schools are closed and people in Argentina are on

vacation. Many people from Buenos Aires travel to the Northwest to experience Carnival.

Argentine Carnival is an annual celebration rooted in agricultural rituals from both Europe and in Latin America.⁹⁰ A European tradition that preceded Lent, Carnival was brought to the new world during the Spanish conquest and was overlaid on top of or combined with existing Indigenous harvest rituals (Avenburg 2014: 16). However, it is important to remember that this was not an innocuous process. William Rowe Spanish American studies scholar and sociologist Vivian Schelling remind us that,

the attempted superimposition of Christian concepts upon native ones by religious orders in the sixteenth century was, like the building of churches on native sacred sites, intended to facilitate Christianization (1991: 62).

The result of this superimposition was that some Indigenous pre-colonial practices survived, but through a process of negotiation and syncretism.

In Argentina, and throughout the Andes, where the rituals to the *Pachamama* (mother earth) were part of pre-colonial practice, Carnival is marked by rituals to this deity, giving thanks and offering for a good harvest (Avenburg 2014: 16; Cortazar 1949). There are three components that are highlighted during Carnival in Salta in particular: the *desentierro* and the *entierro* (the unburial and the burial); *carpas* (musical celebrations); and coplas. Desentierros are rituals that mark the beginning and end of the Carnival season. A desentierro begins by opening up the

⁹⁰ Russian critic and theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin, traces Carnival practices back to the Middle Ages (Vice 1997: 26).

pozo pit, where in some cases, though not all, a small doll, called *el Pujllay* (*Carnival* or “to play” in *Quechua*) has been buried the previous year. As participants in this festival explained to me, *el Pujllay* represents the trickster, like a friendly devil, and symbolizes that the time of revelry is here (Costa and Karasik 2010: 39). During Carnival, people can subvert the rules of social and political norms, which also has led to scholarship on Carnival as resistance (Foust 2010: 9-16; Pryce 1985; Riggio 1998; Dudley 2003). The entierro, which in Argentina falls on the Sunday following Ash Wednesday, signals an end to debauchery and raucous fun. In the entierro, offerings are again made to the Pachamama, in some traditions *el Pujllay* is reburied, and Lent begins.

The syncretic nature of Carnival, also meant that each region where this practice was introduced adopted its own unique combination of pre-existing and post-conquest traditions and particular way of celebrating Carnival. Today, this means that, not only do Carnival symbols and dress differ from one region in Latin America to another but the musical practices do as well. In Oruro, Bolivia for example, *caporales* are a huge part of the celebration, while in Brazil, the samba is more prevalent.⁹¹ In Jujuy, Argentina *comparsas* play brass instruments and travel from house to house (Cortazar 1949; Menneli 2010: 67). In Salta, the most important musical aspect of Carnival is the playing of *coplas*.

⁹¹ Carnival can be found all over the world: for example in Galicia, Spain (Valentine 1999); Germany (DeWaal 2013); Trinidad (Scher 2002); and Bolivia (Stobart 2011).

Coplas are typically played throughout Carnival season, at desentierro and entierro ceremonies all over the provinces of Salta. While similar in some respects, Coplas for Carnival are more festive than the ones typically heard in *Pachamama* ceremonies.

<i>Linda la vida nuestra</i>	Our life is beautiful
<i>La vida los bagualeros</i>	The life of the bagualeros
<i>Nos la pasamos cantando</i>	We spend it singing
<i>Carnaval el año entero</i>	Carnival, the whole year round
<i>Linda fiesta</i>	Lovely celebration
<i>Solo a cuesta, solo a cuesta</i>	It only costs, it only costs
(Báez, Severo)	

Carnival events are advertised on the official website for Salta's tourism board as well as on the radio. So, anyone, including newly arrived tourists, can participate. In fact, despite the fact that I did not know anyone in Salta, soon after arriving during the frenzy of Carnival season I was invited to my first *carpa* for the *entierro* of carnival, which I found out about through a chance encounter when visiting the tourist market. It was also through this encounter that I met Severo Báez, who would become my copla teacher.

Salta Capital, March 2015

Walking around the tourist market, known as el Mercado artesanal, where traditional and ethnic weavings, paintings, silver jewelry with bright aguayo cloths are sold, I strike up a conversation with one of the shopkeepers. She asks me where I am from and what I am doing in Salta. I explain my purpose and convey my interest in learning more about copla music. "If you want to see coplas," she says to me, "I am going to a place where there are lots of copleras. Do you want to come?"

We jump into a taxi and drive for about 10 minutes across a small bridge and to a town on the outskirts of Salta. By the appearance of the simple, concrete houses I get the impression that we are entering a less affluent area of Salta than what my limited tourist excursion around the city center has revealed so far. "To the left,"

Teofilia, my guide, directs the taxi driver. We turn onto a wide street lined with small food shops and modest looking houses, and I begin to hear loud music, which is emanating from a large concrete building on our left. Outside, people are milling around, chatting and laughing, drinking wine from plastic cups and generally having a good time. We pull up, pay the \$50.00 peso cover charge and enter the party.

Inside, a large crowd greets me. There are so many people that I can barely move. People are seated at small wooden tables drinking wine and soda and helping themselves to empanadas. The tables are strategically placed so that there is ample room for the dancers and a large stage. A band consisting of two guitarists, a bombo, and an accordion is playing a chacarera. A woman dressed in a gaucho-inspired ensemble, a large brimmed hat, button down shirt tucked into a pair of tight jeans cinched with a large leather belt and black boots, is directing the numerous couples who fill the dance floor. "Y media vuelta y vuelta entera" (and half a turn and a full turn), she barks into the microphone. The dancers, most of whom are dressed in full gaucho regalia, follow the woman's orders with obedience and joy moving to the zamba carpera choreography. Behind the musicians and dancers, a large banner with the words "Centro de Vallistas y Puenenos: En Defensa de Nuestra Cultura (Center of People from the Valleys and the Puna. In Defense of Our Culture) hangs on the wall.

A large tree is in the middle of the room and long, spiraling colored strips of paper called serpentinas and tufts of brightly dyed wool caught on the spiky branches adorn the limbs like fresh fruit. In front of the tree is a large hole lined by clay terracotta pots and an impressive number of bottles of alcohol. "Those are for the entierro," Teofilia explains. They will be buried for an entire year until next Carnival.

At this point Teofilia introduces me to the owners of this house, Severo Báez and his wife, Rafaela. They are dressed in traditional and elegant outfits, the woman in a skirt and a white shawl embroidered with flowers and the man in a light-blue gaucho suit. They seem excited to have tourists at their event. The woman throws a string of colorful serpentinas around my neck and shouts exuberantly, "happy carnival!"

The MC of the event, who I later learn is Viviana, Báez's daughter, announces that it is time for the entierro, the burial ceremony. At this news, most people abandon their seats and crowd around the pozo where Báez and his wife have begun to initiate the ceremony. Báez is dressed in his most elegant outfit, a pale blue-gaucho suit, with wide legged pants, a tight-fitting jacket over a tucked in button up shirt, a bandana tied around his neck. The outfit is topped off with thigh-high black boots and a wide-brimmed hat. His wife is dressed in her traditional Kolla outfit. She has a wide skirt, flat shoes, and a soft white shawl embroidered with flowers.

Viviana passes the microphone to her father and the ceremony begins. Báez calls up people one by one thanking them for their support with this year's carnival and inviting them to make their offering to the Pachamama, the mother earth deity. He begins with the padrinos (godfathers) and madrinas (godmothers) who have sponsored particular aspects of the event. He then moves on to the individual copla musicians in the room. With each name that Báez and his daughter call out, they also

make special note of where that person is from, la Quiaca, San Antonio de los Cobres, or other rural locales. In this way, they are recognizing and honoring that person's origins. Báez then asks them to sing a copla, or a verse. Each copla begins with a spoken recitation that is then followed by a melodic repetition of the same words accompanied by the rhythmic pattern played on a small drum, the caja. Each person has their own style, intonation, and melody. Thus, no two coplas sound exactly the same.

As Báez and Viviana continue to invite copleras to perform, the band, which has fallen silent, begins to play again. I turn my head in recognition as the bandoneon comes in with a few familiar chords and the first strains of the melody become audible. I realize that it is the song "El Condor Pasa." The bandoneon continues in the background as the ceremony progresses. More copleras approach the microphone and then Báez leads the group in a series of unison coplas to end the ceremony.

Báez's son, Jose, places the last bottle of wine in the pit and then fills in the hole. These bottles will be unearthed next year at the opening, or desentierro, of carnival. As I watch Jose's hand smooth over the last of the dirt, the bandoneon player switches to a new song. Again, I recognize the tune, it is a carnavalito, the famous El Humahuaqueño. The mood suddenly shifts as everyone begins spraying silly string in the air and throwing talcum powder. People link arms and begin dancing in a wide circle. Someone grabs my arm and pulls me into the dance.

The event I just described was open to the public and highly marketed to tourists. As such, while it was not in the city center, any visitor to Salta might happen upon this event in the same manner that I did. Held at the Báez home in a *villa* (poor neighborhood) of Salta called Villa Primavera, this was the first of many *carpas* that I attended. The proprietors of this house hold *carpas*, which both locals and tourists attend at different points during the year. They are also contracted out to play in performances and primarily at ceremonies all over the region during important holidays including Easter, the day of the *Pachamama* (August 1st) the unburying (*desentierro*) and burying (*entierro*) that mark the beginning and the end of Carnival respectively, and other Catholic holidays. Generally, Severo Báez and his wife, Rafaela Gaspar, play together with individual copleras who hail from different

regions of the Argentine Northwest in a collective group called Los Bagualeros del Norte (the baguala players of the north). Years ago, Los Bagualeros del Norte had toured Germany with an Argentine folklorist, Silvia Barrios. Barrios today is famous for her recordings of Indigenous music and her performances in which she herself performs music of the Guarani, the Wichi and other Argentine Indigenous groups. However, today Báez, who is in his seventies, performs more locally. Los Bagualeros del Norte are a professional group, and they get paid to officiate ceremonies. In addition, the *carpas* are a source of revenue since they charge an entrance fee and sell food and drink at the event.

Coplas as Regional Markers

While they are tourist attractions that are publicized on the radio, Báez's *carpas* are also spaces for community gatherings. In the front half of the house, the scenario looks like a typical *carpa*; men, women, and families dance *zambas*, *chacareras*, and *gatos* while partaking in consuming traditional foods like tamales, *humitas*, *locro*⁹², and empanadas. Generally, these events start sometime in the mid-afternoon and continue until around midnight. At first, the bands are traditional folkloric ensembles featuring *bombo*, bandoneon, and guitar; yet, by the end of the night, cumbia groups have taken over. In the back of the house though, copleras from all around the provinces gather to perform music in a participatory setting. No

⁹²Traditional stew made from corn and meat.

one is the leader or the follower, rather people switch off randomly in singing the first verse, and then everyone else repeats in unison.

Severo Báez's House, Easter Day 2015

As soon as I turn on to the street where Báez lives I can hear the music emanating from his house. I approach, pay the entrance fee, and say hi to Báez's son, Jose, who is standing outside with a group of his friends drinking beer and Fernet with Coke, the preferred drink of choice in Argentina.

I walk straight to the back room where the copleras are. As I enter the room, I hear a persistent drumming sound and the rise and fall of strident voices. Instead of couples dancing together to a professional band, I encounter three to four groups of men and women, who are moving together in endless circles stepping laterally and in time to the rapid drumbeats. One group is made up of five members, another of three, and yet another of ten. Both men and women are dressed elegantly. Some wear gaucho outfits and wide black and red ponchos. Many of the women wear long skirts, embroidered shawls and large brimmed hats; colorful balls of wool and long stalks of bright green basil poke out from beneath the band. As I watch, people move easily in and out of these groups, stopping to talk to a friend or take a break and then picking up their instrument to join in again. Each person holds a medium-sized caja, a small double-sided round drum, which they play by hitting a mallet on the drumhead. The majority of people support the caja and the mallet in the same hand, looping the small leather handle over their wrists and gripping the mallet with the same hand between the pointer and middle finger and the thumb. They beat the mallet in a downward motion letting it bounce off the caja. With each hit a rattling sound can be heard. This is from the chirlera (the string tightly strung across the back of the skin).

Báez greets me warmly; he hands me a caja and tells me to go join the group of copleras who are moving slowly in a circle as they play and sing. I notice a different configuration this time. A man, dressed in a red poncho (the poncho of Salta) and a black hat is standing in the center of the circle and playing a small flute (a flautilla jujeña). He holds the flute with one hand and the caja with the other. A group of men and women have formed a circle around him. They each hold the caja and play with one hand as with the other they grasp onto each other's wrists. Joined in this manner, they dance around the man in a circle, moving one foot in front of the next and softly singing coplas. The dance looks similar to el carnavalito. The people pass around a glass of wine mixed with Coca-Cola; they chew coca leaves, and seamlessly open and close the circle again as some members leave and others enter. They also switch cajas from one person to the next.

It is difficult for me to understand the words. The Spanish that people speak in the interior of Salta is quite distinct from that of my city friends. Not only is the accent strong, with a tendency to omit the s, but also there are regionalisms mixed in that I do not understand. As a result, when I participate, all I can do is play the caja and move in

time with the others. For everyone else though, it seems easy to join in or walk away at any point. I note that one person sings a verse and the rest echo in a call and response style. The lead vocalist seems to switch at random, and in general, I do not note any musical hierarchies.

The fact that tourists are invited to participate in these *ruedas* is unusual. After studying privately with him for a few months, *Báez* encouraged me to bring my *caja* and join in. But I had seen other outsiders, such as tourists from Buenos Aires, *Porteños*, who stuck out because of their dress and their thick accents in a Salta setting. Traditionally, *copla ruedas* are participatory, meaning that anyone who knows how to play *coplas* can join into an already performing group. People also join in and leave at will, rather than as something that the music dictates. However, as Cámara de Landa notes, the incorporation of people who did not grow up with the *copla* tradition into a *rueda* today is a result of globalization (2001: 34-35).

Given that *copla* gatherings were more than just tourist events, there were many holidays which the *Báez's* family celebrated just among friends and relatives. One example is Easter. Echoing a practice common to Carnival elsewhere in South America, *Báez's* son hung a life-size doll that looked like a scarecrow outside of the house. *Báez* read a long list of complaints, what he calls "testimonials" against local officials and others who have reneged on the promises they made that year. People yelled insults at the Judas doll and then it was set on fire. The idea is that all the bad parts of last year get burned up with Judas, which leaves a space for new things to

come. As we stood outside, bathed in the light and glow of the fire that was consuming the Judas figure, people began to sing coplas for Easter.

<i>Pascua habían sido</i>	Easter has passed
<i>Yo no he sabido</i>	I did not know it
<i>Yo no he sabido</i>	I did not know it
<i>Llega la pascua</i>	Easter arrives
<i>Saco mi caja</i>	I take out my caja
<i>Saco mi caja</i>	I take out my caja
<i>Pasa la pascua</i>	Easter passes
<i>Guardo mi caja</i>	I put away my caja
<i>Guardo mi caja</i>	I put away my caja
<i>Pascua tenemos</i>	We have Easter
<i>Que más queremos?</i>	What more do we want?
<i>¿Que más queremos?</i>	What more do we want?
<i>(Severo Báez)</i>	

In Defense of Our Culture: Coplas and Identity

As my lessons continued, and I grew more comfortable with Báez, I began to ask him about the copla tradition; what did it mean to him? Was it connected to any particular identity such as an Indigenous one? It obviously took a huge effort for him and his family to organize these events. So, why did they do it? In particular, I wondered how Báez would understand Valladares' characterization of coplas as windows into "the way that the Indian who sang in his language felt" (Valladares 2000: 33). Did he consider coplas to be Indigenous? From his comments, I gathered that for Báez, coplas reflect life, but I did not necessarily get the impression that they could "exorcise the dead" as the announcer in Cosquín had claimed. Rather, for him, coplas were an important component of tradition and life and an important part of a

marginalized culture. In fact, when he spoke of the copleras who came to his events, Báez grew very emotional. He called them the “real deal” and kept repeating that people don’t know this reality. “*¿No es increíble la diferencia entre esta realidad y la vida cotidiana?*” (Isn’t it incredible, the difference between this reality and everyday life?).

Báez was also very proud when he was able to present me, his student, to others, and marveled at the fact that I, as a foreigner, would show a greater interest in coplas than the people of Salta, who were part of this Argentine culture. This was true; studying coplas in Salta was difficult as none of the many academies or schools there offered formal classes. Furthermore, none of my friends in Salta who were more phenotypically white and also represented the typical middle class⁹³ had any interest in learning about or watching coplas. To them this music was not aesthetically pleasing and represented a less desirable segment of society—a segment of which Báez was very proud.

The walls of the Báez home are decorated with cow hides and cloth banners including a pink silk banner that reads “*Centro de Vallistas y Punenos: En Defensa de Nuestra Cultura*” (*Center of People from the Valleys and the Puna*). When I asked Báez what culture they are defending and against whom, this was his reply.

*Estamos defendiendo nuestra cultura.
Manteniendo las tradiciones de los
pueblos.*

We are defending our culture.
Maintaining the traditions of the
people.

⁹³ I use the term middle class here loosely. First, it goes without saying that middle class in Salta is comparable to lower class in the US. *Further*, I do not know technically into what economic bracket my friends fell, but I observed obvious differences between their spending habits and *their* home amenities and those of *the* Baez family.

The word *pueblos* can mean many things: the people, the towns, and often an abbreviation for *pueblos originarios*, so I asked Báez to clarify.

Báez explained that he was defending the culture of his *pago* (hometown). He grew up in a town called Cachi high up in the mountains of Salta province. When he had first arrived in Salta capital, over 30 years ago, no one had celebrated *Pachamama* ceremonies and no one played coplas. So, performing coplas had become an important way of maintaining his traditions. He told me that he is, first, an Argentine and, second, a gaucho. Argentina, he said, is so full of foreigners and people who are concerned with the foreign world, that they ignore the true culture and identity of the nation. Báez seldom mentioned the word Indigenous or *pueblos originarios*. Rather, he talked about his identity as a worker and as a *Vallista* (a person from the Calchaqui Valleys). Similarly, Báez used the word Kolla to describe his wife, but not Indigenous.

To Báez, there were real gauchos and there were people who dressed up like gauchos. In his opinion, the people who lined up to parade once a year in General Guemes' (the criollo independence war hero discussed in chapter two) honor, people who did not own horses and rented sparkling-white gaucho outfits for the day, were disingenuous. As he explained, these people were imposters since, given that a gaucho outfit costs at least 500 pesos (roughly 50 dollars), usually a person has only one or two outfits, neither of which are spotless. The pale green outfit that he wears when he performs in public and at his *carpas* are what people wear in *los pueblos*, the country towns. Báez concluded that if Guemes could see these other

imposters in their sparkling outfits, rather than feeling honored, he would roll over in his grave (Báez, Severo. Personal Interview. June 2014). Thus, Báez clarified for me that he is a “real gaucho”. He knows how to work the land and how to handle a horse.

Báez’ definitions of “real” versus “not real” gauchos can best be explained by returning to a discussion from the introduction of this dissertation, about the different categories of gauchos in Salta. Argentine anthropologists Paula Lanusse and Axel Lazzari divide Salta gauchos into two distinct categories based on ethnic-geographic and class identifiers: the gaucho *indecente* (indecent gaucho) and the gaucho *decente* (decent gaucho) (2005: 238). First, gauchos are divided based on ethnicity, phenotype, and the different regions within Salta from where they originate. The “*gaucho vallista*” (gaucho from the Calchaqui Valleys) is from the rugged mountain area that stretches across the provinces of Salta, Catamarca, and Tucuman. The “*gaucho fronterizo*” (border gauchos) hail from the pre-Andes mountain range and el Chaco (2005: 237). Both types of gauchos, according to Juan Carlos Dávalos, were of mixed race, but to different degrees (1937: 20).

El gaucho de los Valles Calchaquiés conserva más marcas indias, por lo tanto, está menos hispanizado y blanqueado que el gaucho fronterizo de la zona de las sierras subandinas y el umbral del Chaco—el típico “gaucho de Guemes” (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 237).

The gaucho of the Calchaqui Valleys conserves more Indian marks, therefore, he is less Hispanicized and whitened than the border gaucho of the zone of the sub-Andean sierras and the threshold of the Chaco—the typical “gaucho de Guemes”

Báez, who is from the Calchaquí Valley, fits into the latter of these categories, the “gaucho vallista.” Therefore, for Báez, as opposed to members of some of my other case studies, there was no contradiction in being gaucho and being Indigenous. In fact, he added, Indigenous people had always been gauchos. They had even fought together with General Guemes to win independence from Spain. I understood then, that to Báez, “real gauchos” were “gauchos vallistas.”

Of course, not everyone in Salta would agree with Baez. For many others, the ultimate model of the gaucho was Guemes, who, as the above quote exemplifies, is more similar in appearance to the “gaucho *fronterizo*”—in other words, more White. Moreover, class distinctions play a strong role in determining who is a “gaucho decente” or a “gaucho indigente.” In 1978, Salteño historian Bernardo Frías described “gauchos decentes” as urban, well-educated men from good homes and aristocratic backgrounds (Frías in Alvarez 2003: 11). “Gauchos indecentes,” were on the other hand, the landless peasants who worked for the aristocratic landowners. The term “decencia” for Frías signified the inherited traits of the noble Spanish colonizers: virility, equestrian skills, and the honor that came with being a landowner (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 238). As Lanusse and Lazzari conclude, the “gaucho indigente” was marked as an impure mestizo and the “gaucho decente” was a pure mestizo (ibid).⁹⁴

⁹⁴ This language around *decente* and *indecente* is common throughout Latin America. See for example Rowe, William, and Vivian Schelling. 1991. *Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America. Latin America*. London: Verso Pg 28-29. and Mendoza, Zoila S. 2000. *Shaping Society through Dance: Mestizo Ritual Performance in the Peruvian Andes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.pg. 11-18.

Additionally, the gaucho status functioned in direct opposition to that of the Kolla. Caro Figueroa notes that the word gaucho was made more noble through its inverse relationship to the word Kolla, a then derogatory term (2001 quoted in Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 239). Given the complexity of the terms gaucho and Kolla in a local Salta context, it makes complete sense that Báez would choose to identify, not outright as an Indigenous person, a Kolla, but rather as a “real gaucho.” In this way, he is distancing himself both from a potentially negative association with his roots in the Calchaquí Valleys as well as with a whiter and elitist type of gaucho. Indeed, one of his favorite coplas demonstrates his self-positioning as a native Argentine whose roots predate the influx of immigration in the 1800s and perhaps, the Spanish conquest as well.

<i>A mí me gusta cantar gritando</i>	I like to sing loudly (shouting)
<i>Que retumben las fronteras</i>	Let the borders resound
<i>Primero nuestra cultura</i>	First our culture
<i>Después vengan los de afuera</i>	Then come those from elsewhere

Again, this copla demonstrates Báez’ pride in his roots and his desire to protect his culture.

Syncretism and Coplas

Báez also did not see any problem with worshipping a Catholic God and the *Pachamama* at the same time, unlike members of one of the groups I explore in a different case study, Sumaimana. In fact, he performs coplas that mention God

during another important time in September that marks the pilgrimage for the Virgen del Milagro (Virgin of the Miracle).

Dios y la Virgen me ha dado
Con tanta sabiduría
Para ser un buen cristiano
Gracias a la Virgen María

God and the Virgin have blessed me
With so much knowledge
So, I can be a good Christian
Thank you to the Virgin Maria

Gracias le doy a la virgen
Gracias le doy al señor
Gracias le doy a mi madre
Por haber nacido cantor

I give thanks to the Virgin
I give thanks to God
I give thanks to my mother
Because I was born a singer

Of course, even the coplas for this Catholic holiday show the deep syncretism of Argentine culture.

*El sol será taita Dios
La luna virgen María
Ellos son los poderosos
Que me alumbran noche y día*

The sun is father God
The moon is the virgin Maria
They are the powerful ones
That light my night and day

There are two significant aspects to this copla. First, the use of the word *taita* in this copla is important. *Taita* means father in *Quechua*, which makes this one of the rare coplas, mentioned by Cámara de Landa, in which a *Quechua* word appears in an otherwise Spanish-dominated genre. The second piece that is significant in this copla is the interchangeability of Catholic religious symbols, God and the virgin Maria, with ones from nature, the sun and the moon. This syncretism fits with what Báez shared with me about his beliefs.

Para mí, no hay problema. Creo en la Pachamama y creo en Dios. La Pachamama es todo, la tierra, el sol, los flores todo (Báez, Severo. Personal Interview. May 10, 2014).

For me, it is not an issue. I believe in the *Pachamama*; I believe in God. The *Pachamama* is everything, the land, the sun, the flowers, everything.

The syncretic nature of this copla practice again highlights the mixed provenance of this practice, with obvious ties to an Incan history and the language they imposed on the subjects of their far-reaching empire, Quechua, as well as a belief in Catholicism.

Severo Báez and Los Bagualeros del Norte present an interesting example. In many respects, they fit a traditional definition of an Indigenous person. They hail from rural and remote locales, outside of the Salta City. Their practices are highly syncretic, combining primarily Andean Indigenous rituals, like Pachamama ceremonies with Catholic ones. Finally, their music is passed down through oral tradition. Despite these characteristics, Los Bagualeros del Norte did not refer to themselves as Indigenous; nor did they refer to copla singing as an Indigenous practice.

Within this local frame then, coplas were important as part of a long tradition of a non-mainstream culture in Salta. They also provided an outlet for community gathering as well as personal expression. Thus, coplas were important, but they were not separated from other aspects of identity related to the Baez family and the members of Los Bagualeros del Norte; indeed, they were played alongside other musics that hold equal weight in Salta culture, including popular styles like cumbias and caporales and folkloric standards: *chamames*, *chacareras*, and *zambas*. For Báez, then, coplas were a part of everyday life. As he told me multiple times in our lessons, coplas are "*pensando en voz alta*" ("thinking out loud"). "All the things that happen in your life can be conveyed in a copla: your

joy, your sorrow, love, and humor” (Báez, Severo. Personal interview. May 10, 2014). Thus, coplas, whether Indigenous or not, were a vital part of Baez’ existence.

Frame 3: Coplas in Folkloric Music

Gauchos Decentes

In this frame, the copla is not set apart from a mainstream Argentine culture, but rather is integral to its folkloric culture. It is also not used as an index for Indigenous culture. One of Argentina’s most popular folkloric musicians is El Chaqueño Palevecino (El Chaqueño). Particularly in Salta, where El Chaqueño is from, this musician is highly revered. Significantly, El Chaqueño is not a musician known for his solidarity with Indigenous groups and when he performs coplas, it is not as a display of Indigenous belonging.

El Chaqueño embodies everything about the “gaucho *decente*” (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005:238). He rides horses, has a large estate with lots of land, owns multiple houses, and rumor has it, is a bona fide womanizer. Like Báez, he espouses gaucho beliefs, including strong pride in his national identity as an Argentine and a local one as a Salteño (Salta-born resident). And, of course, he loves his meat, and like a true Argentine regularly holds *asados* (barbecues) and *guitarreadas* (musical jam sessions). In fact, El Chaqueño even succeeded in getting himself in the *Guinness*

Book of World Records after he created the longest stretch of grilled beef in history.⁹⁵

El Chaqueño always appears dressed in full gaucho attire including boots, wide-legged pants, a button up shirt and jacket, and a large-brimmed hat. To show his Salta pride, he also dons the signature maroon and black poncho of the province. He dances chacareras and zambas, and of course, he sings folkloric music.

The only thing that El Chaqueño does that slightly departs from the normal folkloric exhibition is that he sometimes begins certain songs by singing coplas. To clarify, the coplas of El Chaqueño, and any other performer who I saw perform on a national stage (other than Carrizo) who I saw perform on a national stage, are distinctive from the Kolla ones played at *Pachamama* ceremonies or the ones I learned with Báez. The *tonada* played in folkloric shows is specific to the Chaco region as well as Tarija, Bolivia,⁹⁶ and is characterized by a sudden jump in pitch and a sustained note. Although a detailed analysis of this extends beyond the scope of my research, it is interesting to note that the more accepted form of the copla on a national scale is the version that comes from the threshold of the Chaco, which is again more European and typical of the Guemes gaucho than it is of the vallista one. How these ethnic and class divisions map onto sonic differences between the two *tonadas* of the coplas is an area for further research. Regardless, the presence of the Chaco copla in many folkloric festivals certainly complicates the coplas as

⁹⁵A few people in Salta mentioned this to me. The barbecue was created during the annual Trichaco Festival, a week-long folkloric music event. The only documentation I could find was this short article.

<http://infovirales.net/2017/03/18/el-chaqueno-palavecino-hizo-el-asado-mas-grande-del-mundo/>

⁹⁶Tarija along with Sucre is one of the regions of Bolivia that do not support Evo Morales. People there told me that they identified more with a Salta identity than a Bolivian one.

Indigenous heritage narrative, since in this setting, coplas are integral to folkloric productions that do not have anything directly to do with indigeneity.

Where the copla fits within a folkloric setting was a dilemma that surfaced again and again in my interviews, and for which I never found one simple response. Some coplas were part of folkloric performances. For Báez, the copla and standard repertoire of *zambas* and *chacareras*, like gauchos and Indigenous, were part of a greater Argentine identity. Perhaps because of the multiple ways that coplas are framed, many Argentines struggle to classify them. Mariana Carrizo, who, as shown in the Cosquín performance described earlier in this chapter is undeniably a culture bearer of the tradition, expressed the confusing status of the copla to me when I asked her where the copla fit in; was it European, was it folkloric?

Hasta hoy hay gente que tiene la duda si hago folklore o que es lo que hago. Entonces, saben que hago copla y me dicen la coplera, pero no saben en dónde poner la copla (Carrizo, Mariana. Personal Interview July 2014).

Even today, there are people who are not sure if I perform folklore or what it is I perform. So, they know that I play coplas and they call me the coplera, but they do not know where to put (classify) the copla.

So, as the singer explained, even today, while she enjoys great acclaim, most Argentines struggle to classify her music.

Frame 4: Coplas in a Modern World

The Lady Gaga of Folklore

While coplas may be lauded as evidence of primordial culture in Cosquín and may be central to Kolla ceremonies and celebrations in both public and private

settings, they are far from a “pure” genre unsullied by modern culture. Rather, as Cámara de Landa points out, the copla/baguala has not escaped processes of interaction between local and global and has been used in mass media as well as sampled into modern musical pieces (2001: 34). Beginning in the 1980s with the previously mentioned Leda Valladares album, *Grito en el Cielo*, stars of *rock nacional* began incorporating coplas into their works. Some of the rarer uses of the copla include that of Jose Halac, a digital composer born in Cordoba (an area outside of the baguala/copla), who begins his electroacoustic piece titled *India Vieja Sincretismo I*, which he created in a studio in New York (Cámara de Landa 2001: 35).

Bagualas/coplas have been brought to Europe and Taiwan, and as Cámara de Landa concludes, an even greater diffusion of this genre is inevitable and no one can prevent someone far from where the baguala originates from claiming it as their own and incorporating it into their cultural heritage (2001: 37).

At the same time this globalizing of the copla is not necessarily a negative outcome. Just as those from Buenos Aires and further are able to play with the bounds of traditional and modern culture, picking and choosing at will, so too can Argentines from the *interior*. A great case in point is Rosaura De Pizarro, a *coplera* from el Chaco region of Salta. Rosaura de Pizarro, who calls herself La Lady Gaga de Folklore, is a coplera who has taken her traditional practice and reinterpreted it by adding in references to pop culture and English words that have become part of the vernacular of hip Argentines.

Salta, September 2016

When I first see De Pizarro, I am surprised. From the neck down, her outfit looks standard: a Salteño poncho, maroon with black stripes, black pants and boots. However, what makes her stand out are a pair of over-size sparkly sunglasses and a fluffy black wig, which makes her look like she is wearing an afro. Any issues of cultural appropriation notwithstanding, she looks hilarious and quite out of place. De Pizarro thanks the audience for their applause, and then begins reciting verses in a conversational manner.

<i>Aquí en Cafayate, aquí solo hay gauchos</i>	Here in Cafayate, there are only gauchos
<i>No hay metrosexual</i>	There are no metrosexuals
<i>Hombre de pelo en pecho</i>	Men with hair on their chests
<i>Orgullo nacional</i>	National pride

<i>Y nosotros las mujeres cien por ciento natural</i>	And us women, one-hundred percent natural
<i>Si somos gordas o flaquitas</i>	If we are fat or skinny
<i>Nos pasamos de sensual</i>	We are incredibly sensual

*As she delivers this last verse, De Pizarro runs her hands down her sides in a sensual manner. She also drags out the *sa in pasamos* for an exaggerated effect. The crowd loves her; all around me people are laughing. I too am enjoying the show, especially for its tongue in cheek way of making fun of both machismo in Argentine men and a gaucho culture. De Pizarro's next verses surprise me even more.*

<i>Las chicas súper stars</i>	The super star girls
<i>No me llevan ventaja</i>	Don't have anything on me
<i>Tina Turner</i>	Tina Turner
<i>De la caja</i>	Of the caja

De Pizarro stretches her arms wide and takes a slight bow as she concludes this last verse. She then begins to play the caja, which she holds in one hand. With the other hand, she plays four consecutive beats. Then she begins to sing.

De Pizarro's performance is fascinating for many reasons. Were she from Buenos Aires, her incorporation of modern terms and famous figures from popular culture might not seem that surprising. However, she is from the Department of Anta, a remote region of Salta interior. Thus, the singer is playing with a tradition

that she grew up with and turning it on its head, transforming the copla and making it applicable to modern audiences, and arguably, to young people too. Yet, at the same time, she does so in a way that does not completely depart from the tradition of copla singing. Indeed, her use of humor and bawdy jokes about taking multiple lovers is typical of the *contrapunto*, vocal battling that takes place in *ruedas* and copla presentations.

<i>Soy dulce como el algarrobó</i>	I am sweet like algarrobó (a plant)
<i>Hembrianta como aloja</i>	Feminine like aloja (sweet drink of mead)
<i>Y pa' que sepan ustedes</i>	And, so you all know
<i>Amante de Jorge Rojas</i>	(I am) Jorge Rojas' lover

Jorge Rojas is a famous folkloric musician in Argentina. For De Pizarro to say that she is his lover is like a US American today saying that Justin Bieber is their lover. De Pizarro also makes reference to non-Argentine stars including Cher, Madonna, Shakira, and of course, Lady Gaga.

<i>Cuando un hombre me mira</i>	When a man looks at me
<i>Ni hablar si me toca</i>	Not to mention, if he touches me
<i>Quedo como la Shakira</i>	I become like Shakira
<i>Loca, loca, loca, loca</i>	Loca, loca, loca, loca

In this verse, De Pizarro imitates Shakira's distinctive warble as she sings "*Loca, loca, loca, loca.*" This is an obvious reference to Shakira's hit song "Loca," which was quite popular at the time. She finishes her set with the following copla.

<i>Me anda siguiendo la suerte</i>	Luck pursues me
<i>Y me sobran los amores</i>	And I have more than enough loves
<i>Soy Rosaura de Pizarro</i>	I am Rosaura de Pizarro
<i>Lady Gaga de Folklore</i>	Lady Gaga de Folklore

In addition to pushing the boundaries of what can be part of a traditional copla repertoire, De Pizarro is also using humor to make a social critique about the position of women in society and an ongoing problem of domestic violence. At the time that I saw De Pizarro perform, there had been a spur of atrocious acts of domestic violence in Salta and elsewhere. In response to this, a women’s movement had emerged called “*Ni una menos*” to protest this violence.⁹⁷ While I cannot say for sure if De Pizarro had written the verses that she sang that night in response to this situation, they were certainly applicable.

*Basta hombres de violencia
Esta quita el hombrecito
Creen que lo tienen grande
Pero lo tienen...*

Stop the violence men
This takes away your manhood
They think they have big
But, really, they have...

Here, De Pizarro made a motion indicating a small penis, by squeezing her fingers together. She repeated the verse once more and refused to finish the line, egging the crowd on until they shouted out “*poquito.*” After having watched De Pizarro perform, I would posit that she is a feminist. In her coplas she makes frequent mention of the fact that all women are treasures and deserve respect and that women do not need to have a certain look or specific proportions to deserve love. She also points out that women do not tend to hold the same standards and are often kind to their husbands, even when they don’t deserve such high praise.

*La mujer a su marido
Siempre lo hace feliz
Y aunque le pase de fierro
Le hace sentirse Brad Pitt*

The wife to her husband,
always makes him happy
Even when he is beyond ugly
She makes him feel like Brad Pitt

⁹⁷ For more on this see <http://niunamenos.com.ar>

In addition to demanding respect for women, De Pizarro also complicates the double standard that men can be unfaithful but that women cannot. She even has a song titled “Rosaura’s conquests.” Coplas have not been a male-dominated genre; in fact, the *contrapunto* (a type of performance battle) allows a space in which women can safely make fun of their spouses and make bawdy and lude jokes. However, Argentine culture, particularly in Salta, remains conservative and *machista* in many ways, and violence against women is not treated with much gravity, to the extent that I often heard jokes about rape and other forms of abuse. In addition, the world of folkloric music is dominated by men; indeed, women musicians are somewhat rare. Thus, for De Pizarro to own her sexuality; poke fun at a culture that promotes a strong, gaucho heteronormativity; call out gender violence; and proudly boast about her conquests, are all acts of social critique. In this way, she is putting a feminist and modern spin on an old tradition.

New Text for an old Tradition

Returning briefly to Mariana Carrizo: even though she has been firmly positioned as a culture bearer in Argentine popular imagination and on the Cosquín stage, she is also pushing the boundaries of what that culture looks like. In our interview, she shared that in addition to being a *coplera*, being a woman was also a major barrier to success in the folkloric world, and that she had had to overcome many obstacles to prove her worth in this arena. Further, like Rosaura de Pizarro, her coplas speak back somewhat to women’s oppression in society, something that

has often been upheld through culture as this verse from a traditional *chacarera* demonstrates.

Las Mujeres Son El Diablo

Women are the Devil

Es tan lindo ser casado

It is so nice to be married

Por una semana o dos.

For a week or two

Pero por toda la vida

But for my whole life,

No me lo permita Dios

This God will not allow me to do

(Valladares 2000: 167)

When we compare this copla, sung from the perspective of a male, to Carrizo's we see how she is adopting a feminist stance.

Casada quisiera estar

I would like to be married

Casada por un ratito

Married for a little while

Casada toda la vida

Married all my life

Eso no lo permito⁹⁸

This I will never allow

Finally, Carrizo is also speaking back to the historical marginalization of Kollas and other non-whites in Argentina. Again, we can compare a traditional copla collected by folklorist Carrizo in the 1980s with one from Carrizo.

Son muchos los extranjeros

They are many the foreigners

que vienen a la Argentina

Who come to Argentina

dándolas de caballeros

Pretending to be gentlemen

Y son viles, traicioneros

And they are vile traitors

de borrachos son enfermos

Of drunks, sick

y flojos, ya lo sabemos

And lazy, now we know

Son la mayor indecencia

They are the most indecent

Ellos son, por experiencia

They are, from experience,

la peor gente que tenemos

The worst people we have

(Carrizo, 1987:80).

⁹⁸ <http://www.marianacarrizo.com.ar/biografia/>

Paula Lanusse and Axel Lazzari explain that this copla expresses the popular belief of many Salteños that Kollas, in addition to being *indios* (pejorative) are also foreigners (from Bolivia) and thus are corrupting Argentine culture (2005: 238-240). As discussed throughout this dissertation, this belief still prevails to some extent, but in particular, after the rise of Evo Morales and the Argentine Constitutional Reform, has begun to shift. Thus, while Carrizo can level the following critique, the racism she is pointing out, is at least being discussed and she can hold her head high as a Kolla.

*Con su permiso señores
Cuatro coplas cantaré
Y aunque soy medio morocha
Tal vez no les mancharé*

With your permission sirs
I will sing four coplas
And even though I am dark-skinned
Perhaps I will not stain you

Even as the copla is continually framed as a purely Indigenous genre, those who practice this music simultaneously resist this classification and use it to their advantage to establish their presence in a historically white nation.

Closing the Frames

In this chapter, I have examined the performance of the copla through four major frames including nationalism, tourism, folklore, and contemporary social criticism. Each of these frames represents a distinct portrayal of Argentine culture. On a national scale, the Cosquín festival performances illustrate how highlighting the Inca roots of the copla adds to its presentation as a “pure” vestige of primordial culture. While it is not incorrect to discuss the copla as rooted in Indigenous

heritage, it is also a narrative that romanticizes this aspect of the genre. In a more local setting in Salta, copla music is both cultural capital, a product for tourists to consume, and simultaneously serves a social function for people from locales outside of the city to come together to play music and celebrate their traditions. In this setting, the copla is presented as Indigenous only in tourism events, while it is simply part of a (marginalized, but not necessarily Indigenous) culture for local practitioners. My next section focuses on coplas within a folkloric setting, a decidedly non-Indigenous context. Finally, my discussion of contemporary women copleras shows the ways that the copla tradition is being adapted to express social commentary about gender constructions, racism and gender violence.

Essentially, the copla is a practice, like Carnival, that is borne out of the overlap of Spanish and Indigenous cultures; hence it is mestizo. Certainly, it is at least in part Indigenous, but what I have emphasized in this chapter is, similar to my argument about the White imaginary not being based on phenotype as much as it is on ideology, so too the copla is presented as Indigenous in some settings, like the Cosquín festival and as mestizo in other contexts like folkloric festivals in Salta. A recent interest in Indigenous causes, or in the case of some, in gaining land rights, has turned the copla into a prominent source of social capital. Thus, again, I argue that the revitalization of copla performance for tourists as well as on the national stage is directly connected to a renewed interest in indigeneity and multiculturalism in Argentina. In particular, the copla has become part of a demonstration of tradition that is central to Kollas proving Indigenous status by being the culture

bearers of an ancient, ancestral heritage directly connected to the Incas. While coplas are connected with an Inca past, the question again is, to what ends are they being deployed this way in local various contexts? To close this chapter, I illustrate one additional context in which coplas have become useful to signify Indigenous identity and Indigenous solidarity: protest marches in Buenos Aires.

Coplas and Indigenous Revitalization

La Primera Marcha de Mujeres Originarias (The First Indigenous Women's March)

Buenos Aires, April 21, 2015

It is 4:00 in the afternoon, and the march has just ended. Hundreds of people are gathered in front of the Congreso de la Nación (National Congress) waiting for news from the 36 representatives of Indigenous groups who have entered the building to present a proposal for el Consejo de Mujeres Originarias por el Buen Vivir, an official body which would have two representatives from each Indigenous community who would be in charge of ensuring reciprocity and harmony between the communities and their natural world.

This protest began at 1:00 in front of the statue of General Roca, a historical figure now villainized for the genocide he perpetrated against Indigenous peoples in the post-independence era of the nation. People wrote messages on small pieces of cardboard and hung them on the gate that surrounds the statue. One woman and her daughter, who told me they were Quom, invited me to write a message with them. Together we wrote: "Si al amor, Si a los derechos humanos, and Si a la tierra" (Yes to love, yes to human rights, and yes to the earth). Afterwards, walking around, I saw that the majority of messages people had written were directly addressed to General Roca, denouncing him as a murderer of Indigenous peoples.

After this, the march began. From one sidewalk to the next, the street was filled with marchers. Many held banners, and I could see that multiple causes were being addressed in this march. Some banners said things like, "No a Monsanto," (No to Monsanto) "No a las Minas," (No to the Mines) "No a la Sojizacion y el Desalojo" (No to the Soy Production and the Taking of Land). These protests express anger with large corporations in Argentina, like Monsanto, that have occupied and taken away Indigenous lands and that are also polluting.

Other banners said more generalized pro-environmental statements like Cuida a la Tierra, take care of the earth. I also saw people holding signs that said "Lucha por el Socialismo" (Fight for Socialism), "El Hambre es un Crimen" (Hunger is a Crime),

and “Europa no Descubrio a America en 1942; América era Rica y Sabia” (Europe did not discover America in 1942; America was already rich and knowledgable). Finally, I saw people who had banners that referenced the atrocities of el Proceso, the Dirty War. This diverse array of signs shows that protest of Indigenous oppression has been incorporated into a larger dialogue about cultural subjugation and human rights abuses extending as back as far as to the Spanish colonial occupation in the 1500s.

Music was also a part of this march. While there was not an organized musical component, the march was filled with different small groups of musicians. There were batucada drummers, people playing quenás and sikus, and copleras. During the march, it was difficult to get close enough to the copleras to hear them. During the lull, as we waited for news from representatives inside the National Congress building, the copleras formed a small circle and began playing, as a curious crowd gathered around them. The group, composed solely of women, were dressed in normal street clothes and showed no obvious signs of being from Buenos Aires or from el interior. When I approached the copleras, I was able to make out the tonada they were playing. I recognized it as a puneno melody and rhythm from la Puna in Jujuy.

At this point, though, something interesting happened. The copleras abandoned this tonada and the lyrics that talk about the Pachamama. Instead, they began singing a popular song called “Cinco Siglos Resistiendo,” five centuries resisting, by adapting the lyrics of this song to the puneno tonada.

“Cinco Siglos,” which was written by Bruno Arias, describes the strength of Indigenous people in South America as five centuries of resistance rather than as five centuries of being conquered. The song is incredibly popular, and I heard it in other protests and in other contexts of Indigenous solidarity. In fact, the group that I discuss in the next case study, Huayra, who were staunch admirers of Bruno Arias, often played that song in their performances.

In that respect, I was not surprised that this song was being evoked in this setting. However, what was fascinating to me was the fact that people were combining the traditional aspects of copla playing with modern and popular songs. On the one hand, coplas being played in an Indigenous women’s march in Buenos Aires seemed to go along with the narrative of coplas as representative of

Indigenous culture, and this recurring national framing of the genre as traditional, primordial, and “authentic.” However, on the other hand, the fact that these coplas were being mixed with popular music tunes meant that, even far from their place of origin, coplas were seen simultaneously as Indigenous and as part of a shifting and malleable culture. This is a definition of indigeneity that fits with a modern understanding of the term. It also fits with my next case study, Huayra, who pull from multiple sources to create their Indigenous ideal and who aim to reframe the occupation of the Americas as five-hundred years of resistance and Indigenous people’s survival.

Chapter Four

Huayra: Urban Indians

Every February during Carnival, the tranquil conservative capital of Salta province is transformed into a raucous, soundscape of drag-queen disco rockers, Afro-Uruguayan drum and brass groups known as *Murgas*, high energy Bolivian *caporales* (Afro Bolivian genre; dance in characterized by high jumps and bells on legs), and *tinkus* (a fast-paced song and dance, originally a type of combat in Aymara communities in Bolivia), and the chants and heavy drum beats of *las comparsas de los indios* (Indian parade groups). After months of hard preparation, these groups compete in the Carnival parades known as *corsos*. In order to stand out in the competition, participants employ wild creativity, displaying extravagant costumes and highly choreographed dances.

One of the biggest attractions of the parade groups in Salta and a phenomenon unique to this region are the Indian parade groups (henceforth referred to as *las comparsas*). A Salteño practice since 1925, *las comparsas* showcase men and women, dressed as Indians dancing and singing in enormous brightly colored plumed masks reaching as high as 3 meters towards the sky. Members process to the 6/8 meter of three groups of drummers, *los tumbadores* (players of large, vertical open-ended drums), *los cajeros* (who play la small round double sided drums hit with sticks), and *los semilleros*, (or little seeds) the youngest

members who mimic the older members, happily banging on their kid-size *tumbadoras* (drums). Finally, the *cacique*, (chief/leader) who is in charge of the entire comparsa, plays a tumbador, and directs the group when to start and stop moving forward.

Along with huge feather headdresses comparsa members, including *Caciques*, *sub-cacique*, sub-chief, *gorros mayores*, or principal headdresses, *tobas*, *apaches*, *los brujos*, *cajeros*, *tumbadoras*, and *semilleros*, also sport boots that lace up to the thigh, ornate skirts and jackets embroidered with condors, snakes, owls, and other local fauna. Finally, many wear grotesque, toothy masks and capes made from animal pelts, and skeletons including jaguar skins and even a petrified crocodile. In this hybridized and fantastical presentation, las comparsas reflect a plethora of “Indigenous” sources including extant Argentine native communities, images of Sioux and Apache from Hollywood Westerns, and ancient Indian civilizations; Mayan, Aztec, and most notably, Incan.

The comparsas are cause for much speculation and elicit various questions. What does it mean for urban Salteños to dress up and play Indians for a few months out of every year? Is their performance intended to be one of realism, fantasy or something else? How does their performance resonate with Salteños? What, if any, is the intended message of indigeneity or the connection to broader discourses of Indigenous revitalization in Argentina or on a national level?

This chapter focuses on the revitalization of Andean music and dance in Argentina and the creation of an exoticized Argentine Indian in las comparsas. Over the past twenty years proponents of the burgeoning Argentine Indigenous movement have encouraged a resurgence of Andean culture through establishing an association between the Argentine indigene and a mythologized Incan heritage: a connection which re-edifies the role of the former as authentic culture bearer. Simultaneously, a backlash against recent Bolivian and Peruvian immigration has engendered a reactionary sentiment that the proliferation of Andean music and dance is evidence of an invading culture threatening to subsume a “pure” Argentine identity. Throughout this dissertation I have analyzed the endless tensions and negotiations of identity politics and performance of Indigenous, and those in solidarity with. Indigenous groups in Argentina. Thus, I dissect the competing ways in which a generalized portrayal of the Argentine Indian in these Carnival comparsas both contributes to and detracts from the struggle for Indigenous recognition.

In this chapter, as in this dissertation overall, I wish to move away from a strict binary that defines the comparsas as either White *indigenistas* appropriating Indigenous culture, or as *indios urbanos* (urban Indians), expressing their true identities. I am not completely convinced by either of these positions. The former would reiterate a myth of Whiteness in Argentina that has been aggressively pursued since the formation of the nation state, and which I have been contesting throughout this dissertation. The latter is quite plausible, that there are many

people of Indigenous descent who now live in Salta City or its outskirts and have either lost aspects of their Indigenous identity or simply choose not to share it with mainstream society. Both of these interpretations bely the complexity of reclaiming Indigenous heritage since they divide the question into a dichotomous, yes, they are Indigenous or no, they are not. As I have explained throughout this dissertation, pronouncing someone a “real” or “unreal Indian” imbues this person with a type of impenetrable purity and cultural authenticity and also requires a “nearly divine intercession of some higher authority” Forte 2013: 6-7). I argue that this interpretation would reiterate a myth of Whiteness in Argentina that has been aggressively pursued since the formation of the nation state and would discount the importance of Indigenous cultural experimentation.

The current Indigenous revitalization in Argentina is complex. On the one hand, given Argentina’s historical denial of indigeneity and the dual narratives in which two cultural figures, both of European ancestry have served as symbols of a White Argentina, any cultural expression of indigeneity can be construed as positive if it is shifting the narrative of a White only nation. On the other hand, the threat of cultural appropriation is still very real. As I demonstrated in the previous chapter, the tendency is for Indigenous music or dance to be recognized on a national level, such as at the Cosquín festival only if it can be traced back to an Andean and thus Inca heritage. Thus, while the Kolla, as Inca descendant can be raised up to the level

of national icon, there are many other Indigenous groups that are still struggling for recognition, in addition to equal access to education and health services.⁹⁹

The rise of the *Kolla* as the tokenized figurehead of Indigenous presence is also complex. First, since the Kolla is tied to an Andean and specifically Inca identity, a reclaiming of Kolla culture and identity can look suspiciously like a repeat of *indigenismo* in which the “great” ancient Indian civilizations are elevated as authentic culture bearers. This leaves the many other extant groups either without recognition or condemns them to be portrayed as primitive in comparison to the great empires that preceded them (Kuenzli 9-10).

Second, although many people now partake in Kolla ceremonies and other festivities, a parallel issue has arisen. Bolivian immigration has long been a part of Argentine society, and travel across the Bolivian border in the Northwest precedes the formation of the nation state. Yet, immigrants are easy scapegoats for the many economic problems Argentines face (Colombres and Ardanez 2013; Villa and Seman 2012: 87) and anti-Bolivian sentiment is strong. Indeed, many interviewees even shared that the term “*bolita*” meaning Bolivian, had replaced the previous term Kolla as an insult.

⁹⁹ According to census data from 2004-05, illiteracy rates are three times higher among Indigenous people (7.8%) than when compared with the national average (2.6%). Furthermore, only 71.6% percent of Indigenous Argentines over the age of fifteen had completed primary education. This is compared to 81.8 % as the national average. See Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos de la República Argentina (INDEC) (2004-05). Encuesta Complementaria de Pueblos Indígenas [Online resource available at http://www.indec.mecon.ar/webcenso/ECPI/index_ecpi.asp]

Being Andean can simultaneously be framed as positive, when connected to a Kolla identity and as negative, when tied to a Bolivian identity. This raises the important question of who is the “indio permitido” and how might their status as “permitido” or non-permitido shift from one context to the next? To remind the reader, this theoretical concept, coined by Charles Hale and Rosamel Millamán warns that multicultural agendas can simultaneously contribute to the rise of Indigenous voices and place limits on their transformative aspirations (2002).

In this chapter, I offer two, somewhat opposing analyses of the *comparsa de los Indios* tradition in Salta. First, I demonstrate the ways that a permitted and non-permitted Indian have been conceptualized of in Salta performance. Next, I show the ways in which this dichotomous view of Indigenous peoples, does or does not fit with a broader Indigenous movement in Argentina nationally and transnationally. In particular, I illustrate that, based on this proscribed definition of a “permitted Indian,” two *comparsas*, *Los Incas* and *Huayra Calpa*, undermine Indigenous recognition in particular ways. The former limits contemporary Indigenous groups’ presence and validation to their perceived relationship with an ancient super power. In addition, most *indigenista* projects did not directly involve Indigenous peoples themselves. The latter position feeds into a contemporary backlash against recent Bolivian and Peruvian immigration.

At the same time, I wish to complicate an overly-simplified understanding of the *comparsas* and particularly that of *Huayra*. I am not suggesting that we think of the *comparsas* as being engaged in anything other than identity politics. I also

recognize that the vague language they use to articulate their positions as well as their lack of cultural specificity suggests a generalized empty multiculturalism. However, I do believe that the comparsas, and particularly Huayra, are actually pursuing and constructing a new identity that is more in keeping with their mixed heritage and, for many, their Indigenous roots. In other words, the members of Huayra are not involved in a blatant case of cultural appropriation. Rather, they, like many Indigenous Americans, are “engaged in their own social remapping” (Reis 2004: 146). Further, it is only during Carnival, with its Bakhtian inversion of power structures, that comparsa members are able to explore and articulate this process.

Kollas Versus Kollas

Part of the discourse of those who position themselves in this anti-immigrant stance is that Bolivians are invading and that the proliferation of Andean music and dance is evidence of a Bolivian culture threatening to subsume a “pure” Argentine identity. This means that at the same time that Argentine indigenistas claim Incan heritage and Andean culture, they also often reject the people most associated with this, Kollas, since they can place them outside of the boundary of Argentine belonging.

This double discourse about Kollas is particularly salient in Salta. Though anti-Bolivian sentiment is evident in Buenos Aires (Colombres and Ardanez 2013; Villa and Semán 2012: 87), fear of immigrant invaders is of course higher in regions that are closer to the border. As Salta province shares a border with Bolivia,

discrimination against Bolivians is prominent there, and Salteños now react sharply to being characterized as Bolivian. The categorizing of Kollas as Bolivians is further complicated by the fact that these two groups are simultaneously presented by some as opposing icons and by others as vestiges of a long, seamless history (in which Bolivians and Argentines have been divided not by ethnic but by political boundaries). The latter notion has begun to hold more weight, particularly as Salta has repositioned itself as a part of the Inca empire through political and tourism acts, but it does not eliminate anti-Bolivian discrimination.

Throughout this dissertation, I have discussed the concept of *Argentinidad* (“Argentine-ness” or “Argentine belonging”) to explain how particular groups have been excluded from or folded into the national narrative. I now wish to use this same idea on a regional scale to discuss the issue of *Salteñidad* (“Salteño-ness” or “Salta belonging”). For almost all *Salteños* a gaucho identity is important, an Indigenous (but specifically Kolla) one has started to be embraced over the last twenty years and a Bolivian one continues to be denied (Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 241-242). Yet, for some Salteños, for example, those in the comparsa Huayra, identifying as Kolla still places them outside of the local boundaries of Salta belonging.

I examine this paradoxical positioning through the experiences of the comparsa Huayra Calpa. Comparsas are a main attraction of Salta’s Carnival, and Huayra is one of over fifty groups that compete each year. Comparsas spend months creating lavish, Indian-inspired costumes, most prominently ten-foot tall plumed

headdresses, which they wear as they process forward, playing drums and dancing. Comparsa members generally come from the *villas* or slums of Salta capital, and represent the less affluent and less white sector of society. They call themselves *indios urbanos*, or urban Indians, by which they mean that they are internal Others who live in urban areas and who have maintained their Indigenous traditions yet kept them hidden from public view.

Huayra members both follow the tradition of *las comparsas de los indios* and they also depart from it. Like the other groups, they don large headdresses, play the *cajita*, (a small *caja*) and walk in the parades to the beat of large *tumbadora* drums. However, Huayra also incorporates live, rather than stereo music; they play Andean instruments like charangos, quenenas, and sikus; and even have a lead female singer. Moreover, Huayra members have a separate dance group, led by women who dress as Kollas with braids in their hair, wide skirts, and large hats. Finally, Huayra draws on popular folk classics like “El Humahuaqueño” as well as more contemporary songs like Bruno Arias’ “Cinco Siglos” and “Kolla en la Ciudad.”

These changes that Huayra, under the direction of their *cacique* (leader) Javier López make, are unique within the broader comparsa context. However, more compelling than their use of these instruments and dress, is the reason for which they have implemented these changes; Huayra members utilize their performances as a platform for Indigenous recognition. The particular way they articulate this Indigenous solidarity positions them within a broader discourse in Latin America that reframes Indigenous struggles not as histories of domination but rather as 500

years of resistance. Simultaneously, however, Huayra participants' efforts to present a more realistic Argentine Indian have made them outsiders within the comparsa practice in Salta.

In order to better understand the comparsas de los indios in general, and Huayra more specifically, it is crucial to have a sense of the layout of Salta province and the history of Indigenous groups in that area. Salta was founded in 1582 after Spanish troops, who had already had fifty years of contact with the Incas, invaded from the north. Notwithstanding fierce resistance from the Indigenous groups in the sub-Andes and the Calchaqui Valleys, Spanish troops were finally able to gain a foothold and settle in this colonial city. Salta soon became a thriving region, for a few reasons. First, the city lay along an important and well-travelled trade route between Lima, Peru, the Spanish stronghold of power in South America, and the edges of their empire in the Rio de la Plata region now known as Buenos Aires (Scobie 1988: 76-77). Second, the area was rich with fertile lands and soon thrived as an agricultural zone. Salta lay close to Potosi, Bolivia, a silver mining town that produced great wealth for the Spanish empire. This meant that the residents of Salta were tasked with providing numerous products for the mining center including grains, cattle, leather, fruits, wines, brandies, tallow, sugar, lumber, tobacco, and woolens (ibid). Through agriculture and trade, Salta rapidly grew into a wealthy colonial city and the surrounding areas into stable locales by the seventeenth century (ibid).

Over a period of 200 years, the Indigenous people of the Salta region were divided into two general categories: those who had been enveloped first into the Incan empire and then the Spanish agricultural and economic systems; and those who, having never been conquered by the Incas or the Spanish, remained on the outskirts. The former group was folded together under a generalized Indigenous identity as Kollas, although some, like the Diaguitas, do not use this umbrella term. The latter group, primarily in the Chaco region, maintained more autonomy, but were demonized as savages.

In the 1930s, Argentine Federico Gauffin described the Indigenous peoples of the Chaco (chiriguano, matorcos, tobas and chorote) as "*hermosos ejemplares de una raza que aún no había generado*" (beautiful examples of a race that had not yet developed) (Gauffin in Chibán *et al.*, 1982:164, translation mine). Lamenting their resistance to civilization, Gauffin further stated that these people were not yet Argentine or Salteños (Gauffin 1975 in Lanusse and Lazzari 2005: 241).

Argentine anthropologists Lanusse and Lazzari showed that Salteños continue to demarcate the Indians of the Andes, the Kollas, from the numerous groups of Chaco Indians (2005: 207-236). The former suffered discrimination yet were enfolded into Argentine society as second-class citizens. The latter were viewed as primitive barbarians, incapable of being civilized (*ibid*), largely because they were never conquered by either the Incas or the Spanish. This distinction is significant because, today, it also excludes them from the parameters of indigenismo

in which Indigenous groups are repositioned as heirs to the great ancient civilization of the Incas.

My experience in Salta confirmed Lanusse and Lazzari's point. I frequently had conversations with urban residents of the city of Salta who relayed stories about government programs that built houses for the Wichi people who instead of living in these houses, knocked out the windows and continued sleeping outside. Those who shared these stories with me concluded that the Wichi people's actions in this scenario confirmed their continued resistance to becoming part of a "civilized" Argentine mainstream society. The unfortunate conclusion of this thought then was that the high infant mortality rates, extreme poverty, and disease the Wichi, and the other groups from the Chaco suffered were brought on by their own disinterest in "modern" culture.

These categorizations are still prominent in Salta society today. Overall, the gaucho and the folkloric musician are both coded as White dominant. Conversations with multiple informants suggested that the stigma attached to indigeneity is an enduring vestige of colonialism and post-colonialist thought that has only begun to change over the last ten years in Salta. For many people, being Salteño means that one is honorable, moral, austere, and abides by proscribed hierarchies, while in contrast being Indigenous is characterized as inferior and in need of being governed, evangelized, and tamed. It could be said that tensions between the residents of Salta and other residents of the province mimics that of those between Buenos Aires and the provinces of Argentina. Indeed, Salteños even refer to the part of Salta province

outside of the capital as *el interior*, or the country, in the same manner that Porteños refer to areas outside of Buenos Aires proper as *el interior*.

Despite Salta's fame as a locus of gaucho culture, Salta province is a multi-ethnic region. Home to nine Indigenous communities—Guarani, Chane, Chorote, Chulupi, Wichi, Tapiete, Toba, Kolla, and Diaguita—it is the most diverse of all Argentine provinces. In addition, Salta's proximity to the Bolivian border means that a Bolivian presence pre-dates the formation of the nation states. However, the city of Salta still seems predominantly White or criollo. Regardless of phenotype, most people self-identify as criollo, a label which in Salta indicates a White, often upper-class status, person. Based on phenotype and genetic heritage most Salteños fall into a category of *mestizo* and would be hard pressed to prove "pure" lineage of either Indigenous or European descent. This, however, does not diminish the way that labels are discursively utilized to establish some people as more or as less gaucho or more or less criollo and therefore more or less Salteño. These labels are important since, as De la Cadena explains,

If, resulting from political struggles, ethnicity becomes a significant component of life, it can have the same discriminatory potential of race, even if it does not reproduce racial discourses per se" (2000: 34).

Beyond phenotype, then, identifiers in Salta are important, and being the "right kind" of *indio* performing in the *comparsa de los indios* is crucial to one's overall acceptance within a Salteño framework.

Las Comparsas de los Indios

Generally, most Salteños wish to disassociate themselves from an Indigenous identity, from both Kollas and especially the “primitive” Indians from the jungle regions of the Chaco. However, this narrative shifts as Carnival arrives; the streets fill with Afro-Bolivian *caporales*, drag *murgas*, and Indian comparsas. This last group, the comparsas de los Indios, is the oldest of the three types of performances in Salta and dates back to 1927. Comparsas draw on a wide range of sources including Argentine Indigenous groups, images of the Sioux and Apache in Hollywood Westerns, and ancient Indigenous civilizations, such as Mayan, Aztec, and most prominent, Incan.

Comparsas use a broad brush to paint themselves—sometimes quite literally—as Indigenous. Members wear ghoulish masks and capes laden with animal pelts and skeletons, thigh high boots, and even bone breast plates like the North American Plains Indians. They execute a march-like step to the beat of three groups of drummers who play *tumbadoras* (large, vertical open-ended deep pitched drums) and *cajas* (the small round double-sided drums discussed in the last chapter). They also sing *coplas*, the lyrics of which in this case extoll one group’s virtues over the others, or simply name the comparsa.

At first glance, the comparsas do not look particularly Indigenous. Salta, a gaucho haven in a country famous for its lack of Indigenous populations contributes

to an impression that comparsas are an act of White cultural appropriation of Indigenous culture. Indeed, in discussions with Salteños, I heard many people talk about comparsas as fantastic and completely fictionalized performances. Many locals observed that long headdresses, bustles, and bone breastplates looked more like Native Americans from North America than from South, and that this was evidence that comparsas were not based in reality.

Other Salteños, however, saw the comparsa tradition as a time when comparsa members claim an Indigenous heritage that they have otherwise been encouraged to ignore. As Valeria Esquivel, a member of the musical group Sumainana discussed in the next chapter, explained to me:

Gauchos and Indians, like U.S. cowboys and Indians, do not mix. It is only during Carnival when this barrier is broken, and it is permitted for the White gaucho to admire the Indian and for the Indian to show his/her true colors. Directly after, of course, the dancing, singing Indian has to be put back in his box (Esquivel Valeria. Personal conversation. July 2014).

The scenario that Esquivel describes here fits with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, in which the great carnivals of Medieval Europe were characterized by a subverting of the norm. Bakhtin argues that Carnival was a time when the ideological and hegemonic power of the state temporarily lessened; people could not only participate in revelry, but a great allowance was made for ridicule and displaying of the grotesque body (Vice 1997: 149-151). It also fits with many popular interpretations that the use of masks and disguises during Carnival

allows people to temporarily subvert social hierarchies and reorder power structures

In their article, Zaffaroni and Choque describe Carnival in Salta as a time when alterities surface and those invisible others, who do not normally feel safe existing in a highly conservative city like Salta, use the liminal space of Carnival to express their true identities. Bolivian immigrants and descendants of Bolivian immigrants unite in massive groups performing caporales, morenadas, and tinkus. Homosexuals and transgender or non-gender conforming people strut proudly through the streets, in miniscule skirts, six-inch heels and gigantic, beautiful, blue, butterfly wings. And, finally, Indians dress as Indians. (2011: 221-234).

People “playing Indians” (Deloria 2007; Siebert 2015: 1-7) has a long history in both the U.S. and in Latin American traditions, yet, what Zaffaroni and Choque suggest is that “playing Indians” is not about assuming another identity during Carnival in Salta; rather it is about shedding a layer of protection allowing one to blend in as part of everyday Salta society (2011: 221-234). Scholars and comparsa members have suggested that Indian costumes are not disguises, but rather outfits, that the Indians, who walk among the Salteños unnoticed the rest of the year, by donning feathers and picking up drums, reclaim a part of their heritage that they have been encouraged to ignore: that of the Indigenous, the non-white. López, the leader of Huayra told me that his mentor, a famous poet and comparsa member, Ramon Vera, had once told him,

una comparsa, en Salta, es uno o más barrios que reuníos juntos para desempolvar a los antepasados de nuestro gran abuelos: el indio (López, Javier. Personal Conversation. February 18, 2015).

a comparsa, in Salta, is one or more neighborhoods that Come together communally to dust off the ancestors of our great grandparents: the Indian

This interpretation complicates a simply exoticist or indigenista interpretation of las comparsas as white Argentines masquerading as Indians. Further, the interpretation of comparsas as Indigenous people in hiding fits well within the overall theme of this dissertation as it supports the idea that the Argentine population is mestizo or mixed race. In this chapter, as in this dissertation overall, I wish to move away from a strict binary that defines the comparsas as either White *indigenistas* appropriating Indigenous culture, or as indios urbanos, expressing their true identities. I am not completely convinced by either of these positions. The former would reiterate a myth of Whiteness in Argentina that has been aggressively pursued since the formation of the nation state, and which I have been confronting throughout this dissertation. It would further discount the importance of Indigenous cultural experimentation and James Clifford's critical observation that,

Groups negotiating their identity in contexts of domination and exchange persist and patch themselves together in ways different from a living organism (338).

On the other hand, the latter interpretation, to accept at face value that comparsas are simply "Indigenous" threatens to embrace an uncritical definition of indigeneity and to place all comparsas, and anyone who dresses up as "Indian" as part

of their performances, within a discourse of Indigenous struggle in which many comparsa members themselves may or may not wish to be located.

In keeping with the overall themes of this dissertation, I see it as neither my place nor my goal to define comparsas as “real” or “unreal” Indians. Instead, I will explore the tensions and negotiations over identity that are inherent to the comparsa tradition, and the decisions that comparsa members make in framing their performances and their roles within them. I will highlight the various ways that comparsas choose to align or distance themselves from a shared or even imagined Indigenous community in Salta, to identify what is at stake for them in this process, and finally to discuss how this plays out through their music, dance, and dress.

Ideological Positioning

Although comparsas were not initially formed with the goal of demanding Indigenous recognition, Huayra members utilize their performances as a platform for this cause. This positions them within a broader hemispheric discourse in Latin America that reframes Indigenous struggles not as histories of domination but rather as 500 years of resistance (Radcliffe and Westwood 1996: 27). Simultaneously, however, Huayra participants’ efforts to present a more realistic portrayal of Argentine indigeneity has made them outsiders within the comparsa practice in Salta. What I examine then are the negotiations that Huayra members make to place themselves within a long Salteño tradition of “playing Indians” while simultaneously

pushing back against a narrative in which Indians are only recognized or celebrated if they are either savages or descendants of a great ancient empire.

Out of my three main case studies, Huayra provided the widest variety of contexts in which to examine the ways that Argentines distance or align themselves with Indigenous identities. This diversity of identities and contexts is rooted in a variety of factors. First, Huayra is composed of one hundred members who range across ages and genders. While the group was united in a general sense regarding comparsa participation, and members dutifully followed the leadership of their *cacique* (chief), in my personal communications and interviews I discovered a wealth of different reasons of why each member participated, what he got out of the experience, and what role he took. Second, the comparsa was split into factions that performed outside of the Carnival parade. A live band called *Los Originarios* and a dance troupe called the *Ballet de Huayra* performed in many different types of settings, including educational workshops in elementary schools, tourist events, and private parties. I had the opportunity to witness how each performance was framed slightly differently and how this in turn shaped the narrative of indigeneity that Huayra was promoting.

Huayra: An Introduction

I first saw Huayra while attending a three-day conference for *pueblos originarios* (first peoples) in downtown Salta. This conference, held April 17th-19th in 2014, was part of the annual celebration of the *pueblos originarios* in Salta. It was

organized by the Sub-Secretary of Pueblos Originarios and the Ministry of Human Rights in Salta province. I had only recently arrived in the city and had been invited to this conference after presenting myself in the office of the Sub-secretary of Pueblos Originarios. It was a small office, practically empty, and at first, I did not think it would be a useful place to begin my queries. However, when I explained my project to the director, Remigio Agustin Fernandez, he became interested.

He was particularly enthusiastic when I showed him some YouTube videos of me playing sikus with Mayupatapi, the Andean ensemble from my university. Fernandez was completely surprised that people in the U.S. played these instruments. This seemed strange, given the massive proliferation of Andean music throughout the world, but I found that this reaction was not uncommon among Argentines. Fernandez told me about a conference that would be held to discuss the current health and bilingual education needs of the many Indigenous communities who lived between five and eight hours from the city's capital. He explained that this conference was part of the annual El Dia del Aborigen Americano (the "Day of the American Indian") and said that there would be Indigenous artists, and that I could see some of their crafts. The conference was open to the public, and I should attend.

The conference included many presenters who self-identified as Indigenous, including many Kollas, but also Guarani, Chane, and Toba, who had travelled from places like Oran and Yaguaray, *distritos* (districts or counties) several hours away from Salta city. Most of the talks were about bilingual education and medical services. One woman advocated for *los paisanos* (Indigenous people) to have a safe

space to stay in Salta when they came to spend time with loved ones in the hospital. This is a need because, in general, medical services are better in the capital than in the remote areas where many Indigenous communities reside, and while sick people can stay in the hospital, their relatives and friends must find other housing options for the time they are in the city. Today, there is a free hostel where people from Indigenous communities can stay if they come to Salta city. This is run by the *Instituto Provincial de Pueblos Indigenas de Salta* (IPPIS), the Provincial Institute of Indigenous Peoples, a governing body in charge of administering legal and social matters related to the many Indigenous groups in Salta province. However, at the time of this conference, this hostel did not exist, and therefore this need was of utmost concern to many of the conference attendees.

The conference itself then, had little to do with music or even art. However, once the talks had concluded, the organizers announced that we would have some entertainment from two Indigenous musical performances: a band called Sumamiana, and a comparsa named Agrupación Huayra Calpa. Since I was unfamiliar with the comparsa tradition in Salta, the first time I saw Huayra perform they seemed larger than life. The conference room was small and only housed about one hundred people. When this mass of feathers, colors, drums, *queñas*, *sikus*, dancers, and voices entered, it felt to me that they had taken over all the space in the room.

April 19th, 2014

The band is introduced and the musicians file in and take their places in front of the microphones. I see a variety of instruments, sikus, quenás, guitars, charangos and a long instrument that looks like a stick or sugar cane stem with a horn attached at the end. (I learned later that this was an erque.) As the musicians gather in the center of the room, I am struck by their outfits; each wear black pants, a fringed skirt that hangs to the knees, and a black jacket. The material looks like satin, it is shiny and black. The skirt and the jacket are embroidered with bright red, orange, yellow, and green colors cut in multicolored squares and long strips. On their feet, they wear heavy-looking white boots with lime-green tassels that lace up to the calf.

The performance begins with a loud crack of the drum and three drummers enter the room, dancing in a step-like pattern, bringing one foot forward and then bringing the other one to meet the first with a slight hop. Each dancer carries a long cylindrical drum, painted with animals and intricate designs. They play a solid $\frac{3}{4}$ pattern and sing out in deep, strong voices that resonate through the room. I cannot understand the words, but the song sounds more like a chant as it rises and falls in a rhythmic swell. The only lyrics I can catch are when they repeatedly called out the group's name, "Huayra!" in jubilant tones.

Next a group of smaller, more agile looking dancers enter the room. They are similarly dressed, but they also bear huge colorful headdresses, adorned with sparkly shapes on the side and topped by a mass of long, fluffy, red and black ostrich feathers. The dancer's faces are almost completely hidden by the headdresses, which slope down around the ears and cheeks and are tied at the neck with a black bow. The headdresses look so heavy that I wonder how the dancers do not topple over with the weight of them. However, to my surprise, far from falling over, this group breaks into a series of choreographed leaps into the air. These dancers hold small round drums, which look like miniature versions of the caja I have been learning to play. They beat the drum once with a resounding crack that explodes at the exact moment that they reach the apex of their leap and begin the quick descent back down.

The musicians are followed by a group of women dancers who appear to be dressed like Kollas. They have on small bowler hats, wide skirts, and flat sandals. The first woman is waving a large wiphala, and the second is waving a white flag emblazoned with an inky portrait and the word Huayra in bold letters. The women dancers have their hair in two braids, interlaced with brilliant red, green, and gold ribbons. The final Huayra member, a young man who appears to be in his early thirties, enters carrying a bombo, (a large Argentine bass drum) which hangs from his shoulder with a wiphala cloth.

The performance is short, and only lasts about 15 minutes. I do not recognize any of the songs until the final number "El Humahuaqueño,"¹⁰⁰ a classic piece of

¹⁰⁰ "El humahuaqueño," also known as "el carnavalito" was composed in 1941 by Edmundo Zaldivar. Zaldivar, a resident of Benos Aires, modeled the song after a huayño and created a new genre about northern Argentina (Pérez-Bugallo 2008: 7-9)

folkloric music that I have heard and seen many times since arriving in Argentina. As the first strains of the quena poured into the room, the dancers join hands and began weaving their way in a serpentine pattern through the crowd. They grabbed hands of seated spectators and pull them to their feet and into the dancing thrall. It reminds me of a game that I played when I was young in which the goal was to hold onto the person in front of you and not lose your footing as the line whipped back and forth violently. In keeping with the way that “El Carnavalito” is taught, the dancers bend the upper half of their bodies towards the floor, from the waist up and cupped their heads in slightly to their chins.

The first time I saw Huayra I knew their performance was highly constructed and not some elusively “pure” or “authentic” Indigenous demonstration. At the same time, their performance was unique and unlike other versions of staged indigeneity I had seen in Argentina up to that point. I sensed the excitement that their mix of familiar and exotic generated in the room and noticed that people around me began rustling in their seats and scrambling for their phones so they could capture this spectacle on video. I also watched as even the most solemn and distinguished conference speakers were pulled from their seats during the final bars of “El Carnavalito,” bowed their heads low and succumbed to the rapid beats and movements with exultation in what was obviously an established practice, firmly ingrained in the minds and bodies of all those present (myself excluded, of course).

Huayra utilized many markers of Andean culture, from their music and instrumentation to their clothes, including the soft wool hats called *chullos* worn by the musicians. The female dancers in particular, looked like glamorized versions of the standard Kolla image, in felt-bowler hats, shiny-satin black skirts and blouses with gold and red stripes on the hem and sleeves. However, given that their performance was the conclusion to a serious conference and not a tourist event, I

was primed to understand these performances as “authentic” and not as Indigenous presentations formed within non-Indigenous parameters. I was still learning about the Indigenous groups of this area and having never before seen a *comparsa*, I was not sure who exactly these people were or how I should interpret their performances.

Many questions arose in the wake of viewing this event. Were the performers people from Salta? What was their relationship to the many Indigenous groups that were represented that day? Had they travelled from Indigenous communities within Salta province? Were they Wichi, Chulupe, Chaney, Toba, or Guarani, the groups that had been mentioned in this conference? What about their music and their dress? It was obvious that this was a crafted and orchestrated performance, but on what were Huayra’s outfits and musical repertoire based?

Promoters of Indigeneity

As the conference came to a close to the echo of the final bars of “*El Carnavalito*” and people began shifting from their seats and preparing to leave, I stood up quickly and went outside to talk to Huayra members. I found them in the building entrance, which had been transformed into an impromptu dressing room. Huayra members were removing their shiny costumes and stripping down to black leggings and t-shirts. I approached the group of women and complimented them on their dance. I told them I was a researcher and wanted to know more about their performance. A woman with two bleached-blond yellow braids introduced herself

as Mercedes and told me that I should talk to their cacique (“chief”) Javier López. At this point the young man who had been playing the *bombo* strolled over and Mercedes introduced me to the cacique, who I learned later is also her brother.

López was both friendly and business-like. I gathered that it was normal for him to be approached by curious audience members, researchers, and the press. He explained briefly that the group’s full title was *Agrupacion Cultural Huayra*, (the Huayra Cultural Group) and that they were a non-professional ensemble from the 20 de Febrero neighborhood, about twenty minutes by bus from where we currently were standing in downtown Salta. This instantly sparked my curiosity. I wondered what stake Huayra—a group from Salta capital, an area supposedly devoid of Indigenous peoples—had in framing their performance as Indigenous. Was this a typical performance for them, or was it especially geared to the group of Salteño professionals and members of Indigenous communities from the outskirts of Salta province present in the conference?

López took my card, gave me his number, and invited me to come visit the Huayra *taller* (workshop), which he called *El Centro Cultural Vecinal* (Neighborhood Cultural Center). A week later I made my first visit to the Huayra headquarters. This neighborhood was quiet, lined with small houses, and small shops where they sold bread, sliced meat, cheese, milk, beer, wine, soda and other Argentine diet staples as well as a *libreria* (a paper store). On my way, I passed a group of kids playing soccer in a lush, green field, a common sight in Salta.

I turned down a narrow street and knew immediately that I had reached the place when I came upon a brightly colored door painted with a large *zefalo* (a two-headed dragon that is part of the Calchaqui Indigenous culture). As I pressed the doorbell, I heard a scampering of feet on the other side, excited snuffling noises, and an eruption of high pitched barks. A minute later, I heard footsteps, and Mercedes, the dancer that I had met at the conference, swung open the door. Now dressed in a red t-shirt and jeans, Mercedes greeted me and explained that her brother, Javier López (Javi for short) was being interviewed. Would I mind waiting? We walked through the long hallway, and I felt as though I were entering a museum. Every wall bore some type of image or painting.

Another *zefalo* was painted on the bathroom door straight ahead. Above this was a large *chakana* (Inca cross) next to a portrait of a man with a stern, square jaw and a large feather headdress. Below this face was written "*La Civilización del Viento*" ("The Civilization of Wind"). This was a symbol in reference to Huayra, since Huayra means wind in Quechua. Directly opposite, I saw a picture of an owl, which I soon learned was the comparsa's logo. On the doorway leading to the next room were the words, "*Ama Sua, Ama Kella, Ama Llulla,*" (Don't Steal, Don't Lie, and Don't be Lazy); this is a commonly repeated Quechua-language phrase that is found throughout the Andes. Next to this was a picture of a Kolla man wearing the characteristic chullo and playing sikus. Another painting depicted a spotted feline and a bull. As I learned later, this was an illustration of the *pimpim* dance from the Guaraní community.

Overall, entering Huayra's cultural center was like being immersed in a collage of Salteño Indigenous cultures all at once, made all the more striking given that these symbols were not otherwise common sights in Salta city. The only image that seemed more typical of other homes and cultural spaces in Salta was a large painting of the Virgin of Urkupiña, with the words "Bless This Home." This was testament to how devoutly Catholic Huayra members, and López in particular, are, a fact which also meant that in addition to performing outside of the Carnival parades, Huayra also sometimes performed at churches.

The main room was a large open space about twenty feet long and twenty feet wide, lined with red brick walls and covered by a corrugated tin roof, that the walls did not quite reach, which left huge gaps between the ceiling and the walls. It was raining; the drops resonated loudly as they hit the metal covering, and I shivered, wishing I had brought an extra sweater. This room, like the entranceway, was decorated in bright murals of Indigenous designs, and drums, masks, and, most prominently, huge feather headdresses that were piled high along the walls.

López was sitting at a long wooden table, talking to a man and woman who appeared to be in their early thirties. When I approached, López introduced me to the man, Javier, and the woman, Mareana. Javier and Mareana are a husband and wife team who study documentary film making in the nearby province of Tucuman. They told me that they were making a documentary about Huayra and would like to film my interview with López.

Mareana and Javier turned out to be permanent fixtures in Huayra's world and thus also in my research. I learned in subsequent conversations that they were focusing on two *comparsas*: Huayra and a group called Los Incas.¹⁰¹ Mareana and Javier also ended up being important fieldwork consultants for me, particularly as they were not part of Huayra and could provide a critical yet empathetic critique of the *comparsa*. Indeed, I was fortunate to have Mareana and Javier at my first meeting with López, as they also asked many questions and gave their input as well.

López joined Huayra as a young child, despite the fact that his parents, who believed that being in a *comparsa* would expose him to heavy drinking and violent behavior, strongly objected to his participation. His parents' fear was logical since, traditionally *comparsas* in Salta were highly competitive; rivalries between groups were gang-like, and violent fights between *comparsas* were common (Caseres 2011: 42-43). *Comparsas* also were known as environments of heavy partying in which copious amounts of alcohol were imbibed prior to and following the parading. As one *comparsa* member explained it to me, "we need that alcohol to get through. It is such a long parade and a long night!"¹⁰² Indeed, I found this out a year later when I joined Huayra and spent night after long night waiting to parade with them, at times until 4:00 in the morning.

¹⁰¹ While my main research was on Huayra I also attended some events of Los Incas and interviewed their *cacique*, Hector Colique. However, fierce competition between *comparsas* made it difficult to work with more than one group.

¹⁰² Personal communication, March 2015

López had joined Huayra and performed under the tutelage of Jesus Ramón Vera, a local poet and the previous cacique.¹⁰³ Vera wanted to spread Indigenous awareness through Huayra, but he died before he was able to do so. When López took over, he was only twenty-four, the youngest cacique in Salteño comparsa history. Originally, López followed in the footsteps of Vera, running a comparsa that was male-dominated and sang primarily coplas. However, he gradually began implementing changes, modifying the repertoire, allowing women to assume a more prominent role, and striving for a clean and sober group in which it would be safe for young people and children to participate. López also continued Vera's unfulfilled vision of making Huayra a platform for Indigenous recognition. Under his leadership, the comparsa has interpreted dress and dance from Northern Argentine Indigenous groups including the genres of *pimpim* and *los assamilantes*, or *la danza de los suris* (the ostrich dance).

When I asked López what the mission of Huayra was, he explained that he and the comparsa members learned music and dances from *los pueblos originarios* and performed them in schools, workshops, and in *los corsos*. Huayra represented Indigenous rights or *la lucha* (the fight). He said that Huayra was different from the other comparsas and that they had received a lot of criticism, in particular from other comparsa groups who were upset that Huayra had made changes to the repertoire by performing genres outside of the typical coplas and drumming.

¹⁰³ The information on the following pages is taken from an interview with López, unless otherwise noted.

López also set a goal to make Huayra a safe and inclusive community for learning and for emotional support among its members, which he said was distinct from the other comparsas. In this initial interview, he talked at length about his relationship with the younger members of the comparsas, and I gathered that belonging to a comparsa was tantamount to belonging to a family. Indeed, I heard this sentiment time and time again in my discussions with comparsa members, who often initially arrived via a current comparsa member and then stayed because of the solidarity and comradeship that they felt in this group. López described el centro vecinal, where members came to create their masks, headdresses, and costumes, as much more than a workspace. Rather, he said that kids and young people could come and go in that place as much as they chose. Some members came from two-parent working families; they had no one to help them with their homework, and so they came to Huayra for support.

López showed Mareana, Javier, and me around the workspace, pointing out the modest library which housed books about Argentina, Indigenous history, music, art, and Spanish language. He explained that Huayra members were always welcome in this space and that he hoped to educate many young people. They had even recently started offering music lessons for those who wanted to learn *queñas*, *sikus*, and *charangos*. These were taught by a local musician and instructor, Lucio Ayala.

López holds a degree in art (*artes plásticas*) and is a talented drawer, painter, sculptor, and designer. He used his talents to design and create the masks and

costumes for Huayra. To pay the bills, he was employed in a bakery that provided food for school children. At the time of this interview, Salta teachers were on strike and López and Mareana started discussing that this was a hardship for many families who depended on their children attending school in order to get at least one solid meal a day. Through this side discussion, I saw that López was an altruistic person dedicated to social change in many arenas that went beyond Indigenous issues.

Dress, Repertoire and instruments

At the conclusion of my interview with López, I told him I would like to see Huayra perform again and I asked that he let me know if such an opportunity were to arise. López told me that I could see Huayra as part of the Carnival parades in an area in the southern section of Salta called el Autodromo. A few nights later I took the forty-minute bus ride, paid my 40 pesos (about 4.00 dollars), and watched my first Salteño Carnival parade. The event was poorly attended due to the extreme cold and the constant drizzle that evening. Despite this, the parade lasted from 10:00 p.m. until 3:00 a.m. in the morning, with Huayra performing around 2:00 a.m.

When I finally saw Huayra perform that evening it was after having seen at least seven different comparsas de los indios. This gave me some context to understand their performance. While they had huge headdresses, and played drums and coplas like the other comparsas, I noticed two major differences. First, their instrumentation was unique. From my vantage point I could not see the musicians,

but I heard *quenás* and *sikus*, something that the other groups did not have. Second, their outfits were distinct. I recognized the women I had seen at the conference who had shed their Kolla skirts and braids and were now garbed in long, grey feathers. Each dancer wore garments made from local, brown and white ostrich feathers, including a crown, a sash slung sideways across the chest and back, a skirt and finally, anklets. Later, I learned that this was the dance of *los assamillantes* or *los suris*, emus, a bird native to Argentina, but at the time I did not know what their costumes were meant to evoke. Despite my inability to interpret Huayra, I could tell that they were negotiating an identity both within the tradition of *las comparsas de los indios* and outside of its performative parameters.

Part of the way that Huayra expressed their solidarity with Indigenous struggles was through the repertoire they chose and the instruments they played. This was also what set them apart from the rest of the *comparsas* of Salta. Like the other *comparsas*, Huayra members don huge masks and feather headdresses and play drums and coplas. However, they have also departed from the traditional *comparsa* costume, dress and repertoire, showcasing northern Argentine Indigenous genres including the previously -mentioned *danza del suri* and *pimpim*.

Pimpim is a genre of dance and music of the Guaraní people. It is played at the *desentierro* (unburying or opening ceremony) and the *entierro* (burial or closing ceremony) of the *arete guazu* (big celebration), that begins with the start of the *maize* (corn) harvest. Generally held between February and March, *arête guazu* ceremonies mark the end of one agricultural cycle and the beginning of a new one

(Arias, Lofeudo: 203). Pimpim music is played throughout the duration of these celebrations, and songs consist of rapid tempo drumming and a short pentatonic melody played on a small flute called a *pinkullo*. While pimpim is widely played in the northern regions of Salta province, the areas of Mosconi, Tartagal, and Oran, it is seldom heard in Salta capital.

During my initial visit to Huayra's cultural center, López told me about Huayra's experience performing la danza de los suris and pimpim. He showed me numerous totem masks with carved heads of jaguars, fish, birds, and lions, saying that he had modeled these masks on those of the Guarani people who lived in Aguaray and other districts in the northern part of Salta. At the end of the pimpim celebration, the Guarani people threw the masks in the river when the Carnival period was over. Huayra had used these masks in 2012 when they had dressed as Guarani and performed pimpim during the Carnival parades. Of course, they had not thrown the masks away but had kept them for future presentations. During the performance, women had worn long, satin tunics called *tipoyos*, which are also part of the pimpim tradition.

In 2014 Huayra added musicians of Andean instruments and genres including *queñas*, sikus, and charangos, as well as carnavalitos and *huaynos*. Two of the songs Huayra regularly performed, "El Humahuaqueño," and "Canción y Huayño" by Bolivian composer Mauro Nuñez, were extremely well-known and were played in every folkloric festival as well as in many ceremonies and dance troupe

performances. Huayra's performing of these songs placed them within a popular articulation of Carnival and general folklore music.

Huayra also incorporated into their repertoire three songs discussed in chapter two: "Kolla en la Ciudad," "Caminantes," and "Cinco Siglos," which were either written or made popular by Bruno Arias. López explained to me that Alex, one of the younger members of Huayra had proposed the idea to López to form a music group as part of the comparsa for events in which they performed outside of Carnival. Alex, who was a fan of Bruno Arias suggested that they cover his song "Cinco Siglos" (five-hundred centuries). Since, the lyrics of "Cinco Siglos" talk about Indigenous resistance in the Americas over the last five-hundred centuries, this song fit with López' vision for the comparsa. The group, who eventually named themselves "Los Originarios" (the originals/first) learned "Cinco Siglos" and "Kolla en la Ciudad." They posted a YouTube video of their performance, and Arias, who performs all over the Argentina, came to their cultural center, when he was in town for a show. The bond between Arias and Huayra grew, and eventually Arias invited Huayra to share the stage with him during his performance at the 2014 Cosquín Festival. This was not out of the ordinary for Arias, who frequently invites smaller acts on as invited guests. For example, when Arias played with Sumaimana at a concert, I will discuss in chapter five, he also invited a *sikuriada* (siku ensemble) to play a few songs.

For Huayra, being invited to perform with Arias was a great opportunity. First, there was the star factor; who would not want to perform with a famous

musician? But more than that, playing with Huayra, helped the group situate itself within Arias' discourse on Indigenous solidarity. Thus, whether they were physically on stage with Arias or simply performing his songs, Huayra could use the repertoire of "Kolla en la Ciudad" and "Cinco Siglos" to position themselves in context much broader than that of the Indian parade groups of Salta.

Outside of the parades, the Huayra affiliate groups *Los Originarios* (music ensemble) and the Huayra Ballet performed in a variety of settings. As a member of first the latter and then the former of these groups, I danced and sang in elementary schools, private parties, ceremonies for the Pachamama and la Virgen de Urkupiña, weddings, prisons, and public concerts. López made all arrangements and had final say on which venues Huayra performed in and which repertoire they would play. As mentioned above, the most popular parade groups were those who performed Afro-Bolivian caporals and tanks. As a *comparsas de los indios*, Huayra did not perform these styles, but outside of this setting, *Los Originarios* expanded the music to include some of the most popular caporales and tinkus heard in Argentina today.

As self-described "urban Indians," Huayra members were also Salteños to the core. Thus, while they were dedicated to promoting indigeneity, they strived to do so in a manner that fit with an ongoing Salta tradition. In the words of Javier López, Huayra "wanted to convey the culture of los pueblos originarios but with a Salteño expression" (López, Javier. Personal Interview. June, 12, 2015). This meant that what Huayra offered was both familiar and exotic to Salta audiences: folklore

standards, wreathed in bright feathers or comparsa processions spiced with Andean instruments.

López seemed caught between the desire to send a powerful message about indigeneity and the need to propel his group towards success. When I asked him how Huayra's performances were received he said that the audience loved them, but the other comparsas often made disparaging comments and stated plainly that "Huayra was not a real comparsa." López and the other Huayra members seemed proud of their outcast status, but they still wanted to win the annual competition and thus needed to garner popular support. This was made apparent to me on two different occasions when discussing their musical choices with López.

In total, I saw Huayra perform in three Carnival celebrations, in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Between September 2014 and January 2015, I had to take a break from my research to attend to a family emergency. When I left in September, Huayra had already begun planning their costume and music for the following Carnival of 2015. I had attended some of their planning meetings and knew that they would be performing as Mapuche. Plans were well underway; gorros mayores had been designed as had the dress and the silver necklaces that the women dancers would wear. López had instructed members to start building *kultruns*, a Mapuche drum, and the group was busy searching for Mapuche dances on YouTube that they could copy.

I was surprised then when I returned in January to find that the theme had completely changed and that Huayra would be performing carnavalitos and

huaynos, in particular the two most popular ones: “El Humahuaqueño” and “Cancion y Huayño.” Most members were unsure why this change had taken place and simply said that it was López’s decision.

When I was finally able to talk to López he explained some of the reasons behind the change. First, the comparsa was suffering economically, and the Mapuche costumes had proven very expensive to construct as they required purchasing high-quality cloths and metals. The second reason was that the Mapuche theme would have been heavy and somber. López did not think that the audience would have received this well and opted for popular music, which he said was more “rapido y alegre,” (fast and cheerful). I was struck by this second concept as it marked an ideological shift in which the comparsa chose to portray a popular, less specific, yet more “fun” Indigenous identity over a presumed less exciting and more specific one. I was further surprised by the ease with which comparsas members followed López’s lead and seemed unconcerned with the message behind their performance. This made me wonder more about the way that each individual member self-identified and thus what stake they had in portraying a particular Indigenous identity.

Self-Identifications/Motivations of Huayra

Huayra members joined for a variety of different reasons. The majority of people I spoke to shared that a friend or relative had initially brought them, and they, after experiencing the warmth of the group, had decided to stay. Indeed,

almost no one brought up Huayra's mission to foster Indigenous awareness or mentioned it as a prime motivating factor. If asked specifically about this, they would say that they also supported Indigenous peoples.

When I asked López about his heritage and why he was so motivated to create Indigenous awareness, he explained that his grandmother was from Bolivia and that he identified as Kolla. He also shared that growing up he had felt ashamed of his heritage, that being called Kolla or, worse, Boliviano, in Salta was a pejorative term and something he tried to avoid in school as a child and teenager. However, when he began studying the plastic arts, he started to change his mind. He began mimicking and creating variations of Indigenous designs like those of the Calchaqui culture, in particular, and became inspired to learn more about the people who created these images. Through this process, he learned about Indigenous cultures in Argentina and grew to feel proud of his own Indigenous heritage.

López talked at length about the positive influence that Evo Morales, Bolivia's famous Indigenous president elected in 2006, had on him and also on changing attitudes towards indigeneity in Argentina. He said that about twenty years ago, few people would admit to being Kolla, to belonging to another Argentine Indigenous group, or being of Bolivian descent, but now post-Evo Morales many people, especially young people, take great pride in their Indigenous ancestry. As part of their mission to foster this pride in future generations Huayra often performed in schools. López shared that schools often talked about Indigenous peoples exclusively in the past denying their current existence. Huayra had faced some

opposition and teachers who even laughed at them. However, overall reception had been positive and many teachers had thanked them for bringing this important issue to light.

I asked López if all of Huayra self-identified as Kolla like he did. He said that there were no requirements or restrictions to participate in Huayra and that people joined for a variety of reasons. He did however encourage the members of his comparsa to learn about and have respect for Indigenous peoples and to participate in native traditions to demonstrate respect for these cultures. One of the major ways that Huayra did this was through holding a Pachamama ceremony each year.

Syncretism

As evidenced by the blessing on the wall of López's house, Huayra members are followers of the Virgin of Urkupiña. In fact, thousands of Salteños worship the Virgin and in 2015 50,000¹⁰⁴ people made a pilgrimage to Cochabamba, Bolivia, the home of the saint. La Virgen de Urkupiña is typically associated with Bolivia and not Argentina, but since 2011 the Virgen has had a solid following in Salta. This highlights the huge impact that Bolivian immigration has had on Salta.

López is also a firm believer in the *Pachamama* (mother earth), La Virgen de Urkupiña, and God. Every year, Huayra has held a ceremony for Pachamama in August (described in more detail below) in which they opened up a *pozo* (a large

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.eltribuno.com/salta/nota/2015-8-16-0-0-0-devocion-por-urkupina-en-salta-virgen-de-urkupina>

pit) where they buried offerings to the Pacha. I realized that practices like that of the Pachamama ceremony run deep in Salta society and that these displays of Indigenous culture were not only something promoted for tourist consumption, but were also central to many people's identities.

The Pacha was a symbol that was of utmost importance and surfaced frequently in their vocabulary, song lyrics, and dress. Huayra held a Pachamama ceremony in their house.

Pachamama Ceremony with Huayra

On July 31, 2014, I received a text from López inviting me to Huayra's Pachamama ceremony, which was to be held on August 2nd. I prepared rice and brought a few bottles of soda to contribute to the offerings. When I arrived at 2:10 about eighty people were there mingling or seated in one of four rows of white plastic chairs. The stone with the etched facial features that López had shown me on my last visit had been uprooted and placed to the side to reveal a hole, four-feet in diameter and about three-feet deep. This was the pozo for the Pachamama and was the site for today's ceremony. I recognized a few familiar faces including Mareana and Javier, the documentary workers who were filming as well as Mercedes and of course, López. Most people were dressed in normal, street clothes, although some Huayra members were dressed in the black, satin outfits or the Kolla skirts I had seen them wear at the conference in April.

At 2:40, López called the group together and began the ceremony by welcoming everyone. The band began playing the dulcet melody of “El Condor Pasa,” a song that accompanied almost all of the Pachamama ceremonies I witnessed in Salta. López introduced the shaman, who went by the name of Calchaqui, and explained that he would lead the ceremony. Calchaqui was dressed in a long off-white tunic with a tree painted on the front and leather sandals. He thanked us for coming and began talking about the importance of the Pachamama, saying that the Pachamama gave us life and that we were all to make offerings to thank the Pachamama for everything she provided.

As he spoke, the shaman began preparing his offering to the Pachamama. First, he lit incense in a small wooden bowl and drew his hand in a circular pattern spreading smoke over the pit. This he explained was to purify and bless the ceremony space. The shaman then poured a glass of wine, took a few small sips, poured most of the cup into the pit of earth and then took one more sip. He also scooped up fruits, corn, rice, bread, and empanadas from tupperware containers and plates sitting next to the pit, and threw those in as well. Finally, he grabbed a handful of coca leaves and scattered those on the pit. I noticed that he used both hands to deliver his offerings to the earth.

By this point, most people had gotten out of their chairs and were crowding around the pit. Our attention was momentarily drawn away when a group of Huayra members began playing a song with sikus, guitar, and vocals. I recognized the song from Huayra’s previous performances and identified it as “Kolla en la Ciudad.” The

song ended and everyone cheered. Then the shaman instructed everyone to come and honor the Pachamama.

The women of Huayra, who were dressed as Kollas in shiny black skirts and shirts, black bowler hats, braids and sandals, helped people make the offerings. They held out plates full of oranges, bananas, potatoes, cooked and breaded chicken with rice, and fava beans. People lined up so they could make an offering to the Pachamama and selected foods from the plates that Huayra members offered. The shaman offered each person a glass of soda, wine, or one of the many other alcoholic beverages that participants had brought to give to the Pachamama. He also proffered cigarettes that people lit with the carbon from the incense. People placed these cigarettes in the ground surrounding the pozo.

Offerings to the pozo were made throughout the day and into the evening. Huayra also served a traditional lunch and had arranged for various musical acts to perform throughout the duration. I had hoped that Huayra would perform the suri dance or the pimpim that López had told me about. I was also curious to see how the music for the Pachamama day would differ from everyday songs. However, the repertoire for the event consisted primarily of popular songs and folkloric classics.

Huayra performed first, with renditions of “Kolla en la Ciudad,” “Cinco Siglos,” and “El Humahuaqueño.” As people were setting up for lunch, pulling together three long tables and placing chairs, a small orchestra of about twenty adolescent boys and girls took the stage. They played classical instruments including cello and violin, but I did not recognize the songs. Next a couple, dressed as a gaucho

and a paisana performed a *zamba* and an *arungita*, two folkloric dances. They were followed by an older duo, a man and woman who appeared to be in their fifties, and who played folkloric classics: *zambas*, *chacareras*, and *gatos*. Towards the evening, a cumbia group began playing and everyone began dancing. Cumbia and the sub-set cumbia villera (an Argentine-specific cumbia) were by far the most popular genres that I heard in Argentina and, particularly the younger members of Huayra followed this trend and listened to a lot of cumbia.

Attending the Pachamama ceremony gave me a sense that Huayra, while united as a comparsa was far from a homogenous group and did not adhere to any strict definition of who or what could be considered Indigenous. This was apparent in a variety of ways. First, the repertoire was varied. By this point, I had talked with other musicians, particularly from the group Sumaimana, who had positioned *gauchos* and folkloric music as an antithesis to Indigenous struggles. However, Huayra did not make this distinction and thus had folkloric dancers and musicians as part of their venue for that day.

The Pachamama ceremony was also the first day that I got to meet some of Huayra members and gain some perspectives other than that of López. Through my conversations with people I began to obtain a sense for the multiple reasons that Huayra members had chosen this comparsas over any other one and the different ways that they identified with the overall goal of the group to foster indigeneity. At lunch, I sat next to a boy about 13 years old named Rodrigo who told me that he had joined Huayra nine years ago through a friend of his whose mother makes the

costumes for the group. He was wearing a mask of a pig head attached to a bobcat or other wild cat pelt that he said was from los pueblos originarios, but he did not know from which exact culture or group.

This was something that would become common for me to hear in my conversations with Huayra members throughout my fieldwork. They would say with complete conviction that they were representing Indigenous peoples, but seldom could pinpoint exactly which group they were representing. Many would also refer me back to their cacique López, saying that they didn't really know, but that Javi knew. This made me wonder what connection or relationship did Huayra have to Indigenous communities outside of the city of Salta? Where do they get their information/learn repertoire?

Sources of Indigeneity

Huayra members put complete trust in their cacique and did not question his artistic integrity or his knowledge of Indigenous cultures. When I asked how they learned the repertoire, a few members told me that López and a few other members travelled to communities in Salta province and brought back their teachings as well as videos to instruct others. My impression after working with this group for two years was that most of the information they had about Indigenous groups was second-hand. This is not a criticism. Indeed, it is expensive for locals to travel in Argentina, and for López, who worked long hours, taking days off to immerse himself in other group's ceremonies and events was simply not a possibility.

However, it was notable to me that Huayra members did not seem overly concerned with the sources of information even as they stood staunchly for Indigenous visibility.

At the same time that most members were vague about the exact groups they were trying to advocate for, this did not inhibit their enthusiasm for the project or sway their conviction. Indeed, Huayra, who call themselves “urban indios” are a perfect example of cultural syncretism. The very way that they celebrated the Pachamama illustrates this.

I was struck by the fact that people were throwing, not only food and drink, biodegradable items, into the pozo but also were giving candy wrappers and cigarettes as offerings. This seemed strange to me given that the Pachamama is essentially mother earth and that throwing garbage into the earth is contradictory to honoring nature. I mentioned this to Marco, a Huayra member, who explained that the tradition of honoring the Pachamama has been adapted into a modern and urban setting, and that this has brought changes. For example, he explained, traditionally only men were allowed to participate in the Pachamama because men, not women, worked the earth, but now tradition has changed.¹⁰⁵ People gave offerings of whatever was most valuable to them. Thus, they gave soda, wine, food, and cigarettes. Marco was also clear that the Pachamama ceremony was about

¹⁰⁵ I never heard this from any other source, and it serves as another example of the plethora of interpretations and information and misinformation that I encountered in my ethnographic fieldwork.

making an offering and not asking for something, but he added, many people confused these concepts.

People continued making offerings to the Pachamama throughout the day and into the evening. As the sun fell, most of the official people López had invited, members of local foundations and the press, left; however, the comparsa stayed long into the night. A DJ replaced the live musicians and soon people were dancing to cumbia and *cuarteto*, two staples of secular entertainment in Salta and much of Argentina. In one lull, Huayra members grabbed their drums and began to sing. López stood next to the pozo and directed the group who chanted coplas punctuated by the cry “Huayra” every few minutes. I noticed that the women refrained from drumming but danced. The mood was highly energetic and enthusiastic.

Gauchos vs. Indians

Given the complex racial categories mentioned in the beginning of this chapter and the tendency for most Salteños to identify strongly with their gaucho characteristics and deny their Indigenous ones, it is also important to see how Huayra positioned themselves along this spectrum. Did they see gauchos as diametrically opposed to Indigenous peoples? What about folkloric music and dance? Did Huayra share the opinion that some other Salteños had shared with me that folkloric music and dance excluded Indigenous culture? As a comparsa de los indios, Huayra members could fit into an existing Salta tradition that did not involve

gauchos, yet I wanted to see how members related to this category outside of this setting.

Most Huayra members did not self-identify as gauchos, but rather stuck to the moniker of “urban Indians.” The only exception I saw was a man named Martin who was a member of a group called Los Fortines del Gaucho de Guemes. This group takes great pride in their gaucho heritage and participates in parades throughout the year to show off their impeccable gaucho attire, their equestrian skills, and their loyalty to General Guemes, the Salteño hero discussed in Chapter two. Martin shared that when he first joined Huayra, the other members of Los Fortines del Gaucho de Guemes did not respect his participation in Huayra. They also discouraged him from wearing his wiphala bracelet showing Indigenous solidarity, although ostensibly because it did not follow the dress code of the group. Martin refused to remove the bracelet and said that eventually his fellow gauchos came to understand and respect his choice.

While other Huayra members did not identify as gauchos they also never expressed any dislike of the term or any notion that claiming this identity would be contradictory to their aim of promoting Indigenous rights. Indeed, outside of the Carnival context, Huayra often performed in the same venues as folkloric gaucho dancers. López told me that he did not see gauchos (and folkloric culture) and Indigenous ones as opposed to one another. In fact, he even invited folkloric musicians and dancers to the Pachamama ceremony. Yet, it is perhaps significant that Huayra members did not position themselves as gauchos as, again, this label

would distance them from the shared Indigenous heritage or the immigrant Bolivian one that they were trying to highlight in their performance. Privileging a European ancestry would further legitimize the presence of the colonizer and render invisible the native peoples and thus would counteract the reframing of the Spanish conquest as a narrative of “five-hundred years of resistance.”

Inclusion and Exclusion within a Salteño context

Huayra’s particular articulation of indigeneity was shaped by their desire to both push back against the Salta narrative that omits Indigenous peoples and to maintain their place firmly within a time-honored Salta tradition of “playing Indians.” Their performances were far from a supposedly “pure” and “authentic” display of Indigenous culture, yet they also defied Salteño norms. In adopting Andean symbols and genres Huayra members have aligned themselves firmly within the broader national expression of Indigenous discourse, which is very indigenista. Yet, they have also opened themselves to the criticism by Salteño locals and fellow competing comparsas that they are not a real comparsa for two reasons: First, they have changed the traditional repertoire and second, they look and sound more like a Bolivian/Andean group than a Salteño comparsa.

These opinions exclude Huayra from a local Salteño identity and a national one as well. First, by declaring that they are not real comparsas, Salteños are calling out Huayra for the ways that they have defied a time-honored tradition of comparsas in Salta. Second, by classifying them as Bolivians, Salteños are

categorizing Huayra members as immigrants and people who do not belong in the national imaginary.

Given the lack of specificity of the Argentine Indian the comparsas portray, this attack on Huayra seems contradictory. Yet, in many ways it fits with other types of “simultaneous admiration for the glorious Indian past and willful disregard for contemporary Indigenous realities” (Siebert 1-2). In other words, to Salteños, Huayra does not represent the exotic, primitive and easily distanced Indians of the Chaco or the great ancient civilization of the Incans. Rather, they put front and center the presence of a less exciting and much closer, thus more threatening one, the Kolla. As such, Salteños’ readings of Huayra fit within broader Indigenista trends in Argentina and throughout Latin America.

Competing interpretations of Huayra and the Salteño Comparsas Performances

Given the contradictory ways that indigeneity is represented in the comparsas, how then should we interpret their performances? Salteños diverge in their opinions about the comparsas, and Huayra in particular. The majority dismiss the comparsas as fictional performances. Pointing to long headdresses and bone breastplates, they say, “That doesn’t look like us. That looks more like you Yankees.” They also single out Huayra’s dress and instrumentation as more Andean than Argentine.

Other Salteños admire Huayra and see the comparsa tradition in general as a time when *comparsa* members claim an Indigenous heritage that they have been encouraged to ignore. They posit that comparsas are not simply Whites appropriating indigeneity but rather are Indios Urbanos, urban Indians, or those internal Others who have been assimilated into cities and who have lost their Indian identity. Indeed, in his poetry, Huayra founder Vera, suggests that comparsa members do not don Indian costumes each year, but rather dust off the veil of Whiteness, to reveal the ancestors of their great-grandparents: the Indians (2001). Huayra members echo this belief and position themselves lyrically not in defense of the Indigenous, but as the Indigenous themselves. Thus, they pick up feathers and drums in reclamation of an Indigenous heritage that have long been forced to deny. Huayra's song, that they performed in the 2014 and 2015 Carnival parades, reflects the group's subject position that they see themselves as part of a long history of Indigenous peoples who were never truly vanquished.

*Somos los indios de hoy
Esos que nunca pudieron matar
Los que se atreven aun
A defender su derecho a soñar*

We are the Indians of today
Those who could never be killed
Those who still dare
To defend the right to dream

*Canción, somos canción
Canta en el viento queriendo
volar
Huayra revolución
Ya no queremos echarnos atrás*

Song, we are song
Sing in the wind wanting to fly
Huayra revolution
Now we refuse to go backwards

Conclusion

Despite Huayra's intentions, it is undeniable that their performances fall short of a realistic Indigenous expression, rather in many ways they are based on highly exoticized tropes of Indians as savages or Indians as Incan descendants. Indeed, Huayra, while socially aware, still follows the *comparsas* trend of portraying an Indian creation through a wide array of Indigenous symbols and a plethora of feathers. The way in which Huayra combines Indigenous symbols from various groups, suggests that what is going on here is little more than an empty multiculturalism or a performative version of "el indio permitido" (Hale and Millamán 2006). However, as ethnomusicologist Joshua Tucker reminds us, even highly exoticized and essentialized Indigenous performances can be viewed positively if they "open up new spaces and articulations for indigeneity" (Tucker 2011: 393).

it is possible that in circumstances where the Indigenous imagination has become so precariously attenuated, (foreign discourses)... provide possibilities for reconstructing Indigenous subjectivity (ibid).

Indeed, Huayra's exploitation of a plethora of "Indigenous" sources, follows that of other identity politics movements, in which protagonists coalesce around an essentialized image. This is particularly true in cases where a historical omission necessitates a recreation or "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm 1983) via a "process of cultural memory" often drawn from a combination of local and foreign sources (Feldman 129). Furthermore, a simple reading of Huayra as either "pure" Indigenous peoples or as Whites appropriating Indigenous culture, would not allow

for a contemporary understanding of what it means to be Indigenous. Returning to a point made in the Introduction, placing this judgment on Huayra, classifying someone as a “real” or “not real” “Indian” is also an act of supposition and power.

Finally, even as they are following the trend of the *comparsa de los indios*, Huayra members are simultaneously pushing back against it. They are doing this through incorporating new instruments, different styles of dress and regalia and, most significantly, through utilizing their performances as a platform for Indigenous recognition. All of these changes position Huayra within a broader discussion in Latin America that reframes Indigenous struggles not as histories of domination but rather as 500 years of resistance. Simultaneously, however, Huayra participants’ efforts to present a more realistic Argentine Indian has made them outsiders within the *comparsa* practice in Salta. In basic terms, the Kolla figure that Huayra represents places them outside of the boundaries of the Salteño “indio permitido.”

Thus, I argue that the *comparsas* and other Indigenous expressions should not be simply dismissed as White appropriation. Rather we should continue to interrogate Whiteness in Argentina and recognize expressions of indigeneity and cultural experimentation as forms of resistance that give voice to a silenced people and remap internal Others back onto Argentina’s White imaginary.

Chapter Five

Sumaimana

While *Kollas* have gained a presence in the popular imagination and on the national stage of Cosquín, many other Indigenous groups in Argentina remain marginalized in social, political, economic and cultural terms. Their musics also have not been codified or folklorized in the ways that Kolla genres have been, such as the previously mentioned “El Humahuaqueño.” This gap is significant, as it means that the categories governing folkloric contests, such as in Pre-Cosquín, do not include any Indigenous expressions beyond that of the Kollas, and even these are limited to “El Humahuaqueño,” *cuecas*, and sometimes, *coplas*. As a result, musicians who play music inspired by or derivative of Indigenous groups other than Kollas cannot compete as such in national music and dance contests. This was clearly demonstrated in one of my first interviews with Valeria Esquivel, the main singer and founder of the group Sumaimana.

Sumaimana is a self-described ethno-folkloric rock fusion band that takes two dissimilar musics, rock and autochthonous songs and/or instruments, and combines them to create a new Indigenous sound. The name Sumaimana, a Quichua word which means something supreme, valuable, or lovely, was bestowed on the musicians by an Ecuadorian shaman whom they met while playing at a friend’s ceremony (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview. 7 March 2015). Their repertoire, the autochthonous rhythms they utilize in their songs, and the instruments and

languages used reflect a broad interpretation of musical indigeneity. In particular, in a manner similar to that of Huayra, Sumaimana members use politically-themed songs to position the group within a pan-Latin discussion about indigeneity and resistance that evokes Indigenous rebel leaders dating as far back as the Spanish conquest.

For Sumaimana, and in particular for the group's founding members, Esquivel and the guitarist and arranger, Carlos Contreras, there is a strict divide separating Indigenous peoples from gauchos. In one respect, this aversion to all things gaucho makes sense, given the contentious and variegated past between gauchos and Indigenous peoples in which the former were conscripted to fight the latter (Slatta 1983: 10). For this reason, Sumaimana, as a band, firmly places itself outside of an Argentine folkloric setting and does not play *chacareras*, *zambas*, *gatos* and other folkloric genres. This decision, however, also makes it impossible for them to compete in folkloric events such as the national Pre-Cosquín contest, events which provide tremendous publicity and exposure to participating groups and their messages.

In 2013, Sumaimana attempted to compete in Pre-Cosquín. To participate, performers must first ascend through multiple qualifying rounds, first at a local, then province-wide and finally national level. As Esquivel explained it, Sumaimana only got as far as the local (Salta) level that year, not because of their lack of talent, but rather because the judges did not consider their music to be representative of an Argentine identity.

The two songs that Sumaimana performed in the Salta-level competition for Pre-Cosquín were a *huayño* (an Andean music and dance genre), and a *pimpim*, (a genre from the Guaraní people). First, the judges objected because neither of those songs were part of a recognized folkloric repertoire. They also requested that the songs be in Spanish and not in Quechua, as was the *huayño*. The judges told Esquivel that Sumaimana needed to play a *chacarera*, a *zamba*, (song genres) or some other recognized Argentine folkloric song. When they refused, the group was disqualified. Ironically, the group who ultimately won played a Mexican *huapango* “La Malagueña.” When Esquivel objected to this, pointing out that a *huapango* was certainly more foreign to Argentina than a *huayño* or a *pimpim*, the judges replied that since “Los Chalchaleros,” a famous Argentine folkloric group, had popularized “La malagueña” in the 1970s, this song was now considered acceptable as part of an Argentine folkloric repertoire (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview. January 7, 2016).

This chapter focuses on Sumaimana, and the position that they hold as a hybrid group blending autochthonous music with rock. Sumaimana members see themselves as a bridge between Indigenous communities and a broader Argentine audience. The music they play is what Peruvian sociologist Patricia Oliart (2014,)), borrowing from Mikhail Bakhtin (1981:359-361), describes as an intentional hybrid. In his discussion on language hybridities, Bakhtin differentiates between organic hybrids and intentional ones (1981:359). Sumaimana members are very intentional about the ways that they promote Indigenous awareness, and this is

reflected in their mission statement as well as in their repertoire, instrumentation, and the venues where they are invited and choose to play. Their mission statement is as follows:

Our mission is to share, promote, foster, and defend the distinct musical expressions of the Indigenous communities of northern Argentina. We aim to create awareness about their respective regions, languages, and rhythms through original songs inspired by native customs, legends, rituals, and traditions. In our compositions, we strive to maintain Indigenous roots as a fundamental and core component and to move from a natural and rustic sound, musically fusing and juxtaposing the urban with the rural and the contemporary with the ancestral through combining Indigenous instruments with electric ones. Through this unique artistic language, we endeavor to entice and familiarize listeners to the sounds of ancient but extant cultures and to engender a renewed curiosity, interest, and attention to musical practices that have been largely overlooked due to complex historical and social-cultural processes, but that which we, as northern Argentines, have had the good fortune to partake in and revitalize. Through our music we have begun to recognize and restore a part of our own identities: a part that has been partially denied. We hope that Sumaimana listeners will have the same experience.¹⁰⁶

Pnina Werbner observes that “intentional hybridity as an aesthetic is inherently political, a clash of languages which questions an existing social order” (Werbner 2001:137). By combining Indigenous sounds with rock instruments, Sumaimana is purposefully juxtaposing and joining two cultures seen as disparate within Argentine society. They are also bringing Indigenous culture into a popular and potentially mainstream setting, thus calling into question the Argentine

¹⁰⁶ This is a translation that I did at the request of Valeria Esquivel. It appeared in a concert program; however, given the groups’ temporary hiatus, I am not sure where it currently appears.

preference for folkloric music or European based musics. Their actions highlight the fact that a proclivity to exclude Indigenous musics is grounded in a historical erasure or in-audibilization of Indigenous cultures in general in Argentina. This further fits with Werbner's notion of an intentional hybridity since Sumaimana is inherently political and questions an existing social order (2001:137) in which Indigenous people and cultures are excluded from mainstream society.

Sumaimana: First Impressions

While I was conducting research, Sumaimana was composed of six members¹⁰⁷ including vocalist Andean wind-player, and lyricist Valeria Esquivel; guitarist, vocalist and composer Carlos Contreras; electric guitarist Hernan Bass; charango and Andean wind player Martin Antonetti; electric bassist Gonzalo Delgado; and percussionists Claudio Ledesma and Laura Caceres.

I first saw Sumaimana attending the three-day conference for *pueblos originarios* in downtown Salta described in the last chapter, part of the annual celebration of the *El Día del Aborígen Americano* (the Day of the American Indian). This was the same conference where I first met the members of Huayra, and I was struck by the different approaches to Indigenous revitalization presented by each group. Whereas Huayra shone with their bright, feather headdresses, their ornate

¹⁰⁷ From 2014, when I first met the band, to now in 2017, they have undergone three separate shifts in which some members have left and new ones have joined. I will base my writing on the members that existed during the time of my research.

dress, and their infectious rhythms that got the crowd up and moving, Sumaimana was marked by its members' comparatively austere presentation, their musicianship, and, most of all, for the informed way that they spoke about the music they were playing. The band also stood out for their unique repertoire, which included genres that I had not heard of before.

In addition to the knowledgeable way that Esquivel described their music and the cultures from which it was derived, I was also impressed by the fact that this group performed in languages other than Spanish, and that their instruments included not only Andean ones, such as *queenas*, *panpipes*, and a charango, that have long been popular in Argentina (Rios 2008) but also more obscure ones from non-Andean Indigenous communities. With each song, Valeria Esquivel, the singer, provided a brief story about which Indigenous group originated the song and its meaning. Her descriptions reflected an understanding about these cultures and the role that music served within their traditions.

One thing in particular that Esquivel said during this performance drew me to this group. "History books have left Indigenous peoples out of the Argentine story," she explained to the attentive audience. "With our music, we hope to help remind people that they have always been there." This was an exciting moment for me as a researcher, as finally someone was directly voicing the core idea of my thesis, which I had heard others in Argentina allude to but never say in such a straightforward and concrete way.

After Sumaimana finished performing, I approached Esquivel, introduced myself, and explained my project. She seemed enthused by my proposal and agreed to let me interview her. We planned to meet a couple weeks later; however, due to personal circumstances she became unavailable to meet. It was not until a year later when I ran into Esquivel and the other members of Sumaimana at an end of a Carnival celebration for Huayra, that I reconnected with the group.¹⁰⁸

My research with Sumaimana was less based on participant observation than on sole observation. I did not join the band or perform with them at any time as I did with my other two case studies, Huayra and Los Bagualeros del Norte. However, in other respects my relationship with Sumaimana was much more profound than it was in my other two case studies. I became friends with the group, and was often invited to *asados* (barbecues) and *guitarreadas* (music jams) at Esquivel's house. I also became a regular at their weekly rehearsals and assisted them with small projects including a translation of their documentary¹⁰⁹ and filming and audio recording for a music video.¹¹⁰

I also only saw Sumaimana perform live a total of six times. This is because Sumaimana does not play music that is typically popular in Salta such as folklore or cumbia. This, combined with the fact that band members are very selective about

¹⁰⁸ This turned out to be fairly typical in my ethnographic experience. I would contact someone or make a plan with that person only to have our meeting changed to an indeterminate time in the future. One of my friends, Lily, explained to me that in Salta it was rude to not show enthusiasm and offer to help someone, but that did not necessarily mean that you would follow through. Eventually I learned to have a healthy amount of skepticism and to not expect that a lead/interview would necessarily come to fruition. At the same time, I took advantage of every opportunity to talk with people if and when they arose.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKM99dNjZyE>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCyu-HUcV0s>

¹¹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1jKIQ64sOBs&list=PLI06CNsBaGtZ_Fl3GZeRWZj0cfhcasGnV

the gigs they accept, meant that Sumaimana played very infrequently during the time of my research. As such, most of my observations and insights are based on personal conversations and other informal interactions, in particular with the lead singer and founder Valeria Esquivel, who was the most vocal about the band's stated goal to foster Indigenous awareness.

Band History and Members

Formed in 2002, Sumaimana has a small but loyal following in Salta, their hometown. Though they have played throughout the province of Salta and as far away as in Buenos Aires, they are primarily a local band since all Sumaimana members currently live in the local area, and the majority of their shows take place in Salta city. However, the band has gained more widespread popularity through collaborations with nationally known artists including Bruno Arias and Ruben Patagonia. The band was created and continues to exist primarily due to the efforts of Esquivel, who is the founder and also functions as the unofficial band manager, arranging gigs, funding shows, and promoting their CD. Although all band members agree with the ideological positioning of the group, it is principally Esquivel's project.¹¹¹

Esquivel grew up close to the border between Argentina and Bolivia in the northern part of Salta province. The child of evangelical missionaries, she moved

¹¹¹ I gathered this from conversations with other band members, but principally based on the fact that Esquivel started the group, invited guest artists, and was also the most articulate and direct about the band's purpose.

from one Indigenous community to another, including: San Jose de Jacuy, a Guaraní¹¹²community; Kilometro 6, a Wichi community; and El Portana, a Chorote community. When she was nine years old, Esquivel moved with her parents to the nearby town of Tartagal and finally to Salta City at the age of fourteen.

Esquivel's father is half Guaraní and half Swiss, and Esquivel self-identifies as mestizo- Guaraní because, as she explains, she grew up in a Guaraní community and does not know anything about the Swiss side of her heritage. At 5'7," slender, and pale-skinned, Esquivel easily passes as White and describes a childhood in which she often felt out of place. She learned from her Guaraní grandfather, who had suffered from discrimination, that it was shameful to be Indigenous and thus safer and more advantageous to say that her family was White. Although this allowed Esquivel certain privileges, it also caused her anguish and left her feeling different than her peers.

Era como yo tenía una crisis de identidad cuando era adolescente porque yo sabía que no me convenía decir que era India. Y yo sabía a dentro de mí que yo tenía más posibilidades de mis amigas Guaraní más posibilidades económicas más posibilidades de la vida por no tener tanto rasco Guaraní. Tenía privilegio yo veía siempre a eso. Tenía más privilegios que los otros y yo sentía culpable por eso, porque ellos no nomás se quedarán en la comunidad y su futuro no era más de limpiar a la casa, trabajar de sirvienta empleado doméstica, trabajar ir al campo con maíz o tener hijos y nada más. Y yo

It was like I had an identity crisis in my adolescence because I knew that it did not benefit me to say I was Indian. And I knew inside that I had more possibilities than my Guaraní friends, more economic possibilities, more possibilities in my life for not having such strong Guaraní features. And I felt guilty about this because they would stay in the community and their future would be nothing more than cleaning house, or working as domestic house servants, to work to go to the corn fields, or have

112

tenía más posibilidades por parecer blanca (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

children. Nothing more. And I had more opportunities because I looked White.¹¹³

Even after she had moved out of the Guaraní community and attended school in Tartagal, Esquivel's crisis continued because she now had to adjust to a *criollo* lifestyle. She had to adapt to speaking Spanish and not Guaraní in school. She also was held back in school because, as she explains, "*en la comunidad apenas enseñaban a escribir y leer, sumar y sustraer*" (In the community they just barely taught how to read and write, add and subtract) (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).¹¹⁴

Esquivel's experiences growing up reflect the severe inequalities in Argentina, in which Indigenous communities suffer from the highest poverty rates and lowest education standards in the nation (vom Hau and Wilde 2009: 9).¹¹⁵ They are evidence of pervasive discrimination against Indigenous peoples, which, although attitudes are changing as more Argentines embrace a multicultural or *mestizo* (of mixed race) identity, remain a problem. These experiences also inspired Esquivel to form Sumaimana in order to fill what she perceived as a cultural gap. As

¹¹³ By White, Esquivel is referring to her phenotype and her pale skin as well as to her mixed-race background.

¹¹⁴ According to census data from 2004-05, illiteracy rates are three times higher among Indigenous people (7.8%) than when compared with the national average (2.6%). Furthermore, only 71.6% percent of Indigenous Argentines over the age of fifteen had completed primary education. This is compared to 81.8 % as the national average. See Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos de la República Argentina (INDEC) (2004-05). Encuesta Complementaria de Pueblos Indígenas [Online resource available at http://www.indec.mecon.ar/webcenso/ECPI/index_ecpi.asp]

¹¹⁵ For most of Argentine history, people who identify as Indigenous have been among the most marginalized. See Hall, G. and Patrinos, H. A. (2005). *Pueblos Indígenas, Pobreza y Desarrollo Humano en América Latina: 1994-2004*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

she explained, she used to be a fan of Argentine criollo folklore, yet she felt frustrated that it did not include Indigenous genres. This was particularly prominent in the *guitarreadas* (music jams) in Salta in which Esquivel began her musical formation.

Yo empecé a tocar música ya de grande, veinte y pico, veintiocho por ahí. Empecé a escribir más que nada. Escribió la música sobre ellos (los pueblos originarios). Y empecé a crear canciones con ese ritmo, de ese estilo, porque tenía en ese momento el objetivo de formar un grupo con ese estilo principalmente porque pensé que había un vacío en el estilo criollo folclórico.

I began to play music when I was already older, twenty-something, twenty-eight maybe. I began writing more than anything else. I wrote music about them (Indigenous peoples). I began composing songs with this rhythm, this style because I had the goal at this time to form a group with this style principally because it was missing in criollo folklore. (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

In addition, Esquivel felt the need to disabuse people of their misguided notions about Indigenous people and their musics because, as she explained, the few popular songs that talked about Indigenous peoples did so in a manner that was incorrect. She mentioned two songs: “*El Humahuaqueño*” by Edmundo P. Zaldivar and “*La Zamba del Chaguanco*” by Antonio Nella Castro. The former, as I explained in chapter two, is a *Porteño* invention that is nonetheless used to frame events as “authentically Indigenous” in Argentina. In this song, Zaldivar, the composer, joins together three instruments that are otherwise never played together: the *erque*, *bombo*, and *charango* (Pérez Bugallo 2008: 7-10). For Esquivel, this was a problem.

El carnavalito es criollo y es algo actual y contemporáneo. Es un genero

The carnavalito is *criollo* and is something contemporary. It is a genre invented by Zaldivar, a *Porteño*

inventado por Saldívar, un compositor porteño que nunca conoció a Jujuy, que nunca fue a un Carnaval en Humahuaca. Y este Saldívar crea la canción como de Humahuaca y le salía el ritmo de un huayño.

Inventó un ritmo parecido que a él le parecía parecido, como posible que sea un huayño. Y él no se daba cuenta de que estaba inventando un género. Porque en realidad el género del carnavalito lo inventó él. Y me paso que cuando estuve en la Quiaca está cerca de Humahuaca, hablé con un señor de ahí, es un señor andino que se llamaba José Marcelino Choque y él decía este carnavalito y todo lo que dice es incorrecta. Dice “erque, charango, y bombo carnavalito para bailar.” El erque es un instrumento típico del invierno jamás, jamás en un Carnaval se va a tocar un erque. Ninguna comunidad de los pueblos originarios en Carnaval toca el erque, Pero la gente no lo sabe. El que trae la lluvia y el erque no puede ir con el charango y el bombo (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

Similarly, in the song “Zamba del chaguanco herido,” the composer uses significant poetic license in his description of Guaraní culture. The song begins with the following verse: “*Hachan caliente los bombos, picando la selva turbia, mientras Juan Chaguanco herido, se dan sangre hacia la luna.*”¹¹⁶ (They beat the drums, piercing the dark jungle, while Juan Chaguanco, hurting, gives blood to the moon).

composer who never visited Jujuy, never went to a Carnival in Humahuaca. Saldívar created a song like that of Humahuaca and it came out with a huayño rhythm.

He invented a genre similar, to him it seemed similar, as if it were a huayño. He didn’t realize that he was inventing a genre. Because, in reality, he invented the carnavalito. And it happened to me that when I was in La Quiaca, which is close to Humahuaca, I spoke with an Andean man named Jose Marcelino Choque. He told me, this carnavalito, everything it says, is incorrect. The song says, “Erque, charango, and bombo carnavalito for dancing.” The erque is an instrument typical of winter, and never, never in Carnival would you play an erque. No Indigenous community plays the erque during Carnival. But, the people don’t know this. The erque brings rain and the erque cannot be played with the charango and bombo.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.letras.com/mercedes-sosa/1296959/>

Esquivel notes these lyrics are highly culturally inaccurate since Guaraní people do not play bombos (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

The issue at hand here is not musicological accuracy as much as a tendency for Argentine composers to invent supposedly Indigenous genres like the carnavalito, or to misrepresent Indigenous peoples due to ignorance. Indeed, this ignorance has even led ostensibly well-meaning composers to use offensive language to describe Indigenous people in their lyrics. As Esquivel notes,

Y no había una canción que habla de los pueblos originarios, siempre hablaban del gaucho e incluso, las pocas que hablaban de los pueblos originarios en su letra decían cosas equivocadas. Como, por ejemplo, "zamba del chaguanco herido", primero que chaguanco es un término despectivo adentro del idioma Guaraní. Es como decir estúpido (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

And there were no songs that talked about Indigenous people, they always focused on gauchos. Also, the few that did talk about Indigenous people in their lyrics said incorrect things, like for example, "Zamba del Chaguanco Herido." First, chaguanco is an insulting term within the Guaraní language. It is like saying stupid.

Argentine anthropologist Adelina María Toro notes that the name chaguanco was imposed on the Guaraní when they were forced into labor in the sugar factories. Thus, she concludes, that the term chaguanco reflects White prejudice as well as an attempt to transform the Guaraní into an alienated workforce by stripping them of their Indigenous identity (María Toro 2012: 12).

Chaguanco, along with *mataco*, are terms that Argentines commonly use to refer to Indigenous groups. These terms are not always used in a pejorative manner. In fact, there is a famous folkloric group that proudly calls itself Los Matacos in

reference to their rural roots in the Chaco region. It is also worth noting that one of Mercedes Sosa's releases in 1966 on the LP *Hermano* (Brother), which ethnomusicologists Carlos Molinero and Pablo Vila call a "social," meaning social protest song, was "Zamba del Chaguanco Herido" (2014: 208). Despite this proclivity, most people I spoke with who position themselves in defense of Indigenous peoples, including Esquivel and Contreras, take umbrage at terms like chaguanco and mataco.

As Esquivel explained, the composer did not necessarily use this term out of malice, yet it still reflects his ignorance about Guaraní culture.

<p><i>Yo sé que el autor no tenía el ánimo de decir idiota a un indio pero usaba un término despectivo para nombrarlos. Lo hizo desde lo desconocimiento. Muchos criollos tratan de hablar del indio, pero no habla desde lo de conocimiento (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).</i></p>	<p>I know that the composer wasn't trying to call an Indian an idiot, but he used an insulting term to refer to them. He did this from a place of ignorance. Many criollos try to talk about Indians, but they do it from a place of ignorance.</p>
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One would hope that a composer who wanted to write about a particular ethnic group would make an effort to become better informed. Even more troubling is the fact that this composer was recognizing the existence of Indigenous people in Argentina, but this recognition may be more detrimental than helpful to an Indigenous cause.

Thus, for Esquivel, there was an apparent need to not only create music that accurately portrayed Indigenous communities, but that also educated people about this part of their Argentine culture. This education was intended to inspire all

listeners; the general public would learn about Indigenous cultures, and those within Indigenous communities from which Esquivel came would see the value of their own music and work for its preservation and revitalization.

En las comunidades si cantaban canciones de los abuelos, pero la mayoría eran canciones de la cuna que esos sobre viven en general por la transmisión oral. Entonces sobreviven de las abuelas a las nietas a las hijas, la mayoría eran canciones de cuna. Entonces era como necesaria dar a conocer a las comunidades a las leyendas a las tradiciones Y no solamente cantar canciones de la cuna Y dar a conocer al público en general (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

In the communities, they sang songs from the elders, but the majority were lullabies that generally survive through oral transmission. And so, they are passed from grandparent to grandchildren, to children, but most are lullabies. So, it was necessary for the communities to get to know their stories and traditions, not only lullabies. And it was important for the general public too.

In addition to creating the band as an Indigenous-rock hybrid, Esquivel also initially planned for Sumaimana to be an all-female group. In her eyes, the goal was to create a female version of the popular Bolivian band Los Kjarkas.¹¹⁷ However, she found this impossible, since the male partners or family members of the female musicians she recruited were against the idea that their wives/girlfriends/sisters should practice long hours or perform in public. Since commitment and solidarity were difficult to foster, the all-female project failed. However, it was during this time that Esquivel met Carlos Contreras, who she hired as a musical arranger, and with whom she eventually formed Sumaimana.

¹¹⁷ With few exceptions, the groups I saw in Argentina were male dominated; therefore, an all-female Sumaimana would have been revolutionary.

Carlos Contreras grew up in a town called Mosconi, in Salta province which borders on an area where a number of different Indigenous communities are located. His grandmother was from Bolivia and spoke Aymara, but Contreras remembers little about her other than her appearance, which he describes as “*tenía dos trenzas largas y ojos achinitos, bien Andina*” (she had two long braids and squinty eyes, very Andean).¹¹⁸ Like Esquivel, Contreras was taught to only recognize his White heritage because being Indigenous opened a person up to discrimination.

No fue bueno ser indio ahí en ese momento y para que no se agreguen, no te discrimen, tenías que ser blanco. Entonces el idioma no me enseñó. Mi abuela materna hablaba Aymara (Contreras, Carlos. Personal Interview. February 2016).

It wasn't good to be Indian in that moment, and in order for them not to count you, to not discriminate against you, you had to be White. So, they didn't teach me the language. My maternal grandmother spoke Aymara.

Thus, throughout his childhood and adolescence, Contreras identified as criollo. It was not until age twenty-nine when he met Esquivel that he began to claim his Andean, or what he describes as Kolla, identity. Contreras describes his meeting Esquivel as a pivotal moment in his life because it was she who encouraged him to recognize and be proud of his Indigenous ancestry. The two musicians did not meet until they were in their late twenties, but they grew up in relative proximity, just one town over from the other. Thus, they were both exposed to Indigenous cultures in their childhoods, but to different degrees.

¹¹⁸Ojos Chinitos literally translates as Chinese eyes, which Argentines mean as small or squinty eyes. It is a feature that they use when describing people from the Andes and to Contreras, this was a mark of pride because it marked his grandmother as Indigenous.

When he met Esquivel, Contreras did not play Indigenous music, but rather folklore, rock, and cumbia. Contreras had been playing folklore since age nine, when his father taught him to play the guitar and took him to all the local guitarreadas. Contreras learned the latter music when he joined various cumbia and rock bands in high school. Later still, after moving to Salta Capital at twenty-three years of age, he taught himself electric bass and also how to read and write music. In Salta, Contreras played folkloric music professionally with the band *Los Guitarreros*, with whom he had a nightly gig for three years in Salta's most famous *peña*, *El Balderamma*.¹¹⁹

As he became more aware of his Indigenous heritage, Contreras used music as a vehicle to explore this facet of his identity, and he moved away from playing cumbia and folkloric music. Instead, he found himself returning to his roots and having a new appreciation of the music he was exposed to throughout his childhood and adolescence. When I asked him if he had played this music as a child, he said that it was forbidden, that his parents told him it was the devil's music. It was only during Carnival, when the members of the Indigenous communities would come to Mosconi to compete in the Carnival parades, that Contreras was allowed to partake in the revelry. It was then that he was exposed to genres such as *pimpim*, *vidala comparsera* and *toba* (Contreras, Carlos. Personal Interview. February 2016).

¹¹⁹ This *peña* is the subject of a famous folkloric song called "El Balderrama." This song helped put Salta on the map as a hub of folkloric culture.

Years later in Salta, with Esquivel, Contreras began exploring these genres and using them to compose. As he explained, these rhythms from the north were in his blood, and when, for example, he picked up his guitar to play a pimpim for a composition with Esquivel, it came naturally to him.

Crecí con los corsos y vi pasar las comparsas con estos gigantescos tambores tumbadoras. (Bueno, yo era pequeño, así que me parecían gigantescos), y también los grupos pimpim. Y cuando conocí a Valeria, nos juntamos con esta música.
(Contreras, Carlos. Personal Interview. February 2016)

I grew up with the *corsos* and I saw the *comparsas* pass by with these gigantic *tumbadora* drums. (Well, I was little, so they looked gigantic to me), and also the pimpim groups. And when I met Valeria, we came together with this music.

Today, Carlos Contreras is the guitarist and primary arranger of Sumaimana. He also co-composes most of the songs with Esquivel.

Esquivel and Contreras are the driving force of the group. They compose the majority of the songs, and train new band members. In addition, Esquivel and Contreras are the band members who are the most committed to the cause of Indigenous awareness, in great part because of where they grew up and the personal connections they have to these regions where many Indigenous communities are located. The other band members grew up in the city of Salta and do not self-identify as Indigenous.

However, Sumaimana is run in an egalitarian fashion, in which all band members have equal input and creative license. Therefore, each member brings his/her unique perspective and contribution. Hernan Bass, the electric guitarist, studied folkloric music and dance growing up. He plays in several rock bands and

has an impressive knowledge of musicians across genres from heavy metal and jazz to American pop. Laura Caceres is a percussionist and has studied everything from classical timpani to West African drumming. Martin Antonetti studied primarily Andean instruments including charango, quena, and zamponas. Gonzalez Delgado, the bassist, is also a luthier and has constructed many of the Indigenous percussion instruments that Sumaimana uses.

Musical Transmission

Prior to joining Sumaimana, Bass, Caceres, Antonetti, and Delgado had never heard or played some of the Indigenous genres such as pimpim or danza toba that Esquivel and Contreras had been exposed to from childhood. This meant that each member had to be taught how to play these styles of music, a process that continues to this day as members leave and new ones join. This of course requires Esquivel and Contreras to work diligently with new members until they have grasped the material. Given this expenditure of time and energy on her part, I asked Esquivel why she did not simply work with musicians who were already versed in this Indigenous repertoire. She explained that it was not an intentional choice for Sumaimana to be composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous musicians, but it was very difficult to find people from the region where she grew up who were both interested and able to join Sumaimana.

*Es muy difícil que un hombre Guaraní
haga música Andina, Wichi, Toba. Es
difícil sacar de una comunidad alguien*

It is rare that a Guaraní man plays
Andean, Wichi, and Toba music
It is difficult to find someone in an.

que se dedique a esa porque la mayoría tiene que trabajar (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015). (Indigenous) community who dedicates themselves to playing music because most people have to work.

In this quote, Esquivel highlights two important issues. First, Sumaimana plays a wide range of genres. Therefore, even if one member was from a Guaraní community and could play pimpim, he/she would most likely not play all of the other genres, and Esquivel or Contreras would have to teach him/her anyway. Second, economic opportunity, or the leisure to dedicate a significant amount of time to honing their musical craft, continues to be a barrier for Indigenous musicians.

Esquivel connects lack of opportunity to a non-artistic mentality and suggests that another reason that it is difficult for Sumaimana to incorporate people from Indigenous communities is that Indigenous people do not consider themselves to be artists.

Hay muy pocas artistas en pueblos originarios por cuestiones económicas, no hay, no hay pintores, la mayoría son artesanos, No hay gente que hace arte, o teatro, solo para estas fiestas y nada más, una celebración, pero la mayoría trabajan en el campo...No tienen la mentalidad artística porque tampoco la ceremonia donde ellos tocan sus instrumentos es artística, con músicos o las músicas como algo artístico (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

There are very few artists in Indigenous communities due to economic reasons. There are none, there are no painters...the majority are artisans. There are not people who do art or theatre, only for events and nothing else, a celebration, but the majority work in the fields...They do not have an artistic mentality because the ceremony where they play their instruments is not artistic, with musicians or in which music is something artistic.

In her answer, Esquivel is drawing a sharp and questionable binary between artists, who do art for art's sake, and artisans, who do art only as part of a community activity. This bifurcation further maps onto a contested distinction between low and high art (Adorno 2001:3). Her statement that Indigenous people “do not have an artistic mentality” sounds patronizing and is perplexing, given her desire to disseminate Indigenous genres, not to mention her own subject position as part Guaraní. I concede that Esquivel's position can be contradictory, and as I will explore later in this chapter, her definitions of Indigenous identity can be narrow in certain aspects.

At the same time, Esquivel is also highlighting her own privileged position in which she has been able to obtain a life outside of the community and dedicate her energy to creating music with the goal of profiting and becoming a professional. Thus, she surmises that lack of opportunity for her Indigenous friends has caused them to not pursue such goals and further, to deny their musical potential.

La gente que conozco de acá que son del norte y que son músicos tienen una negación a ser músico. Y los que quieren hacer música que conocí, como mi amigo Elio, por ejemplo, tienen que trabajar (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

The people I know from there, from the North, who are musicians have a denial about being musicians. And those who want to make music, like my friend Elio for example, have to work.

Of course, just because they are dedicated musicians does not mean that Sumaimana members can survive solely on their “artistic mentalities.” To the contrary, being in the band is challenging. First, popular preference for folkloric

music among most Salteños means that the music Sumaimana plays is not very marketable in Salta. To compound this, the band members are very particular about the gigs they accept. While this selectivity may be rooted in a strong ideological commitment, it also means that band members cannot count on Sumaimana for a stable income. Indeed, all of the members hold additional jobs and most play in other bands.

At the time of my research, Bass and Contreras taught guitar and bass privately. Caceres was a high school music teacher and Antonetti worked full time as a gas electrician. Esquivel split her time between promoting the band and taking care of her five-year old son. She also was helping her partner, Mario, to manage a hotel in Jujuy. In addition to holding day jobs, all of Sumaimana's members, except for Esquivel and Contreras, play in multiple musical groups. For all the members of Sumaimana, then, it was necessary to balance artistic endeavors with more pragmatic ones. However, despite its challenges, this position was at least a possibility for them, while for Esquivel's Indigenous friends it was simply not an option.

Given little opportunity for advancement or a stable income, it is worth questioning why the members put in the time and effort they do to learn their parts and attend rehearsals on a regular basis. When I asked them about this, both Caceres and Gonzalo said that being in the band was about more than a musical experience; rather, it was about exposing themselves to new ideas and new sonic experimentation. Even more than this, being in Sumaimana was about reclaiming a

particular Argentine identity, one that embraces rather than denies a shared Indigenous heritage. Indeed, for Cáceres, the first time she realized that Indigenous people were present in Argentina and were more than a relic of the past, as she had been taught in school, was when she joined the group.

Nunca olvidaré la primera vez que jugamos con Sumaimana, que Valeria dijo allí en el escenario que los libros de historia hablan de cómo vivían los indígenas: que vivían de esta manera, que comían esas cosas, como si fueran cosas del pasado que ya no existe. Y, yo también, hasta hace poco tiempo, pensé en ellos como un concepto distante. Y ahora me doy cuenta de que no, que son seres vivos, que continúan, que continúan cumpliendo una función social, una función para manifestar cosas que suceden en la vida cotidiana (Cáceres, Laura. Personal Interview. July 5, 2015).

I will never forget the first time that we played with Sumaimana, that Valeria said there on stage that the history books talk about how the Indigenous[people] lived: that they lived in this way, that they ate these things, as if they were all things of the past that no longer exist. And, I also, until a short time ago, thought of them as a distant concept. And I realize now that no, they are living things, that continue, that continue serving a social function, a function to manifest things that happen in daily life.

Cáceres' statement that until recently she had thought of Indigenous people in Argentina as a thing of the past is surprising, but I often heard similar statements from other people. Thus, the quote exemplifies the important work that Sumaimana is doing by educating people, including their own band members, about Indigenous cultures in Argentina.

Nonetheless, turnover rate is high. Between when I met Sumaimana in 2014 and the last time I saw them perform in December 2016, the band underwent three shifts in personnel, with only Bass, Contreras, and Esquivel remaining from the original group. Furthermore, soon after I returned from my last visit to Argentina, I found out that Esquivel and Contreras had moved to Jujuy and were running a peña

called La Wiphala. This change, which occurred for economic reasons, could mean the end of Sumaimana. However, it is more likely that it is simply the next shift in the band's long history of transformations and member turnover. Indeed, as long as Esquivel and Contreras, the founding members and main composers, remain, Sumaimana will continue in some fashion.

Repertoire and Instruments

Sumaimana performs Indigenous hybrid sounds, yet members do not necessarily identify as solely Indigenous and thus do not see a supposed "pure" Indigenous ancestry as a prerequisite to express an Indigenous position. In this respect, the members are creating an "intentional hybrid" (Bakhtin 1981:360), and have, as Oliart puts it, "developed a very articulate narrative about what they do and why they do it" (2014:179). Further, like Uchpa, the Peruvian Quechua rock and blues band that Oliart is describing, Sumaimana's "authority and authenticity derive from their own biographies and their ownership of the band" (2014:195-196).

Rather like Uchpa, who emphasize their non-Indigenous identification, Sumaimana have "taken advantage of the malleability of rock and roll as a genre" and used their songs as a "space to perform particular negotiations around their relationship with Indigenous cultures" and Argentine mainstream society (2014: 175).

To perform this negotiation and create a unique sonic experience, Sumaimana relies on a number of instruments and performs a range of styles, from those that are well known in Argentina, such as huayños and *caporales*, to less-

popular genres like *pimpim*, *canCIÓN wichi*, *chuntunquis*, and *vidala comparsas*. Members combine these styles with Western harmonies and rock power chords. The members play a variety of instruments, some of which are standard in rock music, like the electric guitar, acoustic guitar, and electric bass, or in Andean conjuntos, such as the *charango*, *quena*, and *siku*. They also incorporate a wide variety of hand percussion from *chajchas* (shakers made of goat hooves that are played throughout the Andes). In addition to these instruments, all of which are fairly common in Salta, individual songs also showcase the *angua guazu* (a drum from the Guaraní community), an *erque* (the long wind instrument previously discussed), a *pinkullo* or *mbiri* (a small pentatonic flute played in *pimpim*), and—most uniquely—a *trompe* (a Wichi mouth harp).¹²⁰

The *trompe*, is known around the world by many names including the jaw harp and Jew's harp. Originally a European instrument, the jaw harp has been adapted by many Indigenous groups throughout Argentina, particularly the Wichi and the Chorote from the Chaco region and the Mapuche from Patagonia. The Wichi refer to this instrument by many names including *trompa*, *tropa*, *sadumpa*, *el birimbao* and *guimbardo* (Locatelli de PÉrgamo 2000: 23).

Argentine musicologist Ruben Pérez writes that criollos used to trade these instruments for skins and feathers, and that they would increase incentive for trade

¹²⁰ Although the mouth harp is played throughout the world, Sumaimana uses it as a substitute for a Wichi instrument that is also played by vibrating the instrument with the mouth (Pérez Bugallo 2008 107-109).

by saying that these instruments could attract sexual prowess to the player (2008: 107). In this manner, the trompe, was adopted by various Indigenous groups and became part of their instrumentation (ibid). It is also played by the Guaraní who call it *yapínáj* (mosquito), *and* *tsonáj* (hummingbird), and the Chorote, who call it *séli past* (voice of the bird) (ibid).

A small metal instrument about three to four inches long, and shaped like a rounded triangle, the trompe is played by lightly biting on the main part of the instrument, while holding the frame against one's cheek and plucking the metal prong that sticks out on the other end. The sound this creates is a rhythmic vibration, and depending on the size of the trompe, the pitch may be higher or lower. While the trompe may be of European derivation, it has undoubtedly become part of Indigenous instrumentation in Argentina. Furthermore, it is not an instrument commonly played outside of this context. Indeed, the only time I saw this instrument being played was in Sumaimana performances. As such, Sumaimana uses the trompe to index an Indigenous identity.

Another salient characteristic of Sumaimana is that they sing in Wichi and Guaraní, two Indigenous languages that are seldom spoken in Salta Capital except in specifically Indigenous institutions like the aforementioned IPPIS. Indeed, Sumaimana was the only group I ever heard in Salta singing in a language other than Spanish (the national language) or Quechua (included in Andean repertoire).

Finally, in accordance with their carefully crafted approach, Sumaimana members take care that the instruments they play in each song are those that would normally be played in that particular genre. They explain the use of these instruments, as well as the origins of the music they play, when they perform live. In the following section, I turn to these elements of Sumaimana's repertoire as well as provide an analysis of some of their individual songs.

Sumaimana is not the only group in Argentina, or even in Salta, that uses music to foster Indigenous awareness. To the contrary, I saw many musicians who proudly displayed the wiphala (the flag of Indigenous solidarity) or made reference to first peoples in their songs and speeches. Indeed, before I saw Sumaimana perform, I had heard many musicians at Indigenous-solidarity events play Andean genres like huayños and carnavalitos, and use instruments including quenenas, sikus, *charangos*, and bombos, which are all part of a standard Andean ensemble.

However, what makes Sumaimana unique, and what drew me to them, is that they are one of the only bands to play musical styles and instruments from Indigenous groups that are not part of the popular Andean repertoire. One of these unusual styles is the vidala comparsera. A vidala comparsera, also known as a vidalita del carnaval and vidalita del pujllay (Carnival), combines a traditional vidala, a melancholic melody accompanied by guitar and sung in a hexasyllabic quatrain verse form, with the $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm played by the comparsas (Bugallo 188: 121; Aretz 1952: 119-135; Rossi 1973: 52). Usually sung in unison by group processions, a vidalita comparsera is a lively song style that is popular throughout the northwest,

and has extended into the southern areas of the pampas (Luis Goyena 2000: 38-39). Vidalas Comparseras are sung by the *comparsas de los indios* (Indian parade groups) during Carnival parade competitions (Bugallo 1988: 13-136). The vidala comparsera is a style that is iconic of the Argentine northwest.

Even more obscure styles that Sumaimana plays include pimpim, canción wichi, and danza toba, which originate, respectively, among the Guaraní, Wichi, and Toba communities that are all found in Northern region from which Esquivel and Contreras hail. Pimpim is primarily a rhythmic genre; songs consist of rapid tempo drumming and a short pentatonic melody played on a small flute called a *pinkullo*. A pinkullo is a flute made of sugar cane that has six holes (Luis Goyena 2000: 52.)¹²¹ While pimpim is widely played in the northern regions of Salta province, the areas of Mosconi, Tartagal, and Oran, it is seldom heard in Salta Capital.

All Sumaimana songs are original compositions, created primarily by Valeria Esquivel and Carlos Contreras, who generally begin with a specific genre or rhythm and then build on top of this. Each song is carefully composed in such a way that the musical style matches the lyrical content or the theme of the piece. This creates a semiotic relationship in which the latter evokes the former and vice versa. For example, two songs that talk about people from the region of Salta and Tucuman, “En la tierra calchaqui” and “Pal’ carnival,” are vidalas comparseras, while songs that paint a picture of the pre-Andes region of Jujuy, like “El Viejo Erkeró” or others that

¹²¹ Pinkullo is a name that is given to many different kinds of flutes found in Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru. For example, Rubén Pérez Bugallo explains that in Santiago del Estero in the 1400s, children created pinkullos that were small ocarinas made from baked clay (2008: 70-71).

are situated in Peru, such as “Volvimos Y Somos Millones” are huayños. I will explain this in further detail later in this chapter.

In addition to these less popular genres, Sumaimana also play musics that are ubiquitous in Salta like huayños and caporales. However, the manner in which they perform these popular genres, speaks to their intentionality as they make sure to attribute proper ownership to the communities from which these musics originate. One example of this is their performance of sayas and caporales. Neither of these genres are Indigenous; however, a brief discussion of them is justified in order to demonstrate Sumaimana’s commitment to musical accuracy and their efforts to redress misconceptions about music in general.

When Sumaimana plays caporales, they make a point of distinguishing between caporales and sayas. This is notable, as it is common throughout Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina to conflate these genres (Templeman 1998: 440-442; Mendoza 2000: 211; Céspedes 1993). Anthropologist Robert Templeman’s research on Afro-Bolivian music elucidates the difference. Sayas, from the region of Yungas, La Paz, are song and dance genres that are characterized by polyrhythms, which are played in an eight, two sixteenths rhythm ostinato. Instruments include an array of drums of various sizes and pitches, a bamboo scraper, and bells tied around the legs of lead dancers. Vocalists sing verses made up of eight-syllable couplets and perform in a call and response style (Templeman: 1998). Saya is attributed to African-Bolivians, who were descendants of African slaves brought to Bolivia during Spanish colonization. Africans were thought to be stronger and more resilient than

Indigenous people, and so the Spanish imported them to work in the silver mines and sugar cane plantations.

Caporales are traditionally played by brass bands, although today they are part of a Latin pop repertoire and include electric instruments like electric guitar and drum machines. The dance, el caporal (the slave foreman,) is danced in large groups of females who wear short skirts, high heels, sequined shirts and hats, and males who perform with whips and bells that resound with each step and jump (ibid).

The tendency to call a caporal a saya is significant as it inverts the power dynamics of this genre and the way that it has been used as a means of revitalizing an African-Bolivian culture and identity. Since the late 1970s, Black Bolivians in the department of La Paz have been recovering saya along with *zamba*, *la cueca negra* (*the Black cueca*), and *mauchi*, as inherently African traditions. Saya, which was traditionally used for the transmission of oral history and as festive dance music for their village celebrations has become the collective voice and symbol of what Afro-Bolivians call *Movimiento Negro* (Black Movement) (Templeman: 1998). Caporal, on the other hand, is an imitation of a Black colonial slave overseer. In highlighting caporales over sayas, people are in essence celebrating the enslavement of the African people in Bolivia and obscuring their resistance to mestizaje and blanqueamiento (ibid).

While caporales are hugely popular in Argentina, most people refer to them interchangeably and do not know to distinguish one from the other. Caporal

rhythms have even been codified as *saya* by recordings of professional folkloric groups like Los Kjarkas (Bigenho 2002: 41).

It is significant then that Sumaimana makes a point of distinguishing between the two genres. However, as Esquivel pointed out, this distinction is not as simple as saying Black bodies perform *sayas* and mestizo ones perform *caporales*. Rather again, it is about the power dynamics implicit in these representations.

El caporal es lo que somete al negro, el empleado que somete al indio, al negro, en las plantaciones. A veces el mismo caporal era negro. Los cascabeles imitan a las cadenas. Antes en las primeras coreografías el caporal tenía un chiquote (un látigo) y no tenía cascabeles. Los cascabeles tenían los otros bailarines porque eran los negros que llevaba el brillo, que llevaban las cadenas. Entonces el caporal iba en la danza e iba con su chiquote, sometiendo a los otros bailarines, de una manera coreográfica por su puesto. Entonces, los otros iban con los cascabeles que simulaban el ruido de las cadenas. Hoy por hoy el caporal tiene el cascabel, pero eso ha ido cambiando (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview. December 20, 2015).

The caporal is the one who overpowers the black, the employee who overpowers the Indian, the Black on the plantations. Sometimes the caporal himself was black. The bells (on their boots) imitate the slave-chains. In the first choreographies, the caporal had a whip and did not have bells. Other dancers had bells because the blacks were the ones who wore the shiny things, the chains. So, the caporal danced with his whip, subduing the other dancers, in a choreographic manner of course. Then, the others had their bells that simulated the sound of the chains. Today the caporal wears bells, but this has changed over time.

It is significant then that Sumaimana makes a point of distinguishing between the two genres. However, as Esquivel pointed out, this distinction is not as simple as saying Black bodies perform *sayas* and mestizo ones perform *caporales*. Rather again, it is about the power dynamics implicit in these representations.

Esquivel's knowledge on this subject speaks to Sumaimana's informed position as

well as to an intentional use of vocabulary or musical terminology. Through making a concerted effort to correctly identify the genre both in live performances and in the liner notes of their CD, Sumaimana is again engaging in a project of public education to re-emphasize the role that sayas (and not caporales) play in Afro-Bolivian recognition.

It is important to clarify that Sumaimana's goal is not to collect an unadulterated Indigenous sound and transplant it into an urban setting for posterity's sake, as would, say, an ethnomusicologist like myself. Rather, as stated in their mission statement, members aim to entice and familiarize listeners with the sounds of ancient but extant cultures, by constructing a sound that is both different and easily recognizable.

Thus, Esquivel faithfully reproduces genres styles and does not mix instruments by playing, for example, Wichi instruments in Andean huayños.

Lo que yo hago es respeto el ritmo, la etnia, y el instrumento, pero le pongo letra. Hago una canción sobre este estilo... "El carnaval comenzó" que es un huayño que habla del Carnaval de la quebrada. Obviamente le respeté la zona y puse huayño. No le puse ritmo de pimpim; le puse huayño. Y así la idea siempre va a ser difundir los estilos en base de una necesidad que tiene, el pueblo originario de mostrar su costumbre (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

What I do is I respect the rhythm, the ethnic group, and the instrument... "El Carnaval comenzó" is a huayño about the Carnival of the Quebrada. Obviously, I paid attention to the region and I put it as a huayño. I did not put it as a pimpim; I made it a huayño. And like this the idea will always be to develop the styles based on the necessity that each Indigenous community has to display their tradition.

She also uses lyrics to describe an aspect of the culture whose music she is playing.

Cuando dijeron, ay el pimpim necesitamos que hable de nosotros, salió la canción de pimpim que habla de la fiesta de arête (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

When they said, we need a *pimpim* that tells our story, a *pimpim* song came out about the arête celebration.

At the same time, Esquivel uses creative license to modify certain characteristics of these genres, such as, for example, adding lyrics to traditionally instrumental pieces. As she explains, this was part of her initial goal, which was to compose music to which young Indigenous people could relate.

Pero yo pongo la letra. Poner la letra, este no surge de mí. Surge de un pedido de los jóvenes. Me decían “nosotros no queremos cantar “hay, yay, yay”. La cumbia tiene una letra de amor o de cualquier otra cosa que nos identifica. Entonces yo utilicé ese “hay, yay, yay” y le puse otra letra. Porque eso es una necesidad que surge de los jóvenes. A los mayores no le puede parecer, pero yo creo que es una necesidad (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview: December 20, 2015).

But I add lyrics. Adding lyrics, this was not my idea. This came from a request from the young people. They told me, “We do not want to sing “hay yay, yay.”¹²² Cumbia has lyrics about love or any other thing that we identify with. So, I used this “ha, yay, yay” and I added other words. Because this is a need that comes from the young people. The elders do not like this, but I believe it is necessary.

Since their repertoire includes genres that are not popular in Argentina, it falls to Sumaimana members to educate their listeners about these musics. They do this in part, by accurately labeling genres on their CD, as in the caporal example mentioned above. However, an even greater opportunity arises for Sumaimana to foster Indigenous awareness in their live performances.

¹²² This refers to vocables.

Performance

Sumaimana members not only introduce their listeners to Indigenous styles, but they also educate them about the cultures from which these musics derive. They achieve this through explaining about the cultures in their concerts and/or through composing lyrics that reflect the cultural context in which these musics would traditionally be played. For example, the song “Wet lanam lathat,” which in Quichua means “se que volveras” (I know you will return), is a love song, so the lyrics themselves do not reflect any particular cultural or ethnic identity. Yet, when she performs this piece, which is a canción Wichi, Esquivel makes a point of explaining about the use of the Wichi language, and of the *trompe* instrument.

Esquivel also tells audience members about the Wichi people and mentions some of the communities that she is familiar with in the Northern Argentine region. Finally, she acknowledges, both in live performances and in the CD credits, the collaboration of her Wichi friend Elio Fernandes, who helped her adapt the Wichi lyrics to a non-Wichi melody. Esquivel explained to me that she worked side by side with Fernandes to make the Wichi lyrics fit with a popular music aesthetic through modifying the Wichi pronunciation. For example, she intentionally toned down the nasal pronunciation on certain words to make them copasetic with Western harmonics and with her personal breathy tone and singing style. This adaptation is also key to the way that Sumaimana, as an intentional hybrid, endeavors to make their music appealing to a broad audience.

“Wet lanan latat” alternates between unfamiliar, autochthonous sounds and familiar Western harmonies. It begins with a layered entrance of three separate *trompes* that play in different tones and beats. Again, since trompes are not common instruments in Argentina, this creates a sonically unfamiliar entrance. However, the ear is soon soothed with an easy guitar riff and some electric bass chords until a few bars later when all band members join in a “hey, ya, hay, ya” chant, sounding out vocables that bring the listener back to an unfamiliar sound. Esquivel then begins her high-pitched and breathy melody, which despite being in a noticeably distinct language, is sung in diatonic Western tonalities.

In this way, Sumaimana introduces new sounds into a familiar setting and encourages audience members to listen to some elements of Indigenous Wichí music. As the quote mentioned earlier from percussionist Caceres shows, for many Argentines who have either not heard of Wichí people or who learned about them as people of the past or even as primitive beings, this may be one of the first settings that provides a realistic and positive assessment of Wichí people.

Dress

In general, in their concerts Sumaimana does not rely on dress or extra-musical theatrics to convey an Indigenous identity. In many ways, they look like a typical rock band in jeans and t-shirts. The male members usually wear t-shirts and jeans. In larger, more professional concerts, male members may wear linen shirts, similar to Cuban *guayaberas* (dress shirts), embroidered with *aguayo* cloth (Andean

textiles). The female members normally dress in slightly more elegant attire. Esquivel, who habitually wears her hair in a braid, lets it flow, long and loose, down her back when she performs; she also wears long feather earrings. Finally, Esquivel tends to wrap a wiphala around her microphone. However, apart from these subtle symbols of to an Indigenous style, Sumaimana's appearance gives little indication as to what their sound will be like. In other words, they do not put their Indigenous identity on display. Indeed, even when Esquivel is on stage and is describing her knowledge of Wichi, Guaraní, and the other Indigenous communities, she does not mention her own upbringing in those settings. Indeed, Esquivel's subject position within her own compositions switches between one of ownership or self-identification to one of distance. I will explore this in more detail below.

Sometimes, Sumaimana will invite guest artists on stage, who bring their own performances of indigeneity. For example, in live renditions of the song "Pa'l Carnaval" (discussed later in this chapter), the band often invites the *comparsa Huayra* (see chapter 4) onto the stage with them. In these moments, the show changes dramatically as *Huayra* members march onstage, playing painted *tumbadoras* (drums) and garbed in full regalia: women dancers dressed as Kollas; *cajeros* (*caja players*) with brightly-colored plumed headdresses; and *diablos* (devils) with sparkly masks and devil horns. The only time that I saw Sumaimana members themselves dress in an Indigenous fashion was for the opening of their CD release concert. *Teatro de Huerta, Salta, May 18, 2015,*

The stage is set. The audience is quiet and expectant. A voice comes over the loudspeaker, "Please welcome Sumaimana," and everyone claps. The lights come up to reveal eight musicians with tall wooden masks on their heads. These masks are from the Guaraní people and are used in pimpim ceremonies. Each mask represents a different jungle animal from the North of Salta. Contreras wears the great head of a lion; his long black hair pokes out in crazy angles from beneath the wooden mask and gives him the appearance of an actual lion with an unruly mane. Esquivel, tall and slender, has a bird mask on her head; it looks like a condor. The others wear masks of black and yellow spotted jaguars and other types of birds. Contreras begins the piece by sounding out the guitar riff on closed strings so that only the rhythm comes through. Caceres joins in on hand percussion. The musicians are highly animated and begin to jump around and call out in short, high cries (hi, hi, hi). They utter shouts of "vamos al arête" (let's go to the party) as they invite listeners to the pimpim celebration. After the introductory bars, Antonetti shifts his mask from his face to the top of his head and, stepping up to the microphone, begins the short pentatonic riff of the pinkullo (flute). A moment later, Esquivel follows suit, and removes her mask in order to begin singing. The other band members keep their masks on for the duration of the song. After the final notes of "En la distancia" echo away, everyone removes his/her mask. Valeria steps up to the microphone and explains to the audience that the previous song is based on a traditional rhythm and ceremony from the Guaraní communities in Northern Salta province and that the masks are a part of this ceremony, el arête guazu.

This show was an important one for the group, and thus interesting that they chose to alter their performance aesthetics to include visuals such as masks and a screen with a slideshow of Indigenous symbols. In general, however, Sumaimana members use their music more than their appearance to make tangible references to Indigenous cultures and Indigenous resistance. In the following section, I turn to that music and provide a more detailed analysis of several of Sumaimana's songs, highlighting the ways that they convey Indigenous awareness.

Song Interpretations

To date, Sumaimana has released two CDs: *Senales de Humo (Smoke Signals)* in 2007, and *Volvimos y Somos Millones (We will return in the thousands)* in 2015. According to Esquivel, the band has improved drastically since the release of their first album and, while I was given multiple copies of *Volvimos y Somos Millones*, I was unable to obtain a copy of *Senales de Humo*; indeed, I have never even heard this album. I am aware that the first CD includes an Andean *chuntunqui* piece as well as a Mapuche *loncomeo*, but again, I have never personally heard Sumaimana play either of these genres. For this reason, my analysis will focus on the songs in *Volvimos y Somos Millones*.

The album *Volvimos y Somos Millones* sends a powerful message as each song, in its own way, urges the listener to remember heroes of Indigenous resistance in Argentina, such as Juan Calchaquí,¹²³ and more broadly, throughout Latin America, such as Tupac Amaru,¹²⁴ as well as to celebrate the traditions of contemporary Indigenous peoples in urban and non-urban settings. This is done through both lyrical and musical ways. In some cases, this is subtle, while in others, the lyrics convey an obvious message of protest.

¹²³ Juan Calchaquí was the chief of Tolombón, one of the early Indigenous communities in the Calchaquí Valleys who fought against, first the Incas and then the Spanish (Bonatti and Valdez 2010: 20).

¹²⁴ Tupac Amaru, the leader of the Tupac Amaru rebellion, a Peruvian Indigenous rebellion that spread through the Andes from 1780-1783, stretching from south of Cuzco, Peru to present-day Bolivia and instigating parallel skirmishes in present-day Chile, Argentina, and Colombia (Walker 2014)

“Y En La Distancia”

One of the liveliest pieces on the album, “Y en la distancia” (And in the distance), described previously in the section on performance is a *pimpim*. *Pimpim* is a Guaraní genre that is played in a 4/4 meter, accompanied by a pentatonic (five-note) flute melody. *Pimpim*, a name that is an onomatopoeia referring to the sound of the stick hitting the drums, is normally played with two percussion instruments: the *angua retepe* (small drum) and the *angua guazu* (large drum) (Pérez Bugallo 2008: 115-118). Primarily percussive, *pimpim* is often accompanied with a pentatonic flute called a *mbubi* (Locatelli De Pergamo 2000: 27-29). This song exemplifies the way that Sumaimana uses a specific genre and lyrics to reference and make audience members more aware of a particular Indigenous culture. It is largely descriptive and celebratory; however, a close lyrical analysis also illuminates an undercurrent of Indigenous resistance.

In addition to introducing listeners to the *pimpim* genre, “Y en la distancia” contextualizes the Guaraní music through lyrics that describe an *arête guazu* (big celebration), a traditional Guaraní ceremony performed to celebrate the harvest in February or March. The song begins by placing the listener in Tartagal, where Esquivel grew up, and invites us to see the world through her memories.

<i>Crece el río en mi ser</i>	The river grows in my being
<i>Siento que sube hasta mis recuerdos</i>	I feel that it rises to my memories
<i>Casitas de barro y madera</i>	Houses of mud and wood
<i>Alla lejos en Piquirenda</i>	There far away in Piquirenda (a town)

In these lyrics, Esquivel shares her longing to be part of the arête guazu, to participate in the ceremonial practices, including the drinking of *Kayugi*, a traditional drink thought to cleanse one of evil spirits (Toro 2012); playing the pimpim rhythm on the *angua guazu* (big drum); and splashing one another with *uruku*, a plant with red nectar that is used to paint people's faces.

<i>Kayugi quisiera beber</i>	<i>Kayugi</i> I would like to drink
<i>Para limpiarme todos los males</i>	To cleanse myself of all the evils
<i>y regresar al monte ipora</i>	And return to the mountain <i>ipora</i> (a place)
<i>con mi pueblo volver a soñar</i>	With my people, begin to dream again
<i>Tocan el Anguaguazu</i>	Play the Anguaguazu (big drum)
<i>Suena para cansar tristezas</i>	Sounding to ease the sadness
<i>Uruku píntame el Corazón</i>	Uruku (traditional plant) paint my heart
<i>Que en Yacuy me espera un amor</i>	For in <i>Yacuy</i> (local village), my love awaits me

The chorus describes the way that the sounds of pimpim drumming signal to neighbors within the communities, as well as to those on the outskirts, that the arête guazu has begun.

<i>Y en la distancia se escucha un</i>	And in the distance, can be heard a
<i>pimpim,</i>	pimpim,
<i>Que canta, que llora, que baila y</i>	That sings, that cries, that dances and
<i>grita sus penas</i>	shouts out its sorrows
<i>Baila tipoy alrededor de la hoguera</i>	Dance <i>tipoy</i> around the bonfire
<i>Para que llueva, para que llueva</i>	So it will rain, so it will rain

These lyrics also highlight nostalgia and a sadness on the part of Esquivel and Contreras to have been cut off from their Indigenous roots. Esquivel shared that she was too young to participate in the arête guazu ceremony, and Contreras similarly shared that he remembers hearing the pimpim sounds as a child and being prohibited by his parents from attending.

Siempre me dijeron que estaba el diablo o era una manera para que no vaya pa' ahi. Me han criado teniéndolo miedo (Contreras, Carlos. Personal Conversation. November 1, 2015).

They (my parents) always told me that the devil was there. Or it was a way of telling me not to go there. They raised me to fear that place.

Contreras' quote again demonstrates that Sumaimana's project comes from a deep desire for Contreras and Esquivel to reclaim a facet of their identity that they were taught to fear and deny.

"Y en la distancia" concludes the same way that the arête guazu ceremony does, by throwing the masks, thought to be inhabited by *añas*, ancestral spirits, into the river. Guaraní people believe that by throwing their masks into the river they are cleansing themselves of evil spirits and sicknesses for the year to come. As Esquivel explained, the belief is that if one holds onto these masks, it will bring bad luck (María Toro 2012).

*Se va Arête guazu
Aña ya te llevan al río*

Arête guazu is over
Aña (spirit/mask) now they take you to the river

*Se va Arête guazu
Aña ya te llevan al río*

Arête guazu is over
Aña (spirit/mask) now they take you the river

The last line of the last stanza refers to a performance that occurs at the *entierro* (the burial) of the arête guazu in which two men, one dressed as a *tigre* (tiger)¹²⁵ and the other as a *toro* (bull) stage a fight in the middle of the ceremony space. The two animals fight and the tiger chases the bull around in a circle to the

¹²⁵ The direct translation for *tigre* is tiger. Of course, tigers are not native to Argentina, but people called jaguars tigers. The animal that the Guaraní people dress as in this ceremony is a jaguar as well. In every ceremony, I saw in Jacuy, Salta, the man who was the tigre was wearing a loincloth and a mask of a large cat, his otherwise naked body painted with large black spots.

accompaniment of the pimpim musicians. Finally, the tiger catches up to the bull and pounces, biting its neck and killing it.

Volverás para otro Carnaval
Y el tigre al toro vencerá
Volverás para otro carnaval
Y el tigre al toro vencerá

You will return for another carnival
And the tiger will defeat the bull
You will return for another carnival
And the tiger will defeat the bull

Sumaimana includes the repeated line about the tiger and the bull for two reasons. First, this performance concludes the arête guazu. Second, this encounter between the tiger and the bull is symbolic of the encounter between Indigenous peoples and the Spanish conquerors. The bull, an animal non-native to Argentina, represents the Spanish colonizer and the tiger (or jaguar), a native animal, represents the Indigenous people.¹²⁶

The fact that the tiger defeats the bull is a performative way of recasting or re-writing history so that the Indigenous people won the colonial confrontation. This interpretation that the tiger and bull fight represents a rewriting of history is part of popular culture in Salta, and various people—from those working in tourist agencies, to Sumaimana, Huayra, and even Guaraní people I met when I visited Yacuy, the area that Sumaimana mentions in this song, —shared with me this meaning of the tiger and bull performance.

¹²⁶ This act of using a performance to reframe the Spanish conquest is found throughout the continent. For examples about Mexico see Harris, Max. (1988) "The Return of Moctezuma: Oaxaca's "Danza De La Pluma" and New Mexico's "Danza De Los Matachines"." *TDR* 41, no. 1 and Cohen, Jeffrey H. "Danza De La Pluma: Symbols of Submission and Separation in a Mexican Fiesta." *Anthropological Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (1993): 149-58.

When I asked if this interpretation was to be taken literally or figuratively, people told me that it was both. While no one actually thought that the Indigenous groups had come out ahead, they also argued that the very fact that many Indigenous groups still existed and maintained their traditions and cultures was evidence that the Spanish had not won. This interpretation again speaks to a new way of conceptualizing the conquering of Indigenous people, by framing the very survival of Indigenous groups and customs as resistance.

For Sumaimana, their choice to include a line about this performance in their lyrics not only reflects their desire to make the song culturally accurate, but also to position themselves ideologically as defenders of indigeneity. Through repeating the line “y el tigre al toro vencerá” (and the tiger will defeat the bull), they reiterate a political mantra that Indigenous people and culture have survived and will continue doing so, or perhaps even they will conquer. The imagery also highlights the importance of the *arête guazu*, which takes place close to Carnival, as a moment of annual recognition and cultural revitalization for Guaraní people.

Pal' Carnaval

Another song in which Sumaimana matches instruments and genres to lyrical content is “Pal' Carnaval.” This song, like “Y en la distancia,” similarly conveys the message that during Carnival each year, Indigenous people or people of Indigenous descent, reclaim their heritage as an expression of resistance and cultural revitalization. This song, a *vidala comparsera*, describes the *Salteño* phenomenon of *las comparsas de los indigos*, like *Huayra*, who perform during Carnival each year.

The song begins with a reference to a strong association between comparsas and alcoholism, stemming from a long history in which comparsas engaged in heavy partying during parade competitions, and the winners and losers, spurred on by alcohol, often broke into much more serious and violent encounters after the event concluded (Angel Caseres 2008)

Pal' carnaval entonaran
Una copla negada
Con el alcohol en el alma
La comparsa cantaba

For Carnival, they will sing
A denied copla
With alcohol in the soul
The comparsa sang

However, rather than constituting a criticism of comparsas, these lyrics offer a social critique of the social, cultural, economic, and ethnic context in which they perform. The phrase “alcohol in the soul” conveys not just a passing relationship to drinking, but a sustained one in which alcohol has been used as an escape to such an extent that the practice of drinking has become integrally tied to comparsa members’ identities—a tradition passed down, as Sumaimana writes, through the soul.

The previous phrase, “a denied copla” further suggests that this substance abuse is tied to a cultural denial in two ways. First, comparsas traditionally sing coplas. Therefore, the lyric suggests that the comparsas have been silenced or prohibited from performing. However, as explored in chapter three, coplas are also thought of as Indigenous music. Therefore, when Sumaimana mentions a forgotten or denied copla, they are also highlighting the comparsas denied Indigenous ancestry. Sumaimana make this abundantly clear in the next line.

<i>Yo vengo de villa exclusión</i>	I come from the <i>villa</i> (slum) of exclusion
<i>el indio que no murió</i>	The Indian who never died
<i>traigo en mi ser monte y cerros</i>	I carry in my being mountains and hills
<i>cantando revolución!</i>	Singing revolution!

Here Sumaimana plainly states that comparsas are Indians who have been relegated to the poorer areas of Salta and excluded or forgotten, or have assimilated into larger society and learned to deny their Indigenous heritage. Esquivel explains:

<i>Las villas son lugares de migrantes pobres de otros países y de descendientes de indios pobres que vienen a la ciudad en busca de oportunidades económicas. Vos vas a la villa y no vas a ver gente blanca. Y ocupan los límites de la ciudad y la ciudad nunca les va a brindar lo que buscan y siempre van a estar ahí en ese lugar. Y por un sentido de pertenencia auto convocan, armar una comparsa de indios. Y por no saber, por eso algunos tienen esa mezcla de Maya, Azteca, Inca, Wichi, Toba, y no hay claridad. Para mí, eso es una comparsa (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview. April 5, 2015)</i>	The villas are places of poor immigrants from other countries and those descendants of poor Indians who come to the city in search of economic opportunities. You go to a villa and you will not see any White people. And they live on the outskirts of the city, and the city will never offer them what they are looking for and they will always be in this state. For some feeling of belonging they make a claim for themselves, they create an Indian comparsa. And because they do not know, some create comparsas with a mix of Maya, Aztec, Inca, Wichi, Toba, and there is no clarity. For me, this is a comparsa.
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In this quote, Esquivel expresses both admiration and sympathy for comparsas. She acknowledges that comparsa members mix together different Indigenous groups in a nebulous hodgepodge, yet she reasons that this is a result of these people having never had the opportunity to learn about their heritage as she and Contreras have. Thus, she admires the comparsa members' efforts to reclaim a lost identity. However, Esquivel also sympathizes with what she calls the "anguish" of the comparsero.

De ser una persona que está ahorrando plata todo el año para hacerse un gorro mayor, tiene un montón de gasto en hierro, en plumas que es 5 mil mango, en armar la pluma, el hierro, el brillo, todo. Y además hacer la estructura y sostenerla por el peso que tiene el gorro mayor. Los trajes, las botas, los cascabeles, armar, ir a ensayar, ir a los corsos, y que el premio es miserable. Con el premio, ni recuperan los trajes (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview. April 5, 2015).

To be a person who saves money all year in order to make a big headdress, have a ton of expenses in iron, in feathers that cost 5,000 pesos, in creating the feathers, the iron, the shiny decorations, everything. And even more so to make the structure (of the headdresses) and support that weight of the headdress. The outfits, the boots, the bells, to create all that, to practice, to go to los corsos, and then the prize is nothing. With the grand prize, they cannot even pay for their outfits

Thus, “Pal’ Carnival” is both a critique of the social difficulties of the comparsas and a call to recognize their valuable cultural contribution. Sumaimana makes it explicitly clear that Indigenous people are not extinct, but rather are waiting, not on the sidelines, but within the people themselves.

*Suenan ya tumbadoras
Para cantar
Arde la vida, la sangre tira
Cuando llama el carnaval*

Now the drums sound out
For singing
Life stings, blood pulls
When carnival calls

Sumaimana implies that this time of Carnival is a time of primordial encounter that engenders an Indian renewal.

*Pal’ carnaval encontraron
Un tiempo existencial
Es un ritual de libertad
Renace la indianidad*

Towards Carnival they will find
An existential time
It is a ritual of freedom (that)
Renews the Indianness

In these lyrics, Sumaimana continues the rewriting or re-framing of history that they used in “Y en la distancia.” Carnival is a tradition that comes from Europe and was brought by colonizers to Argentina and other parts of Latin America. It was laid atop of pre-existing Indigenous traditions and thus became a syncretic tradition

(Avenburg 2014: 16; 1991: 62). Here, however, Sumaimana has stripped Carnival of its colonial trappings, distilling it to an “existential time,” again turning on its head the narrative that a colonial culture has all but subsumed an Indigenous one.

In his study of race relations in Brazil, Abdias do Nascimento points out that characterizing the amalgamation of Catholic saints with African divinities common in Afro-Brazilian cultural practices as syncretic has led to a common misconception that they are the product of an equal relationship between African and Catholic religious traditions (1973; 1989). Rowe and Schelling observe that religious syncretism actually reveals a duality of resistance and accommodation to White civilization (1991: 124). In describing Carnival as an ancient ritual that “frees the inner Indian,” Sumaimana has inverted the power dynamic of this syncretic tradition and highlighted the resistance component while negating the accommodation to White civilization. It is as if they have drawn a thread between *comparsas* and a pre-Spanish Indigenous reality pulling them together, and thus making each more visible.

For Esquivel, the *comparsas* as well as the caporal groups who compete in the Carnival parades are in the process of searching for a lost identity.

Sí, no importa si sacan de África, de Latinoamérica igual es una búsqueda. Para mí siempre fue así desde la primera comparsa del 1940 hasta el día de hoy. Es algo que necesitan saber. Por eso la copla dice “pa’l carnaval encontraron en tiempo existencia (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview.

It doesn’t matter if they get it from Africa, from Latin America, it is always a search. For me it has always been like this, from the very first *comparsa* in 1940 to today, it is something they need to know. For this reason, the copla says “Towards carnival, they find an existential time.”

The lyrics conclude on a strong note, denouncing the nation for its historical denial of indigeneity and declaring that the seeds or embers that burn within the comparsas are embers of resistance and revolution that will not be extinguished.

*Quemando está el corazón
Rescodo de mi nación
Un fuego que no apagarán
Soy la memoria ancestral*

The heart is burning
Embers of my nation
A fire that they will not extinguish
I am the ancestral memory

The lyrics of “Pal’ carnival” describe Salteño comparsas in general, but in performance Sumaimana often includes the actual participation of Huayra. In addition to featuring them on the recorded album, Sumaimana also showcased the comparsa in their video for “Pal’ Carnival,” and includes them the band’s live performances. The video, shot by Eduardo Agüero, was filmed in Huayra’s practice space and shows Huayra members preparing for Carnival parades. Huayra was also frequently invited to perform on stage during the live performance of “Pal’ Carnaval.”

Huayra gave guest performances at Sumaimana’s shows in the *Teatro de Huerta* in Salta on May 18, 2015, and again when they performed at the Teatro Provincial on November 7, 2015. In both events, Esquivel introduced the group by speaking briefly about the tradition of comparsas in Salta and saying that Huayra was a comparsa that she highly respected. Then the members of Huayra came on, led by the women dancers dressed as Kollas and followed by the cajeros with their brightly colored plumed headdresses, the rest of the group playing tumbadoras, and finally, López, the *cacique* (leader).

Sumaimana chose to work with Huayra because this comparsa, like Sumaimana, has embraced the opportunity to foster Indigenous awareness. Esquivel explained that she was impressed with Lopez's leadership and his particular vision for the comparsa, and that this led her to collaborate with the group.

Y este sentido de pertenencia a un grupo que tiene una identificación con pueblo originario que tuvo la comparsa Huayra me llamó mucho la atención. Y no importa con que, ellos no saben a qué etnia pertenecen, los flecos que usan, los colores, las botas, o la guarda que se pusieron en el pecho. Pero saben que son del pueblo originario. Me gusto lo que Javier intentaba hacer con la comparsa que era diferente a las otras comparseras. Era una comparsa diferente, entonces decidimos hacer, hicimos un montón de presentaciones donde ellos fueron invitados y así empezamos a hacer como un trabajo en conjunto con Huayra (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal Interview. April 5, 2015).

And it grabbed my attention, this feeling of belonging to a group that identifies with *pueblos originarios* that Huayra had. And it doesn't matter with what, they don't know what ethnic group they belong to, the tassels they use, the colors, the boots, or the symbols they put on their shirts, but they know they are from Indigenous roots. I liked what Javier was trying to do with the comparsa, which was different than the other comparsas. It was a different comparsa, and so we decided, we did a bunch of presentations in which they were invited and like this, we began to create a project with Huayra.

Sumaimana has been collaborating with Huayra since their first meeting in 2008, each group inviting the other to their events. Esquivel had always wanted to create a video with Huayra and to collaborate with them on a vidala comparsera, and so Sumaimana invited Huayra to participate on the recording of "Pal' Carnival." The song opens with a recording taken from an actual comparsa performance by Huayra during Carnival. The sounds of the crowd can be heard in the background, and somewhat faintly the $\frac{3}{4}$ steady comparsa beat played on tumbadoras. More prominent are the *silbatos* (the whistles) that Lopez and the other comparsas

section leaders play. The silbatos' shrill, high pitch carries further than the singing or the drumming, and is used to keep the comparsa members together on the same beat. In true imitation then, the silbatos are also the loudest instruments heard on the Sumaimana studio recording.

After a few bars of drumming, the *locutor* (or M.C.) of the corsos can be heard announcing Huayra and saying, "*Ahí están los chicos, en homenaje a la pacha hay allá, hay allí pacha mama, pujilla pujilla. Y les acompaña a Huayra, Sumaimana.*" (Here are the group, in homage to the Pachamama (mother earth). And accompanying Huayra is Sumaimana.) At this point, the live recording fades out and is overtaken by the powerful sounds of the drums from the studio recording. The electric guitar and quena play the main melody twice until a rapid chord progression leads into the shrill silbatos, echoed by the guitar.

The song concludes as it began, with a recording of Huayra. This time, though, it is a studio recording in which Huayra and Sumaimana members sing, in an overlapping pattern, a copla in homage to Huayra's founder, Jesus Ramon Vera. The song is a quotation taken from "Vidala para mi sombra" by Julio Santos Espinosa, a Salteño poet and composer. Vera was a fan of Espinosa and often sang this verse; thus, when Sumaimana offered Huayra, the opportunity to participate in the song, López chose the following verse.

*A veces sigo a mi sombra
A veces viene detrás
Pobrecita si me muero
Mi sombra
¿Con quien va a andar?*

Sometimes I follow my shadow
Sometimes it follows me
Poor thing, if I die
My shadow
Who will it go with?

The original Espinosa song is a vidala, and as such is slow and melancholic. However, Huayra adapted the song to a vidala comparsera that has a solid $\frac{3}{4}$ beat and also sounds more upbeat and defiant. In addition to being an homage to Vera, this copla also symbolizes strong Salteño pride, since Espinosa was from Salta, as well as a greater Argentine pride because “Vidala para mi sombra” is one of the most popular songs throughout the country. Indeed, according to *SADAIC* (Society for Authors and Composers Rights), it is the third most recorded song in Argentina.¹²⁷ Thus, the quotation of the Espinosa copla in the Sumaimana song represents a sonic signification that has undergone multiple transformations in a process that Thomas Turino has called “semantic snowballing” (2008: 146).

By beginning and ending the song with a live and studio recording of Huayra, Sumaimana creates a bricolage of meaning and signifiers that transport the listener back and forth between the actual reality of being in a comparsa and a distant perspective that allows for a social critique of the comparsas’ socio-economic situation. Thus, they exemplify Stuart Hall’s description of the slippages of coding and encoding:

The meaning of a cultural form and its place or position in the cultural field is not inscribed inside its form. Nor is its position fixed once and forever.... The meaning of a cultural symbol is given in part by the social field into which it is incorporated, the practices with which it articulates and is made to resonate” (Hall 1981, 235).

¹²⁷ It is superseded by “La comparsita” and “El día que me quieras,” which are both tangos. <http://emepea.com/vidala-para-mi-sombra/>

“En la tierra Calchaquí”

While “En la distancia” and “Pal’ Carnival” reference a generalized hidden Indigenous identity, other songs refer to specific moments of Indigenous rebellion. “En la tierra Calchaquí” narrates the long battle, described in chapter one, of the Calchaqui people who lived in the Calchaqui valleys of the present-day province of Tucuman until they were defeated and forced to walk approximately 850 miles to Buenos Aires where they were relocated.

The lyrics of “En la tierra Calchaquí” are blatantly political as, in their narration of the encounter between nationalist hero de Mercado y Villacorta and the Quilmes people, Sumaimana members are completely sympathetic with the latter group. They change the historical interpretation from being the greatest accomplishment of de Mercado y Villacorta to being the greatest tragedy of the Calchaqui people of Los Quilmes, in which they were completely severed from their homeland.

Sumaimana exposes the cruelty of the Spanish who forced the Quilmeños into slave-like conditions and controlled them through cruel corporal punishment.

*Fue el botín de Guerra deportado
a la ciudad a trabajar
Por calvario de penas,
la espalda indefensa
el verdugo blanco sobre la
¡Piel negra, nunca más, ay! Nunca más
Nunca más*

They were the spoils of war, deported
to the city to work
A Calvary of suffering,
The back, defenseless against
the White executioner on the
Black skin, never again, ay!
Never again

In addition to narrating a historical encounter, Sumaimana encourages the listener to consider the wrongs that are perpetrated against the Quilmes people today

through historical accounts that 1) fail to present the conquering of the Quilmes as an act of genocide and 2) present the Quilmes people as an extinct population. They echo Costilla's assertion that the history books that proclaim Quilmeños as extinct are perpetuating lies.

<i>Y en los libros de historia</i>	And in the history book
<i>Solo mentiras, nada mas</i>	Only lies, nothing more
<i>Quilmes partió rumbo al sur con dolor</i>	Quilmes fled towards the south with pain
<i>Yacen las ruinas nada más quedo</i>	And in the ruins, nothing was left
<i>Un anciano contó toda la verdad</i>	An elder told the truth

Here, Sumaimana makes a subtle reference to the idea that some people escaped, and that only these people know the true history of the Quilmes, as narrated by an elder who "told the truth."

Attention to the musical language as well as the lyrics strengthens the reading of this song's protest message. Sumaimana has woven in numerous sonic components to signify the Indigenous struggle. One of the subtlest examples is embedded in the line in which they reference Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta's military strategy, that to uproot people is a good way to conquer them. Esquivel calls out de Mercado y Villacorta's brutal military strategy as she sings, "*¿Quién te dijo que sin patria no hay patriotismo?*" ("Who told you that without a homeland there is no patriotism?") Her rephrasing of de Mercado y Villacorta's military strategy embodied in the words "*sin patria, no hay patriotismo*" ("without a homeland, there is no patriotism") highlights the fact that the Calchaquies were subsumed under a nation state that attempted to pacify and exterminate them by

taking away their sense of belonging and their connection to the land. Thus, the Calchaquies could either surrender and relinquish their land to the Spanish or they could face cultural and physical annihilation.

While Esquivel sings these lines, Contreras and Bass quietly accompany her, singing a quote taken from the Argentine national anthem "*Oid mortales el grito sagrado, libertad, libertad, libertad,*" (Mortals! Hear the Sacred cry! Freedom, Freedom, Freedom!). This is a musical as well as a lyrical quote since the first two words (*oid mortales*) follow the actual notes of the anthem and then switch to follow the melody of the main song. By juxtaposing these two phrases, Sumaimana is highlighting the hypocrisy of the national anthem since freedom did not apply to the Indigenous peoples of Argentina, but only to Spanish colonizers and the immigrants who later arrived from Europe. May E. Bletz, in her assessment of the creation of citizenship in Argentina and Brazil, explains this contradictory position in which citizenship "requires acceding to a political fiction of equal rights that is generated by the denial of certain alternative histories in order to create the ontology of the nation" (2010: 9). In addition, omitting Indigenous peoples from the Constitution also did not recognize the sacrifices that they made in fighting for independence, since they were not included in the national project.

This line in Sumaimana's song articulates through sonic means anthropologist Claudia Briones' critique that the Argentine nation had a policy of creating internal Others through granting citizenship to European arrivals and excluding those whose presence predated the Spanish colonization (Briones 2005:

9-40). Thus, Sumaimana asks, how can a nation simultaneously encourage all its people to embrace freedom—as the next line of the anthem says, “*Oid el ruido de rotas cadenas*” (“Hear the sound of broken chains”)—when that nation has been built on the forced labor of Indigenous peoples?

Finally, Sumaimana reminds its audience that while the genocide of the Quilmes is in the past, the suffering of Indigenous people is not. Esquivel sings,

Del pasado se comprende
el presente que vivimos ayer
Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta
hoy tienen otros nombres,
pero son la misma cosa
los hombres que a mi pueblo
con ambición destrazan

We learn from the past
the present that we lived yesterday
Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta today
has other names,
but they are the same thing,
the men that greedily destroy
my people

These lyrics reiterate the idea that Indigenous people in Argentina continue to suffer from the pain of being marginalized and in many cases historically erased. As Contreras asserts, “the original de Mercado y Villacorta may be gone, but there are many more de Mercado y Villacortas that have taken his place” (Contreras, Carlos Personal Conversation. January 3, 2016).

Despite this fatalistic perspective that history will continue repeating itself and oppressors will beget more oppressors, Sumaimana, following the defiant theme of this album, also adds a moment of hope and a cry for a revolutionary spark.

*Tal vez este grito desde las tinieblas
Reclame justicia en la luz que queda
Porque hay semillas
Que están a la espera
Del malón dormido que tu alma lleva*

Perhaps this outcry from the darkness
Will reclaim justice in the remaining light
Because there are seeds
That are awaiting
The dormant rebellion that your soul carries

While it is buried in the middle of the song instead of on either bookend, the message is clear: there are people who are waiting to rise up, and justice will prevail. The subtlety of “En la tierra Calchaqui” allows listeners a different point of access and the choice to read the song as more or less political. A listener, after hearing the song for the first time, may be inclined to think that it is simply narrating a story. A more in-depth lyrical analysis could reveal a sympathetic bias and a statement that history books are full of lies. However, the most trenchant critique is embedded in the overlaying of the de Mercado y Villacorta quote with that from the Argentine national anthem. What is unclear is how many people actually notice this subtle play or can identify the insertion of the anthem, particularly because it veers quickly from the melody of the actual anthem. Therefore, a listener would have to be paying close attention to hear and recognize these words. I did not extensively interview listeners on this point, so I am not in a position to make a concrete statement about what the average Sumaimana listener hears or does not hear in this song. A more thorough discussion of listener reception in this context extends beyond the scope of this dissertation and my research. However, the inclusion of a quote overlaid by the main lyrics demonstrates a level of subtle sophistication in Sumaimana’s writing.

Lyrical Analysis and Subject Position

To conclude this section on performance and song analysis, I will discuss Sumaimana's use of pronouns in the lyrics, which reveals an interesting play with subject positioning. The lyrics in "En la tierra Calchaqui," begin by telling a story in third person. This could be construed as an impartial position. However, in the stanza about the dormant uprising and the coming justice, the vocalist directly addresses the listener "*porque hay semillas que están a la espera del malón dormido que tu alma lleva*" ("Because there are seeds that are waiting from the dormant rebellion that *your* heart carries" - emphasis mine). This seems to be a call to action for the listener. In the final line, Esquivel takes ownership of the suffering of Indigenous peoples and places herself within their struggle: "*Pero son la misma cosa los hombres que a mi pueblo con ambición destrozan*" ("But they are the same thing, the men that ambitiously destroy my people)."

In "Pa'l Carnival," Sumaimana again plays with subject position through switching from third person to first person and also through different vocal textures. Vocally, the piece is multilayered and switches between a sung vocal melody and a strong chorus, which also indicates a play with subject position. The first phrase, in which Contreras sings the first two lines of the first phrase and Esquivel joins in harmony in the second half, is sung in third person. Sumaimana is relaying a story about the comparsas explaining that they come together to drink and sing coplas.

In the next section, the subject position switches to first person with the lines, “I come from the villa (slum) of exclusion, the Indian who never died.” Through this phrase, Sumaimana is claiming ownership over the pain that they, (although this applies more to Contreras and Esquivel) together with the comparsas, have suffered from feeling excluded because of their Indigenous roots. In other words, they are aligning themselves together with the members of the comparsas. What is significant in this switch is that the vocals move from being melodic and legato to a more staccato feel like a chant. Also, this section of the song is sung exclusively by all of the male members of Sumaimana. Since Esquivel is the main vocalist throughout the album, the absence of a female singer in this part is salient. The heavier, male dominated staccato vocal quality on these lines symbolizes the comparsas, who historically have been male only groups.¹²⁸¹²⁹

In the third phrase, the song returns to a more legato and higher-pitched sound as Esquivel sings “now the drums sound out for singing.” In addition to providing a distinct timbre, this section also returns the listener to a third position perspective. The dynamics drop here, and it almost feels as though Esquivel, somewhat separated from the comparsas because she is female, is the omniscient narrator. Slowly layering in, but less prominent than Esquivel, the all-male chorus comes back in singing “life stings, blood pulls.” Their deep voices contrast starkly

¹²⁸ For a full description of the history of comparsa and Carnival parades in Salta see Caseres, Miguel Angel. 2011. *Historia De La Comparsa Salteña*. Salta, Argentina: El Mochadero.

¹²⁹

with Esquivel's bright, soaring melodic line, repeating as the tension and volume of the song increases, emphasized through a beating of the drums.

The lyrics, "life stings" match the low voices, which sound like a low rumbling which increases together with the words "life blood pulls." It is as if the comparsas themselves are marching from their marginalized locales in Salta and their affirmations are growing louder as they reach the city. Although there is no pronoun attached to this phrase, the assumption is that the male chorus is again singing in first person. As the dynamics build, Esquivel joins in with the male chorus and completes the line "when Carnival calls." At the height of this crescendo, the other instruments come back in at full volume; Bass, the electric guitarist, plays a short riff from the beginning of the song plays and Esquivel, Antonetti, and Contreras begin playing the silbato whistles once more.

In the second half of the song, Sumaimana follows a similar pattern in which the first phrase sung by Esquivel and Contreras describes the comparsas in third person, only this time the lyrics are in future tense. "Towards Carnival they will find an existential time." In the next phrase, the all-male chorus again sings in unison, mixing first person and future tense, "Embers of my nation a fire that they will not extinguish. I am the ancestral memory."

In the songs conclusion, Sumaimana and Huayra, representative of the comparsas here, join together and sing the refrain from "Vidala para mi sombra." What is interesting in these final few bars of "Pa'l Carnaval" is the layering of voices between Sumaimana and Huayra. They sing the copla in an overlapping style in

which Huayra sings each line first and then Sumaimana echoes the line. This has the effect of creating a circular pattern in which one voice blends and repeats with the next. When I asked Contreras why they sang it this way he said that it was an aesthetic choice. However, to me (the listener) this overlapping singing conveys the idea that one voice seamlessly morphs into the next just as one generation of *comparsas* becomes the next and repeats the same identity. Thus, just as they are drawing a thread between *comparsas* and an Indigenous past, they are also weaving together the stories of many *comparsas* throughout Salta's history.

Syncretism

Of the three case studies explored in this dissertation, Sumaimana has embraced the most rigid definitions of what it means to be Indigenous and what music and cultural practices Indigenous people should or should not adopt. For example, Esquivel often critiqued Indigenous groups who practiced a dominant religion such as Catholicism or Evangelicalism. For her, religious syncretism was a sign of Indigenous groups being co-opted by Western culture and religion. Thus, for her it was contradictory to say a Catholic prayer or have a Catholic priest spread holy water at a Pachamama ceremony since this was an Andean and not a Western religious practice. Indeed, Esquivel critiqued both Huayra and Los Baguales del Norte, specifically for the use of gaucho dress as well as for using Catholic priests side by side with their shamans (Personal conversation. June 7, 2015).

Esquivel also lamented how if one were to go to the Guaraní or Wichí communities, one would see that most people had stopped performing their traditional music and instead only played worship songs in their native language. This has been documented in Miguel A. Garcia's book, *Paisajes sonoros de un mundo coherente: Prácticas musicales y religión en la sociedad wichí*, in which the author describes how it was necessary to go to the mountains or a secluded spot where the priests would not overhear the music when he wanted to record traditional music (2005).

On the one hand, Esquivel's position is understandable and can be construed as sympathetic to an Indigenous struggle to survive within a dominant Western hegemony. On the other, it presupposes a binary in which Indigenous culture is automatically unadulterated and authentic, and is under threat from industrialization and the modern culture industry. Rowe and Schelling describe three interpretative narratives of popular culture. The first, arising from Romanticism, assumes that the purity of a peasant culture is lost or degraded under pressure from the capitalist media (1991: 2). The second narrative, predicts that modern culture is the ultimate goal and will be the salvation of "backward" cultures (ibid). Finally, the third ascribes to popular culture an emancipatory quality whereby the practices of oppressed classes inherently contain resources for imagining an alternative future (ibid). As Rowe and Schelling demonstrate, all three of these theories, which overlap and combine, have their limitations. The first is predicated on a nostalgia for the past, the second fails to recognize the capacity of

traditional and non-Western cultures to bring about a different modernity, and the third locates the observer in an ideal place from which everything can be seen as detracting from or contributing to an emerging positive future. In sum, each of these positions fails to acknowledge that the modern and the traditional spheres are not only connected, but indeed are mutually imbricated and that many people in Latin America live in both modern and traditional worlds at once (1991: 2).

Through assuming that Wichí and Guaraní people have lost their culture because they have chosen to adopt Catholic or Evangelical traditions and thus only sing worship songs, Esquivel echoes the first Romanticist narrative and enforces a notion of an Indigenous culture that remains pure until it is negatively impacted through contact with Western influence and is thus endangered. This allows for only a static culture that does not recognize the existence of Nestor Garcia Canclini's "multitemporal heterogeneities," practices that simultaneously reference modern and traditional culture without rupturing one from the other (1995: 47).

In addition, this preservationist position is problematic because it posits a limiting scope of tradition by questioning any Indigenous activity that is of a Catholic or Western religious nature. As Erich Kolig notes, many Europeans in the dominant White society believe that Indigenous traditions are defined as "continuous, uninterrupted maintenance of cultural features and customs dating back to the period when White settlers first made contact with the Indigenes, and before this into the grey mist of the pre-European Indigenous past" (Kolig 2005:293). Through not establishing this type of continuity, Indigenous people find

themselves subject to skepticism and cynicism if their claims cannot be proven to have roots in ancient practices. Although she is a staunch defender of Indigenous rights, Esquivel's limited acceptance of what was and was not Indigenous and therefore acceptable, thus ultimately circumscribes indigeneity.

It is ironic that Esquivel and other Sumaimana members hold a strict view on indigeneity for three reasons. First, most obviously, they themselves are far from "pure" and, indeed, as explained above, represent an "intentional hybrid" that is highly crafted and orchestrated. All of Sumaimana's pieces are original works, and most are composed by the two founding members of the group, Esquivel and Contreras. When they compose, Esquivel and Contreras generally begin by choosing the rhythm or style they would like the song to be written in. They elect styles that are representative of different Indigenous groups native to the northern Argentine region. Like Huayra, Sumaimana embraces the idea that Indigenous identity is not encapsulated by national boundaries, but rather must be articulated in terms of local transnationalism. In other words, they highlight the fact that musical as well as cultural exchange has taken place across the borders between Argentina and Bolivia since a time that predates the formation of the nation state itself.

Second, this hybridity is created through a repertoire that is based on the idea that rhythms like huayños, chuntunquis and even saya caporales can be deemed Indigenous to Argentina because while they may belong to multiple ethnic groups, none are defined or limited by the borders of the nation state. In addition, Esquivel remarked multiple times about the futility of trying to define one

Indigenous group of Northern Argentina as distinct from the next because they have been named and renamed, disjointed and reconfigured so many times that today the majority simply self-identify as Kolla or *Diaguíta*, both generalized terms that were imposed by the Spanish in an effort to group people together (Personal conversation. June 7, 2015).

Thus, on the one hand Esquivel recognizes that indigeneity is amorphous and difficult to define when posited in relation to territorial and national belonging. However, at the same time, she sees indigeneity as something static that can be corrupted through Western culture, and particularly Western religion. It is worth noting that Sumaimana's aversion to missionaries derives from a long history of the church abusing its power to conquer and subdue Indigenous groups in Latin America (Schwaller 2011; Rowe and Schelling 1991: 19-24). Furthermore, Esquivel has a personal connection to this subject since her father is a Swiss-Argentine missionary with whom she lived in a Guaraní village until age nine.

The last reason that Esquivel's critique of Indigenous groups who perform worship songs or who incorporate Catholic prayers in their ceremonies is surprising is, returning to Rowe and Schelling's, it contradicts the possibility that popular culture of oppressed classes provides a vehicle for imagining an alternative future. For, if Indigenous peoples are limited to expressions of "authentic" culture and barred from (perceived) modern, Western ones, how can they create an alternative future? In his description of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia and New Zealand, Kolig argues that the formation of a body of resurrected, revitalized, and invented

traditions stems not from a wish to return to a pre-European “golden era,” since, “even the most extreme expression of nostalgia is ultimately an engagement with Modernity (or post Modernity) and a creative attempt to shape the future, rather than return to the past” (2005:296). Thus, “cultural revival involves a dialogue with Modernity both as a culture and as a political system” (ibid).

Again, it is strange that Sumaimana would adopt a view that limits this dialogue with modernity and essentially limits Indigenous groups capacity for both cultural and political expression. This is particularly true when we consider Sumaimana’s goal to share, promote, foster, and defend the distinct musical expressions of the Indigenous communities of northern Argentina. One would suppose that this aim to share musical Indigenous culture is motivated by the idea that through popular culture, Indigenous people, will gain a voice and the ability to advocate for themselves and create a new and alternative reality.

Volvimos y Somos Millones

Indeed, the song “*Volvimos Y Somos Millones*” (“We have returned and we are thousands”) conveys this exact message. Abandoning subtlety, this song, also the title track of the album, delivers Sumaimana’s strongest message for Indigenous resistance as it urges the listener to remember heroes of the Indigenous resistance in Argentina and throughout Latin America including Juan Calchaqui, Pedro

Chumay¹³⁰, Lautaro¹³¹ and Manuel Quilchamal,¹³² Tupac Katari, and, most famous of them all, Tupac Amaru and his wife Micaela Bastidas Puyucahua¹³³.

<i>Tupac yuyaricuna</i>	Tupac remember,
<i>En los andes prometiste un día volver</i>	In the Andes, you promised you would return
<i>Tupac jataricuna</i>	Tupac stand up
<i>Dame tu valor, ven libérame</i>	Give me your courage, come liberate me
<i>Tupac Amaru con Puyucahua</i>	Tupac Amaru with Puyucahua
<i>Tupac Katari y su reina aimara</i>	Tupac Katari and his Aymara queen
<i>Perduran en la memoria</i>	Will be lost in the memory
<i>Son nuestros héroes, es nuestra historia</i>	They are our heroes, our history

The CD liner notes state that the song “Volvimos y somos millones” is in “homage to the heroes, those who were excluded from our history books. Warriors who never die, they plant the seeds, and in this Latin American moment they say, we are here!!” Thus, with this song Sumaimana is redressing a historical exclusion of Indigenous peoples.

“Volvimos y somos millones” also features guest artists Bruno Arias and Ruben Patagonia. As I discussed in chapter two, Arias and Patagonia are well-known throughout Argentina for their focus on Indigenous awareness. Since both Arias and

¹³⁰ Juan Calchaquí and Pedro Chumay were Indigenous chiefs/leaders in the Calchaquí Valleys who fought against, first the Incas and then the Spanish (Chumbita 2009: 69).

¹³¹ Logia Lautaro was an Araucanian chief/leader who headed the resistance against the Spanish in Cuyo, San Martín (Chumbita 2009: 29).

¹³² Juan Quilchamal was a Tehuelche chief/leader, one of the last to resist occupation in Chubut in the 1800s. <http://patagoniarelatada.ar.tripod.com/tribusseng.htm>

¹³³ Tupac Katari, an Aymara leader, and Tupac Amaru II, a Quechua leader, who claimed to be a descendent of the first Tupac Amaru, led simultaneous rebellions against the Spanish (Andrien 2001: 222). Micaela Bastidas Puyucahua, was born of pure Spanish blood, but after marrying Tupac Amaru II (then Condorcanqui) she joined him in the rebellion against the Spanish. She and her husband were both executed (Walker 2014) <https://www.encyclopedia.com/women/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/bastidas-micaela-1745-1781>.

Patagonia are vocal about their support of Indigenous rights, Esquivel invited them to collaborate on the album. As she explained,

Bruno es uno de los pocos artistas folklóricos que comenzó a proclamar las banderas de las comunidades nativas y a unirse y apoyar a los pueblos originarios. Hablé con él y le expliqué, y él, con toda su generosidad. Ofreció su talento, su entusiasmo.¹³⁴

Bruno is one of the few folkloric artists who began to proclaim the flags of the native communities, and to join and support native peoples. I spoke with him and I explained to him, and he, with all his generosity, offered his talent, his enthusiasm.

In particular, Sumaimana invokes the memory and legacy of Tupac Amaru, the leader of the Tupac Amaru rebellion, a Peruvian Indigenous rebellion that spread through the Andes from 1780-1783, stretching from south of Cuzco, Peru, to present-day Bolivia and instigating parallel skirmishes in present-day Chile, Argentina, and Colombia (Walker 2014). Tupac Amaru has become a larger than life symbol of revolution and uprising. Although historians differ in their opinions on Tupac Amaru's the role (aka Jose Gabriel Condorcanqui Noguera) and his wife, Micaela Bastidas, in Spanish independence, the two figures have become national and international icons. Historian Charles Walker observes that a certain mystique has added to the popularity of Tupac Amaru, and his name has been used in association with resistance and revolution in a variety of contexts from Tupac Shakur, the famous U.S. rapper and son of Afeni Shakur, a Black Panther member, to those fleeing the Shining Path Guerrilla war in Peru (Walker 2014: 267-278).

¹³⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKM99dNjZyE&t=8s>

It is fitting that Sumaimana members see themselves as the reincarnation of Tupac Amaru. Like Amaru, they represent a cross between an Indigenous world and a modern criollo one. Amaru was a Quechua-speaking Indian who claimed bloodlines from the Inca royalty. In fact, his adopted name comes from the last Incan emperor, Tupac Amaru. Unlike most Indigenous peoples of his time, however, he was well-educated and spoke both Quechua and Spanish with ease. Amaru held an official position as a *kuraka*, the ethnic authority in charge of collecting the colonial tribute, a role that he inherited. As such his role was to move between the Spanish and Indian worlds (Walker 2014: 1).

Although he was not a mestizo, Amaru occupied a social position more akin to that of mestizo people than to the many Indigenous people who were being exploited by the Spanish colonizers (ibid). Like many revolutionaries then, Amaru was an intellectual who formed alliances with the lower classes and came to lead a rebellion. Similarly, Sumaimana as a group are multilingual, as they sing in Quechua, Wichi, and Spanish. Contreras and Esquivel both self-identify as part Indigenous, and Esquivel speaks multiple languages, including Quechua, Aymara, Wichi, Guaraní, and Spanish. Further, like Tupac Amaru, the majority of Sumaimana's members are formally educated and hold degrees in music education.

It is this spirit of resistance that Sumaimana invokes with the song "Volvimos y somos millones", a quotation attributed directly to Tupac Amaru himself. On November 7, 2015, the group held a CD release concert with invited guests Ruben Patagonia, Bruno Arias, and Huayra in the Teatro Provincial in Salta City. Before

performing “Volvimos y somos millones” Esquivel explained the meaning of this piece to the audience.

Tupac Amaru dijo esas palabras antes de su muerte. El dijo “Volvere y sere millones,” y nosotros queremos actualizar esa profecía, decir: “estamos y somos”

Tupac Amaru said these words before his death. He said, “I will return and I will be in the millions,” and we want to bring this prophecy to life, to say: “here we are, we exist”¹³⁵

Sumaimana has taken Tupac Amaru’s statement and has placed it in the present tense. They have also located themselves directly within the quote (“Volvimos y somos millones ” (we have returned and we are in the thousands). With this lyrical move, they invoke the power and the spirit of Tupac Amaru. The band members imply that they, as well as Indigenous people in general, are no longer dormant seeds, but strong fighters. In the words of Contreras, “the revolution is now” (Personal Conversation. December 14, 2015). As previously stated, Sumaimana members position themselves not only as defenders of Indigenous cultures, but also more integrally as members of a broad Indigenous collective that is taking back their rightful place in history. This song conveys this exact message; that Sumaimana, like the great leaders of Latin American Indigenous struggle, will return and will multiply to number in the thousands.

¹³⁵ Although I have not found any document with this exact quote, in his book, *The Tupac Amaru Rebellion*, Charles F. Walker makes note that Mata Linares, in his interrogation of Tupac Amaru, questioned whether the rebel leader had promised his Indian followers that they would be resurrected if they fell as martyrs. Francisco Cisneros confirmed that Tupac Amaru had told his followers that they need not fear death-he would resurrect them. (Colección Documental del Bicentenario de la Revolución Emancipadora de Tupac Amaru, III, 1, 259-261 in Walker: 2014: 161)

Again, like Severo Báez and Huayra, Sumaimana's position is complex and contradictory in many respects. One could easily characterize the members of this group as the most indigenista of the three case studies, given their level of education and the fact that the members of this group are able to profit from their music. and its message As Esquivel herself points out, this is a privilege that the Indigenous groups of the Chaco do not enjoy.

At the same time, Sumaimana is doing what no other contemporary professional music group in Argentina is doing. They are emphasizing the culture of all Indigenous groups in Argentina, not only the Kollas, the ones who fit into an Andean framework, but the more distant ones as well from the Chaco region. In keeping with their mission statement, Sumaimana members are trying to build a bridge between Indigenous groups and mainstream Argentine culture. They are pushing back against the myth of a homogenous White Argentina, a historical erasure of Indigenous presence throughout the nation, and a pervasive discrimination against the "less-civilized" groups of Salta province.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

In 2002, three young musicians from the Ava Guaraní community of San Jose de Yacuy, an Indigenous community located in the Northwestern region of Argentina, travelled from their home town to the capital city of Salta. Their intention was to register their music with SADAIC (*Sociedad Argentina de Autores y Compositores de Musica*, the Society of Authors and Composers,), a body similar to ASCAP, thereby making it eligible for SADAIC royalty fees as well as copyright claims for ownership.

When they arrived at the SADAIC office, the musicians were surprised to learn that their music could not be registered, as it did not fall within any classifiable sub-genre or even larger genre category. Initially the SADAIC official outright denied their application, claiming that *pimpim*, (Guaraní genre) by which they identified their compositions, did not exist. The musicians argued vociferously that *pimpim* had been as an essential part of their culture for centuries, and was a core part of the *arête guazu*, a Guaraní festival that predates European colonization on the South American continent. At that point, the official modified his position. *Pimpim* may exist, but it could still not be registered, since all songs needed to be registered with an identifying genre code, and *pimpim* did not have one. The only option was for the Guaraní musicians to register their music under the general category of “melodic song.”

The category of “melodic song” does not include Argentine genres. Rather, specifically Argentine musics like zambas and chacareras are categorized under “folklore,” or in some cases, as with tango, under “popular music.” Further, since “melodic song” is primarily used for foreign genres like bugaloo, bolero, boogie boogie, and fox-trot, using this category placed the Guaraní musicians’ songs outside of the national musical soundscape, rendering them, in official terms at least, inaudible as part of the Argentine nation. To register their music as “melodic songs” without the identifying pimpim label essentially required them to deny their ethnic identity as Indigenous Argentinians.

The Guaraní musicians sought the help of Valeria Esquivel, the leader of the group Sumaimana discussed in the last chapter, and as readers will recall, herself a musician of half-Indigenous Guaraní and half-Swiss descent and a staunch defender of Indigenous rights. Esquivel discovered that pimpim was not the only Indigenous style that SADAIC excluded. Indeed, as she explained in an interview with me, Indigenous people were not represented in SADAIC at all: it was as if they did not exist (Esquivel, Valeria. Personal interview. 21 December 2016). This realization prompted Esquivel to undertake and successfully complete a musicological study proving that pimpim and sixteen other Indigenous styles could be classified as “folklore,” and should therefore be allotted a proper code under this category.

Proving that pimpim should be accepted as folkloric music presented Esquivel with some unique challenges. The final documentation that she presented to SADAIC included two folders of research and documentation, an official letter

stating her argument, and a cassette with audio examples of the subgenres discussed. Dr. Ana Maria Huerta, the director of the national copyright office in Buenos Aires, instructed Esquivel to provide sufficient evidence of the ethnic origins of each subgenre and also to show that these genres were both “traditional” and “popular”; this is what determined if they were folkloric or not. Esquivel also had to provide a legal document proving her Indigenous heritage. Although Esquivel grew up in a Guaraní community and could speak to her musical experiences during that time, she knew that her personal testimony would not be sufficient. Instead, Esquivel consulted the texts of Argentine scholars including musicologist Ana María Locatelli de Pérغامo and ethnomusicologist Isabel Aretz, who earlier in the twentieth century had both researched Indigenous music in Argentina. Thus, much of her documentation was not based on current ethnomusicological studies, but rather on historical ones.

Through these scholars’ works and other written accounts she was able to demonstrate that these genres had been passed down through generations and had been part of traditional and ancestral contexts. For example, Esquivel argued that *pimpim* is played during *arête guazu*, a Guaraní festival, that marks the beginning and the end of the corn harvest, which is also a time of cyclical reconnection with ancestors had been played for centuries in Argentina. Though *pimpim* could be from Guaraní on either side of the Argentine-Bolivian border, Esquivel needed to make a case for this genre to be recognized within the specifically-Argentine musical repertoire identified as “folklore.”

The second part of proving that *pimpim* belonged under the category of folklore was demonstrating that it was popular, or that it had become part of the Argentine vernacular. However, as Esquivel argued, “these styles were not well-known exactly because they had not been accepted into popular repertoire” (interview December 2016). Therein lies the paradox: if Indigenous culture, specifically music and dance, has never been popular and part of a recognizable body of music for a general Argentine audience, the natural response would be for uninformed listeners to assume that these genres are indeed foreign. Yet, as the SADAIC case study so perfectly demonstrates, believing this could have not only culturally damaging effects but socially detrimental ones as well. Indeed, Esquivel shared that she was inspired to get involved in the case after she saw how upset it made the Guaraní, not only to be denied the right to register their songs with SADAIC, but also to be told that their culture, or at least a major component of it, did not exist (Esquivel. Valeria. Personal Interview. January 10, 2017).

Another manner in which Esquivel and the Guaraní musicians’ case directly addressed the complex position of indigeneity in Argentina was its inclusion of multiple other genres in addition to *pimpim*. This list included sub-genres that extended beyond what could logically be argued as Argentine Indigenous ones, including for example Afro-Bolivian *sayas* and Bolivian *tinkus*. Their inclusion highlights an important aspect of indigeneity in Argentina, which is its transnational nature. That is, indigeneity is often articulated as part of a pan-Indigenous and pan-ethnic context that highlights rather than downplays the fact that many Indigenous

groups, including Mapuches, Guaranís, and Kollas, have always existed in territories that transcend national borders. As such, Esquivel and her fellow musicians argued that these musics belonged in SADAIC because first, many Bolivian sub-genres were also Argentine as migration and cultural exchange between these two countries predates the formation of the nation-state. Second, sayas and tinkus had become fully incorporated into Argentine culture and thus were now part of its folklore.

There is no simple interpretation of the SADAIC case. One could certainly argue that incorporating sayas and tinkus into an Argentine folkloric repertoire is cultural appropriation. Indeed, there is a well- documented history of antipathy between Bolivians and Argentines around this issue (Rios 2014: 197-227). On the other hand, one could push for the position advocated by Esquivel, which is that Indigenous and Afro-Argentines alike had been left out of the national narrative, and that solidarity with both groups called for a re-introduction of Indigenous and African-derived genres; regardless of their origins, sayas and caporales formed part of a larger performative discourse by and about oppressed peoples in Latin America.

Esquivel's efforts were ultimately successful, and on January 30, 2006, SADAIC passed Act #43, which assigned a code to each of the following subgenres, granting them a place within the larger folklore category. The list included sikuriada, anateada/tarkeada, quena, erkenchada, kantu, huayno-sikuri, auqui-auqui, chuntunqui, tinku, saya, pimpim, toba, vidala comparsera, kaani, tail or taiell, canción mapuche, and canción india o danza indígena. For the first time, Indigenous music in Argentina was officially recognized within the country.

I begin the conclusion with this story because it encapsulates many of the questions and issues at the heart of this dissertation. First and foremost, the Guaraní struggle for recognition underscores Argentina's national self-image as a White nation, even well into the twenty-first century, and how it continues to perpetuate the invisibility and outright erasure of its Indigenous peoples, their histories, cultural practices, and at times, their lives. In referring to Whiteness here, as throughout this study, I highlight not the actual number of phenotypically "White" versus "non-White" people who live in the country, but rather the ways that a powerful investment in Whiteness as a cultural identity (Lipsitz 2006) has shaped the boundaries of national belonging and citizenship in Argentina.

Second, this legal and administrative skirmish illustrates the ways that popular culture, and more specifically, dance and music, have been important sites for constructing and contesting narratives around national, regional, and ethnic identities. I have argued that Argentina's national self-image has been constructed around two particular figures: the tango dancer, and more notably, the gaucho, who have each propagated this White imaginary in different ways. On opposite sides of the spectrum, the tango dancer, associated with a Mediterranean population of urban Buenos Aires, and the gaucho, the icon of criollo, rural life, have vied historically for position as the prominent emblem of a European national identity. The Guaraní struggle for recognition exemplifies how the construction of Argentine folkloric music has formed powerful boundaries between what is included and what is excluded in national terms. Without being reclassified as folklore, pimpim would

either be registered as foreign—e.g. NOT Argentine—or not be registered at all. As Esquivel argued, it would be paradoxical to place *pimpim*, a music that predates the Spanish conquest, under the same category as foreign styles like the fox-trot and rock.

The third major point that the SADAIC case illustrates is that today both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, or people of mixed ancestry, have taken steps to refold indigeneity back into the national narrative. This has taken place through revisionist histories that recast emblematic events in Indigenous history, like the Desert Conquest and the forced relocation of Los Quilmes people, as examples of fierce Indigenous resistance rather than as military tactics employed in the “justifiable” advancement of the nation. Proponents of this revised history stress the heinous nature of these events, calling for example for the removal of monuments to Roca across the country. They also emphasize the hidden truth, that the Indigenous people who remain, simply by continuing to exist, have engaged in a fierce battle for survival. This repositioning places Argentina’s Indigenous revival in conversation with a broader discussion about Indigenous presence throughout the Americas, one that emphasizes a five-hundred-year history of resistance.

The SADAIC case also raises some compelling questions that I have explored throughout this dissertation. Primary among them: who are the Indigenous people in Argentina, and how is their identity determined? As I have explained, in raw numbers, the last census in 2010 revealed that 955,032 people self-identify as belonging to or descending from an Indigenous group in Argentina. Yet census data

can be misleading, given the myriad and complex reasons why a person would or would not choose to self-identify as Indigenous. On what, then, is indigeneity in Argentina based? If territoriality is a factor, given that the Indigenous presence precedes the nation-state and its borders, how are we to understand or position Indigenous groups whose ancestral lands extend across these borders, or who frequently traverse from one country to the next even today? Where do we position individuals from groups such as the Guaraní in Jacuy, or Tartagal, Salta, some of whom came to Argentina during the Chaco War in the 1930s, a century after independence? Since one factor in gaining rights to ancestral land after the 1994 Constitutional Reform was contingent on proving membership in a community with a continual existence that pre-dated Spanish colonization, should people who have lived on the other side of the Argentine/Bolivian border be denied this right? Should they be counted in data about Argentine Indigenous people? In an indirect way, Esquivel's research conducted for SADAIC confronted these very questions.

I have explored these debates over ownership and cultural identity from a multitude of perspectives. I have analyzed the relationship between musical recognition and physical recognition and have observed how displaced groups in Argentina use their music and dance practices to confront the mainstream—the White imaginary— and define their social status. Part of my queries have focused on the introduction of instruments and genres, formerly considered Indigenous, into urban and national spaces. I have considered if and how they have opened up room for minority expression. In particular, I have analyzed how and why particular

genres and instruments have become incorporated into a national musical narrative, and how these inclusions and exclusions have been shaped by the discursive boundaries of Argentine national belonging.

When I began this project, I had no idea what my findings would be. I hoped that I would see that music and dance were playing a crucial role in the Indigenous movement in Argentina, that they were serving as powerful vehicles for marginalized groups to express their identities. What I found, of course, was much more nuanced and contradictory. At the outset, I had no idea how prominent the tensions between my two field sites in Buenos Aires and Salta were, and how much this in turn shaped peoples' often conflicting understandings of national icons like Mercedes Sosa, the gaucho, or the Kolla. I also came to understand through my fieldwork that none of my case studies could be understood as part of a simple binary, either as Whites appropriating Indigenous culture, or "pure" Indigenous peoples claiming cultural space. Instead, I found mestizo genres presented as "pure" primordial culture; people playing "Indians;" musicians who believed that Indigenous cultural expressions should be separate from centuries of Catholic syncretism; and people who viewed indigeneity as a boundary-less concept. I also met lots of music aficionados who claimed to love Bolivian and Kolla music, but disliked Bolivians and Kollas.

Some of the most pressing questions underlying this dissertation regard what is at stake in the shifting attitudes and practices informing Indigenous cultural expression in Argentina today. Is the contemporary popularity of Argentine

Indigenous culture serving as a catalyst for broader social and political agency, or is it simply another example of empty multiculturalism? Given the extent to which Indigenous people in Argentina have been made invisible, have they begun to reclaim a lost, or at best, fragmented culture and heritage? Have they done so through a process of creating “invented traditions” (Hobsbawm 1983)? Through borrowing from cultures across a range of Indigenous groups? I found mixed answers to these questions.

The fight for recognition and the guarantee of basic human rights for Indigenous peoples is far from over. This is evident in the current struggles that Indigenous people and those who stand in solidarity with them face. Indeed, it seems that in the new era of a post-pink tide Latin America, Argentina and other countries that were until recently making progress in their quests to reframe themselves as pluri-national or multicultural nations have retreated from that goal. While former President Cristina Kirchner had her critics, and was guilty of ignoring Indigenous struggles, the situation for Indigenous peoples in Argentina has demonstrably deteriorated under current President Macri (elected in 2015). Indeed, in alignment with current global trends exemplified by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump, Argentina today is characterized by a heightened xenophobia and a general lack of respect for human rights.

In correlation with these political changes, the Argentine economy has once again declined considerably, and the everyday reality of most Argentines has become more financially precarious. Due in part to this economic situation, two of

the musical groups explored in this dissertation, Huayra and Sumaimana, have now disbanded. Six months after I completed my fieldwork in 2016, I returned for a brief visit to Salta. What I found was disheartening. Many of my friends were struggling to survive financially, and this had necessitated significant changes to their lives. Javier Lopez, the leader of Huayra, had begun focusing more on his day job, and fervor within the group for the lofty goal of creating Indigenous awareness waned. The comparsa voted Lopez out of his leadership position, and Huayra abandoned its experiments with the incorporation of Andean instruments and more realistic-looking Kolla outfits. In doing so, they have become a much more typical Salteño comparsa de los indios. Sumaimana has also disbanded, primarily for financial reasons. Esquivel and her partner finished construction on their hotel and moved to Humahuaca to manage the business. They also founded a peña called Wiphala, and Contreras has moved from Salta to work as a part-time manager and musician in the peña. Although I never heard officially that the band had broken up, it appears that they are on an indefinite hiatus. Of the three case studies, only Los Bagualeros del Norte still remain active. While the national financial situation is precarious, tourism to Salta remains a mainstay of the local economy, and as long as tourists continue to come in search of Kolla culture, Severo Báez will still be contracted out for Pachamama and Carnival ceremonies.

In closing, I return briefly to SADAIC case to underscore the complexities of Indigenous cultural expression in Argentina today. The main goal of registering a song or of copyrighting a work is for an artist to profit from their composition.

Despite official recognition of Indigenous musical genres in 2006, however, the Guaraní and other Indigenous groups in Argentina have not generally profited or even obtained copyright ownership of their music. This can be attributed to a variety of social and economic factors. First, Indigenous communities in Argentina often do not support individual copyright claims, as this contradicts their practice of communal ownership. If you catch a fish, that fish belongs to the whole community. Similarly, if you create a song using a Guaraní rhythm, that song belongs to the community.

In contrast, people who are not Guaraní have not been restricted by these social boundaries and have composed in these styles freely. Indeed, some of the most recognized pimpim songs in Argentina today are performed by people who are not Guaraní. For example, “El Pin Pin de Ternura”¹³⁶ is by the band Ternura, a group that plays exclusively cumbia, with the exception of this one pimpim song. Another example is the previously mentioned Los Tekis version of “Rosita Pochi.”¹³⁷ Thanks in part to the SADAIC ruling recognizing Indigenous genres, Ternura and Los Tekis can freely appropriate Guaraní culture and then charge individual authorship royalties for songs with pimpim rhythms. Indeed, logically, if a Guaraní person were to cover Ternura’s pimpim song, they would have to pay royalties to play a genre of music that originates in their own community.

¹³⁶ El Pin Pin de Ternura music video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISrW--ClGq0>

¹³⁷ Los Tekis in concert, “Rosita Pochi,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nhh-Z2r3JKc>

Another challenge raised by communal ownership is that, in the case of musical genres, it extends beyond a single community to include an entire ethnic group. As Esquivel explained, even if she and her group Sumaimana, who compose using *pimpim* styles, wanted to give proceeds to the Guaraní people, they would not know which of the numerous communities to compensate. Should it be the Guaraní of Salta province, those who live in the province of Misiones, or even those who live in Bolivia, Paraguay, or Brazil? Without a specific legal guide for this type of compensation, Esquivel worried that giving money to one group and not the other, might end up creating intra-community strife as opposed to being useful.

In broader terms, a primary reason that Indigenous Argentines have not taken advantage of the SADAIC law and registered many copyrights is rooted in a fundamental clash between traditional music and Western law. As ethnomusicologist Sheryll Mills observes, “modern copyright law remains ill-equipped to provide cross-cultural protection” (1996: 57-58). This is primarily because copyright laws prioritize capitalist musical modes of production through rewarding originality and sole-authorship, and through discounting collectively authored pieces, often relegating them to the arenas of unknown author or common use public domain.

Economic factors have also played a role in the lack of Indigenous copyrights, as for many, the fees incurred to copyright a composition are simply too high. Costs include transportation to and from Salta where SADAIC is located, copyright application fees, and often payment for transcription. In total, Esquivel estimated it

would cost between 2,000 and 2,5000 pesos, roughly 200 dollars—a significant amount in Argentina—to register a single song. Even if the Guaraní musicians managed to copyright their music, it is unlikely that they would have the means to bring any guilty party to justice. According to Esquivel, numerous Guaraní have accused their neighbors of appropriating their songs; however very few have made official complaints, as this would require economic resources that they lack. This echoes an important point raised by Mills in her discussion of the United States “anti-bootlegging laws,” which criminalize the recording, transmission, or dissemination of live performances without prior consent. Mills notes that the major flaw of this law is that it is not self-policing, and that “the community or an interested party must discover the violation and initiate legal action. Otherwise, violations will occur without subsequent legal responsibility” (1996: 66).

In the face of these barriers, we might wonder what benefit Esquivel’s research and SADAIC’s law has had for Indigenous Argentines. I would like to suggest that in this case, the monetary gains that the Guaraní were afforded through SADAIC’s law were second to a broader opportunity for identity recognition. Indeed, this is what Esquivel shared when I asked her about the success of her project.

Me inspiré para crear este alboroto ... después de ver lo devastados que estaban mis amigos, no solo se les negó el derecho de registrar sus *pimpim*, sino que también se les dijo que no existía, y por extensión, que no existió. ¿Puedes imaginar? Llegaron desde Yacuy solo para que les dijeran que no podían registrarse con SADAIC, ¿y por qué? Porque eran indios (Esquivel Valeria. Interview. January 5, 2017).

I was inspired to create this ruckus.... after I saw how devastated my friends were that not only were they denied the right to register their *pimpim*, but they also were told that it did not exist, and by extension, that they did not exist. Can you imagine? They came all the way from Yacuy only to be told that they couldn't register with SADAIC, and why? Because they were Indians.

Thus, for Esquivel, her primary goal was not so much to enable Indigenous copyright as it was to help her compatriots feel, hear, and see themselves included in a national musical repertoire.

The future of Indigenous music in Argentina is uncertain. Technically, Indigenous musics like *pimpim* are now classified as folkloric. However, the majority of Argentines are not aware of this, and popular culture still dictates that Argentine folklore is a European derived *gaucho* tradition rather than an Indigenous one. Regardless, Esquivel's efforts and SADAIC's recognition of these eighteen Indigenous genres is important.

In the end, the Chiriguano musicians that served as a catalyst to the SADAIC battle did not finish their recording or copyright their songs. However, should they ever choose to do so in the future, thanks to Esquivel's musicological study, they will be able to. Economic and social barriers may still impede their success, but at the very least, they will not be systematically barred from SADAIC as *pimpim* is now

officially recognized as part of an Argentine folkloric repertoire. This is a step towards greater Indigenous recognition in Argentina.

Throughout this dissertation, I have demonstrated that folkloric music in Argentina has historically excluded Indigenous expression. Thus, it seems that including this music into a folkloric repertoire would be one way for Indigenous peoples to gain a presence on the national stage. Yet, a question arises: if Indigenous musics in Argentina are enfolded into the national narrative and become part of a folkloric repertoire, will that ultimately benefit them? As ethnomusicologist Sherylle Mills points out, “nationalizing Indigenous music under a government’s exclusive control creates a dangerous system” as governing bodies “are easily manipulated and potentially allow the denial of usable benefits to politically unpopular groups” (1996: 72). This of course, is the danger of a neoliberal multiculturalism that Hale and Millamán have warned about.

Yet, there is also cause for hope that Indigenous recognition, both cultural and political is a close certainty in Argentina. On a cultural scale, Indigenous expression, particularly that of Kollas seems to be gaining ground. The most recent example of this comes from the latest pre-Cosquín competition in 2018. The winners, Andres Ramos and Daniella Echenique, two dancers from Salta, showcased a copla *contrapunto* (vocal duel) as part of their zamba competition. What is notable is that the style of coplas that they sang were not the highly stylized version like that of El Chaqueño, that normally appear in a folkloric setting. Rather the coplas, sung in the puneno style, were more rustic sounding and representative of styles that

Ramos himself had grown up with in his hometown of Seclantas, a rural region a few hours from the capital of Salta. The fact that Ramos and Echenique took first place with a genre that is obviously framed as Indigenous in a national folkloric competition suggests that the broader narrative of Indigenous recognition in Argentina continues to grow stronger. Further, Ramos and Echenique deftly combined the two national symbols of the Kolla and the Gaucho in one performance. In this act, the dancers illustrated through performance the trend of “urbanites changing their habits and recognizing themselves as Indigenous” (McNeish 2008: 49). Building on Andrew Canessa’s work, McNeish reminds us that urbanites claiming Indigenous heritage is

not only an indication of mestizos, or people of mixed racial identities, moving back into the solidity of the Indigenous, but a sign that the idea of the Indigenous is expanding into social sectors that, in the past, would never have considered the possibility of identifying with what has always been a negative, highly racialized category” (2008: 49).

Canessa distinguishes between indigenismo as being more about mestizaje and indigenismo as being about Indigenous peoples acting as political and cultural subjects through their own agency. Considering recent trends in mestizos recognizing their Indigenous heritage in Latin America, Canessa even ponders, “If indigenismo was accompanied by a strong impulse to assimilate Indians, it is worth asking if indigenism has the potential to assimilate mestizos” (2006: 244). While Canessa’s observations here are specific to Latin America, the same question could be asked among populations in the United States. Katherine Ellinghaus shows that after 1887 and the passing of the Dawes Act, which divided reservations into

individual sections, many Indians of mixed descent were denied official Indian status since they could then be seen by the government as ineligible for enrollment and thus, dismissed of their land rights (2014: 288-299). Given the fact that denial of Indigenous heritage and assimilation was a political and social strategy, Ellinghaus argues that we view mixed race people who suddenly claim Indigenous heritage within that historical context.

Popular discourse often hints or states outright that people who suddenly “discover” their Indian ancestry are figures of fun who are simply jumping on the bandwagon of indigenous identity now that it has gained some kind of postcolonial cachet...But considering the history...we might offer another perspective on these social phenomena. How many such people were victims of the U.S. government’s efforts to enroll, allot, and enumerate Indian nations, and in so doing set in stone an understanding of Indian status that disadvantaged those of mixed Indian descent? (Ellinghaus 2014: 310).

As I have illustrated in this dissertation, Indigenous peoples in Argentina have been subjugated to a similar type of political and social ideology, in which, until recently, most official documents, such as censuses, enveloped them into a broader national White imaginary. Thus, like Ellinghaus, I argue that Huayra, Sumaimana, and Los Bagualeros must be understood within that historical context and that what they are expressing is more complicated than cultural appropriation. Rather it is a demonstration of a changing attitude towards indigeneity in Argentina, a process that is both internal to the individual members in the groups and external within a broader cultural setting.

It is undeniable that cultural symbols and media shape our lives and opinions about the world around us. Therefore, it is a logical conclusion that a new trend has

emerged of mixed race people reclaiming through cultural performances a part of their identity hitherto denied. That is, Indigenous belonging, has come about at least in dialogical relation to, if not catalyzed by, cultural forms. Drawing on J. Friedman, John-Andrew McNeish reminds us that,

the same globalization processes that have led to the homogenization of economic, security, and development policies have also opened possibilities for cultural political strategies aimed at resisting the homogenizing forces and stressing indigeneity. However, this indigeneity is not just about the Indigenous groups as such, but about a process of identification in the contemporary global arena that is a powerful expression of the overall transformation of the system (McNeish 2008: 50; Friedman 1999).

As my case studies and interviews have shown, in Argentina, the general popularity of Kollas, although highly tokenized figures, has led more people to recognize that the stories of Indigenous genocide have omitted one important detail: the genocide was incomplete. Thus, despite a powerful white imaginary that seeks to justify settler-colonial logic in Argentina, there are in fact Indigenous people who, like Indigenous groups around the world, have resisted complete domination and emerged as “complex “layered” and adaptable cultures” (Smithers 2014: 15). In his study of Indigenous mobilizations in Guatemala and Bolivia, McNeish concludes that the government of Evo Morales, while marked by contradictions and limitations, marks an *irreversible shift* ending hundreds of years of Indigenous exclusion (2008: 53 emphasis mine). I conclude with a similar argument about Argentina. The current economic and political situation in Argentina has led to a decline in multiculturalist agendas. This has certainly impacted the groups I work

with in negative ways. Despite this, the narrative of a White imaginary has changed and there has been an irreversible shift. This change has not brought land reform or equal rights to all, yet, the conversation about Argentina has undeniably changed. This is something that I have palpably noticed from the time that I began my research, in 2013, to today in 2018. Indeed, today I never get the question, “Are there really Indigenous people in Argentina?” This recognition can bring nothing but further gains for Indigenous groups in Argentina. In their own small ways, Los Bagualeros del Norte, Sumaimana, and Huayra have contributed to this shift and the creation of a narrative that pushes back against a White imaginary.

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Appendix A.



Figure 1. Folkloric Dancers in Salta



Figure 2. Author and dance teacher, Andrés Ramos, dressed as paisana and gaucho



Figure 3. Severo Baez initiating a Pachamama Ceremony



Figure 4. Copleras and pinkullo player



Figure 5. Banner in Báez home



Figure 6. Severo Báez playing a copla at Pachamama ceremony in Báez home



Figure 7. Severo Báez closing the pozo during the entierro



Figure 8. Severo Báez closing the pozo during the entierro



Figure 9. Offerings to the Pachamama



Figure 10. The pozo, with offerings for the Pachamama

The First March of Indigenous Women for El Buen Vivir in Buenos Aires



*Figure 11. Marchers gather around
the Monument to General Roca in Buenos Aires*



Figure 12. Crowd gathered at protest march

Messages that were left for General Roca by the marchers



Figure 13. Monument to Roca with messages

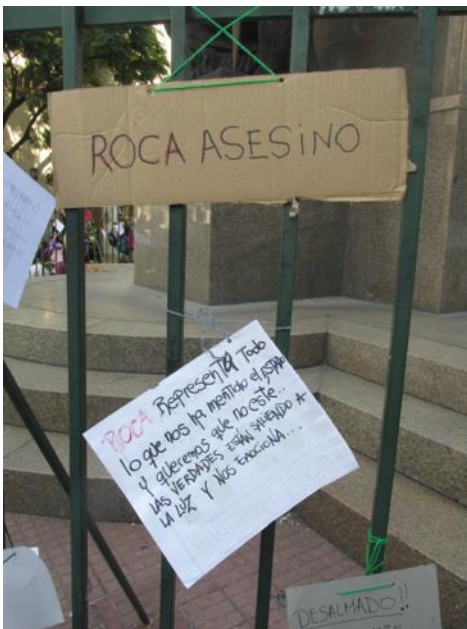


Figure 14. "Roca Asasssin"



Figure 15. People in Buenos Aires writing Messages Calling out Roca for His Perpetration of Genocide



Figure 16. Marchers Gathered Together



Figure 17. Gathering for the March



Figure 18. Waiting Outside the Assembly Hall for the Buen Vivir Act to be Confirmed



Figure 19. The Stage for the Concert in Support of the Buen Vivir March



Figure 20. Bruno Arias and Che Joven sharing the stage in support of the Buen Vivir march

Las Comparsas de Los Indios



Figure 21. Comparsa Procession



Figure 22. A Brujo from the Comparsas



Figure 23. A Crowd Watches the Comparsa Procession



Figure 24. A Comparsa Gorro Mayor (Headdress)



Figure 25. Comparsa de Los Incas Carry Banner in Homage to Indigenous Peoples



Figure 26. Comparsa Huayra carry banner with Kollas and Dancers of El Baile de los Suris



Figure 27. Javier López Huayra Cacique



Figure 28. Huayra members dancing at el centro vicinal, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 29. Huayra members dancing. Picture, used with permission by Paulina Varas Mora.



Figure 30. Huayra member in "Kolla" dress at ceremony for the Virgin of Urkupiña



Figure 31. Calchaqui initiating Pachamama ceremony at Huayra's cultural center



Figure 32. Huayra members in Huayra's cultural center



Figure 33. Martin Antonetti of Sumaimana playing the erque with suri dancers



Figure 34. Suri dancer leader at Tastil



Figure 35. Suri dancers at Tastil



Figure 36. Suri dancers at Tastil



Figure 37. Suri dancers at Tastil



Figure 38. Author with Huayra procession



Figure 39. Huayra Headdress



Figure 40. Comparsa boots



Figure 41. Huayra tumbadores (large drums)



Figure 42. Huayra performing as guests of Sumaimana, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 43. Huayra performing as guests of Sumaimana, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 44. Sumaimana performing in Pachamama Ceremony at El Mercado Arsenal. Picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora.



Figure 45. Martín Antonetti playing the erque. Picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 46. Caporal Dancers in Salta Parade



Figure 47. Sumaimana performing, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 48. Valeria Esquivel and Carlos Contreras performing with Sumaimana, , picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 49. Hernan Bass performing with Sumaimana, picture, used with permission, by Paulina Varas Mora



Figure 50. Sumaimana performing in pimpim masks



Figure 51. Los Quilmes Ruins



Figure 52. Guarani Community Celebrating the Arete Guazu

Making a Caja Drum



Figure 53. Author making a Caja Drum



Figure 54. Frame for Caja Drum



Figure 55. Soaking Skin for Caja Drum



Figure 56. Stretching Skin for Caja Drum



Figure 57. Sewing Caja Drum



Figure 58. Completed caja with zefalo painting