URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA'S CULTURAL CAPITAL

An Analysis of City Branding and its Impact on Gentrification in Buenos Aires

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about cities, there are inevitably some urban landscapes that come to mind. Cities as diverse and different from one another like Paris and Beijing, or Jerusalem and Rio de Janeiro, or New York and Istanbul are so emblematic that they encapsulate the quintessence of the ideal of the metropolis in the 21st century and have managed to capture the imagination of millions. In this we can acknowledge that certain cities have reputations, and that as a result of their historical, economic, political and cultural influence, some cities have already generated an organic brand name for themselves.

It is for this very reason that some cities attract phenomenal amounts of tourists, for the legacies and images they have imparted to the world have transformed them from mere locations into desired destinations. As mass tourism continues to gain momentum as a worldwide phenomenon, these global cities become ever more important nodes of this ballooning industry. Given that tourism today is a major industry, generating a total of USD 7.2 trillion or 9.8% of global GDP and responsible for 1 out of 11 jobs in 2016 (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016), it is unsurprising that there is growing competition amongst cities for a greater market share of this bountiful bonanza. However, much of the academic literature about tourism continues to focus on its impact in rural areas, indigenous communities and the natural environment and as such this paper posits that the impacts of urban tourism cannot be neglected as cities have come to increasingly define human life in the 21st century.

This paper will investigate the relationship between a tourism strategy known as 'city branding' and an urban phenomenon known as 'gentrification'. City branding is essentially the marketing process undertaken by an urban area to consolidate and promote an image of itself that is attractive to tourists and investments. Gentrification, on the other hand, can be broadly described as the process of socioeconomic change in a specific urban locality. Both are concepts that are increasingly bandied about and have attracted the attention not just of scholars and urban planners but also of the average layman or city resident who has taken an interest in the development of their environment.

Going beyond a mere theoretical examination, this paper is centred upon the interaction between city branding and gentrification in the city of Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires is arguably one of Latin America's most iconic cities as well as one of its most visited. It is the bustling capital of Argentina and has adopted the title of Latin America's 'cultural capital'. This paper will examine how Buenos Aires' city branding strategy has influenced or caused gentrification in the predominantly working-class neighbourhoods

of San Telmo and La Boca since 2001. Given that both phenomena appear to be important factors in shaping the urban fabric of Buenos Aires, the investigation posits the hypothesis not only that are they interrelated, but that city branding as a strategy is, if not the cause, at least an amplifier of gentrification. The goal of this paper is therefore to test whether this hypothesis is correct and, if so, to what extent.

Chapter 1 seeks to lay down the foundations of the theoretical underpinnings of city branding and the various forms of gentrification, as well as the relationship between these two concepts. By drawing upon the ideas proposed by international, Latin American and Argentine authors, the chapter will demonstrate how the concepts are perceived differently in the various contexts and the impact this has on shaping this paper's analysis. Chapter 2 begins with an analysis of Buenos Aires' city branding strategy through the set of plans and strategic documents the city government has published. The chapter will go on to trace the implementation of those plans and their impacts on the urban fabric. Chapter 3 will draw upon interviews conducted during fieldwork in Buenos Aires between November 2016 and January 2017 with academics, policy makers, residents and participants in the tourism industry to build upon the context laid out in Chapter 2 and to analyse the impact that city branding and its related schemes has had in San Telmo and La Boca. In addition, Chapter 3 incorporates some of the author's own observations that have been influenced by a series of informal conversations about the nature of tourism and residential life in the two selected neighbourhoods. Crucially, Chapter 3 will demonstrate how the residents of Buenos Aires, known as *porteños*, themselves view the interplay between city branding and gentrification and examine whether there is in fact a causal relationship between the two factors, in order to prove the validity of this investigation's initial hypothesis.

This investigation would not have been possible without the guidance of Dr. Isla, and the gracious support of Argentine academics like Drs. Schettini, Troncoso, Bracco and Bertoncello. Their insights and advice have helped to shape this project and they have been invaluable assets by constantly challenging the analysis to take into account the complexity of the issues at hand. The countless residents with whom this investigator had the privilege to interact with, and who shared their personal insights into the dynamic process of urban change, have also proved crucial in shaping an informed and nuanced analysis. Needless to say, much thanks must also be extended to all those who set aside their time to be interviewed and whose responses serve as the bedrock of this entire investigation.

Through both an examination of the literature and from the fieldwork experience, it is clear that the chosen topic is an important one in our contemporary world. Cities will always be laboratories for humankind, serving as receptacles for our ingenuity and as meccas for cultural development. But these cultural spaces, treasured by tourists and viewed by authorities and elites as lucrative commodities, are also home to residents who often hold opposing views. So long as people remain curious and seek to experience

the new, urban tourism is only likely to continue to grow and such spaces will increasingly become both sites of intercultural interaction and conflict. Tourism and its promotion will raise questions about the way cities use space and who has legitimacy over its use. It is therefore vital that we understand the potential impact this could have on residents and on the development of urban spaces that are increasingly both local and international.

CHAPTER 1

A Theoretical Overview: City Branding and Gentrification in the Latin American Context

This paper begins with an overarching theoretical examination of the literature written about city branding and gentrification. Before delving further into these concepts, it is crucial to note that they were originally conceived through a Euro-North American lens, and that the idea of city branding was initially very Eurocentric. By focusing upon academic work that places these concepts in the Latin American context, one can see how these phenomena have been inflected with a different character when transposed to the region. This theoretical framework will be used to analyze the specific situation of Buenos Aires in subsequent chapters.

1.1 The Idea of Cultural Tourism

1.1.1 What is Cultural Tourism?

The importance of city branding itself must be understood through the context of cultural tourism, as city branding is a tool employed by cities to shape an image of themselves that will prove attractive to tourists seeking a distinctive local cultural experience. In effect, it can be argued that city branding is a response to the growth in cultural tourism. Tourism is defined by Baud and Ypeji as "voluntary, temporary travel for rest or recreation" (2009: 1). The link between culture and tourism is established by these authors when they argue that present-day tourism, a key part of globalization, is a combination of international travel for the purposes of cultural discovery or consumption (Ibid.).

To understand the contemporary version of cultural tourism, this paper adopts Stebbins' definition, which views cultural tourism "as a genre of special interest tourism based on the search for and participation in new cultural experiences rooted in the aesthetic, emotional or psychological interactions with a way of life different from one's own" (1996: 948). Richards (2007) argues that from its beginnings with the European Grand Tour of the 19th century to the present day, cultural tourism has evolved in two major directions, namely through its globalization and through the shift from the admiration of monumental landmarks to partaking in living cultural experiences.[1]

[1] Richards defines 'living cultural experiences' as an interlocking, interactive series of exchanges with a geographical locale (2007: 2-3).

Furthermore, this globalization of cultural tourism stems in part from the extensive competition between the traditional European market, as well as the desire for less traditional destinations in more exotic places (Richards, 2007). Initially seen as a particular niche activity only pursued by a minority of travellers, up to 70% of international tourists today partake in some form of cultural tourism (McKercher & Du Cros 2002). Crucially, the 'cultural tourist' is on the lookout for a unique experience, one that is specific to the location in question and where the traveller is able to interact to some degree with the local culture (Ibid.). Distinctiveness is therefore the keyword for destinations seeking to market themselves as cultural destinations. Furthermore, destinations that focus on culture as the main touristic draw often place greater emphasis not on monuments or specific attractions, but rather on developing or marketing particular streetscapes, communities, neighbourhoods and festivals that are seen to be emblematic of a particular facet of urban, national or historical life (Ibid.). Destinations without grandiose monuments, particularly cities in the less developed Global South, have therefore been increasingly drawn to such a model of tourism due to its relatively low entry costs and due to their ability to market their exoticism to tourists from the Global North.

Whilst Stebbins (1996) agrees with the importance of distinctiveness posited by McKercher and Du Cros, he presents a different view of cultural tourism, distinguishing between forms of mass cultural tourism and the more 'serious' kind, which he argues involves the cultural tourist using a particular geographical area to fulfil a particular hobby or interest. Stebbins differentiates the cultural tourist from the cultural dabbler, with the latter merely content to passively experience a particular cultural setting whilst the former seeks intense experiences, engaging with the geographical locale and its people (Stebbins, 1996). The type of cultural tourism pursued hence generates a differentiated impact upon a particular locality, with the cultural dabbler arguably imposing greater costs on the host society as experiences have to be readily available for consumption. The cultural tourist on the other hand imposes less costs as experiences are personally sought after rather than presented as a blatantly consumable good.

1.1.2 Cultural Tourism in Latin America and its Commodification Impacts

The global rise of cultural tourism in the 1990s paralleled the pursuit of neoliberal economic policies as a solution for development and economic growth. Cultural tourism was seen as a means by which new markets could be established, foreign currency could be earned and employment generated (Baud & Ypeji, 2009). The focus on cultural tourism therefore demanded an ability on the part of countries to offer experiences that would prove attractive to tourists.

Cultural tourism in Latin America would come to be based upon what Bowman (2013) as well as McKercher and Du Cros (2002) came to term as the "allure of authenticity".

This idea of the importance of authenticity was in large part also derived from how cultural tourism was focused on the pursuit of a differentiated experience from the one tourists would be able to experience back home. As Scarpaci (2005) noted, authenticity and distinctiveness became linked concepts, with Latin American cultural tourism increasingly focused on the concept of unique authenticity, or on experiences that were both typical and indigenous to the locality. Schettini (2009) built upon this idea by noting that authenticity became increasingly linked to the idea of patrimony and that urban cultural tourism began to focus on key areas that were turned into attractions as a result of their heritage value. This model of cultural tourism implied a shift away from the enclave or resort tourism that had been the predominant model in Latin America in the preceding decades (Baud & Ypeji, 2009). This demonstrated the new importance dedicated towards authenticity and the need to focus on the individual particularities of each locality rather than investing in creating touristic sites that were broadly similar and marked only by their price differences. The focus on authenticity therefore made that concept into the growing factor of differentiation between destinations in the region.

Cultural tourism would come to focus on both the tangible and intangible aspects of what an area could offer. On the issue of tangible assets, Scarpaci (2005) advanced the idea of the formulation of 'living museums' in the old towns, or *centros históricos*, as a critical part of the urban touristic experience in Latin America. Bowman (2013) argued that these were critical sites of authenticity chiefly because of their visible historical heritage. This historical element conferred a sense of legitimacy upon them and Scarpaci posited that the 'living museum' concept placed upon such areas enabled the transformation of the *centro histórico* into a physical space where one could experience a unique history. Borrowing Stebbin's (1996) idea of a cultural dabbler, these 'living museums' would serve as perfect sites for those interested in sampling elements of local culture without the hassle of having to search for and invest effort in immersing oneself into local culture.

Yet, just as cultural tourism promoted the growth of the 'living museum' idea and the commodification of physical space, it would also affect the people who lived in such areas as the tourist and the local came into contact with one another. Residents would inevitably find themselves to be part of the attraction, even if they had not volunteered for that role. Baud and Ypeji (2009) noted that cultural tourism has the effect of turning 'the resident into spectacle', where the local human element is needed for authenticity and atmosphere, as well as for the interactive experience central to cultural tourism. At the same time however, the local resident is excluded from his own locality as the space has now been reclassified for the consumption of external parties. The commodification of residents of these historic districts therefore demonstrated a new priority that privileged the foreign over the local. If such areas were to be living museums, the residents were effectively transformed into being part of the exhibit.

Scantelbury (2003) builds upon this commodification of space and resident when he put forth the idea that cultural tourism in Latin America has led to the commodification of both tangible and intangible heritage that have formed the basis of country brands. Scantelbury (2003) and Scarpaci (2005) both noted that certain emblematic elements of local culture such as music, food and dance have been highlighted and marketed to tourists and that these elements, which increasingly play a major role in the construction of cultural circuits, have also gradually become linked to particular countries. These perceived representative cultural elements have therefore gelled together to form an organic branding for the country or city in question. This process transforms these experiences into consumable products, with specific aspects of culture behind presented as attractions. This has the effect of ingraining a certain perception of a locality and its offerings to potential visitors, resulting in the emergence of a basket of cultural goods that a potential locality could officially combine in a concerted marketing campaign. The following section will examine how one such model, city branding, came to be, and how it draws upon these elements of cultural tourism as its necessary lifeblood.

1.2 The Formulation of City Branding

Key cultural elements serve as keystones for a cultural touristic experience and these formed the basis of city branding projects meant to promote these cities as international tourist destinations. Moraes Ocke and Ikeda (2014) view city branding as the principal strategy adopted by cities to augment their attractiveness and to delineate their distinctiveness from potential competitors. To understand the importance of city branding in the overall scheme of cultural tourism, it is crucial to have a clear conception of what the term itself actually means. This paper adopts the definition posited by Sevin (2014) that city branding is effectively the summation of the collective efforts undertaken to transform a city from a place to a destination. City branding therefore seeks to build an idea or, more accurately, an ideal, of what a particular city is and what it can offer the potential visitor. As Moraes Ocke and Ikeda (2014) note, city branding is essentially an exercise in a positive reinforcement of distinctiveness. Sager (2011) places this concept within the neoliberal prism that was dominant in the 1990s, which elevates the city to the status of a place with unique experiences that can be sampled by a visitor, essentially transforming a place into a consumable destination.

Sevin (2014) posits that the final objective of city branding is the successful crystallization of an imaginary web of tangible and intangible experiences in the minds of potential consumers, or in this case travellers, that they can only associate with the specific destination. In a competitive market, a city is forced to compete for investment and capital and, in this context, the exploitation of unique cultural goods such as the historic city centers and the promotion of certain activities and businesses form an

important strategy in the construction of any city branding idea or campaign (Calvento & Colombo, 2009; Lederman, 2015; Kanai & Ortega-Alcázar, 2009).

Dinardi (2015a) postulates that this form of strategic thinking converts an existing urban culture into a product directed towards an international audience, with the clear and unmistakable goal of generating income and wealth for the city in question. Taking into account both Sevin's and Dinardi's perspectives on city branding, this paper argues that a key outcome of such a strategy is the inevitable creation of an "imagined" or "idealized" city, where a place is glorified and dressed up to be a destination. Yet in the pursuit of such an ideal it is inevitable that some cultures, identities and social groups are celebrated and reified to be emblematic icons of that particular urban centre while others are suffocated and marginalized (Herzer, Di Virgilo & Rodríguez, 2015). City branding therefore results in the creation of a set of winners and a set of losers in the pursuit of conformity to the desired ideal of a city as conceived of within the adopted city brand. Furthermore, the necessity imposed by city branding schemes of making a city conform to its desired image necessarily requires both the leadership and the intervention of the state in urban affairs. This is why Valenzuela (2015) argues that city branding is a project of change that is directed by the state and supported by the actors, both local and foreign, that stand to benefit from it. There are naturally a host of phenomena that are generated as a result of such attempts by a dominant group to advance a project of their own design over the concerns of the dominated group, but this paper focuses on one single phenomenon by exploring what Sager (2011) argues to be city branding's role as an important factor in the generation, acceleration and intensification of processes of gentrification.

In this sense, city branding is, by its very nature, an elite project. The image of the desired city is defined often not by the majority of the city's residents, but rather by those residents who hold the greatest influence, be it political, economic or sociocultural (Sager, 2011). Adopting the argument posited by Herzer *et al*. (2015) regarding the inevitable creation of a hierarchy of winners and losers as a result of such a strategy, this paper argues that city branding is a scheme propelled by the desire of the city's socioeconomic elite to impose their vision of an ideal city on its inhabitants. In places like Latin America where social inequalities are already large, this strategy further serves to widen that gap by benefiting the already significantly advantaged elites. Furthermore, it can be argued that, as city branding to a large degree draws upon a city's cultural resources, there is a process of cannibalization of local non-elite culture that is repackaged and remarketed as authentic for domestic elite and external consumption. Therefore, through the promotion of idealized and sanitized versions of local culture, city branding poses the risk of turning areas into commercialized living museums and diluting indigenous culture for the benefit of an external rather than domestic audience. While city branding threatens to debase and commoditize local culture and identity, gentrification can be seen as the tangible transformation that undermines the spaces and the people who generate the cultural elements being promoted.

1.3 The Debate About Gentrification and its Links with City Branding

Although the processes we collectively and colloquially term gentrification might occur in a host of cities across the globe, this paper proposes that there exist several phenomena that are similar to gentrification, but are simultaneously unique and distinct. This section seeks to examine the way gentrification is presented and to contrast it with some of the other labels and concepts used to address related phenomena.

1.3.1 Gentrification or Urban Regeneration?

In their studies about gentrification, Herzer *et al*. (2015) and Salinas Arreortua (2013) have defined gentrification as a phenomenon that can be measured through two key criteria, with each criterion denoting the specific form of gentrification that is occurring in a particular locality. Residential gentrification is the recuperation or acquisition of a residential area by a higher social class, often by elements of the middle or upper class that results in the gradual displacement of the previous residents. Commercial gentrification, on the other hand, involves a substantial change in the nature of enterprises in a locality, with the newer businesses targeted towards servicing a different, economically wealthier clientele. Both sets of authors stress that mixed cities, i.e. cities with a mix of residential and commercial functions within each neighbourhood, often experience both forms of gentrification.[2] From their definitions, this paper adopts the definition that gentrification is effectively the process of change in the existing socioeconomic profile of a locality's residents and in the commercial and recreational services that are available for consumption.

Although gentrification may be the word most commonly associated with such processes of urban transformation, Salinas Arreortua (2013) notes that this is an increasingly loaded term with significant negative connotations. This is because 'gentrification' has become inextricably linked to the inevitable displacement of pre-existing groups and has been seen as disadvantaging groups on the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder. For this reason, scholars such as Troncoso and Schettini (2011) have noted that municipal authorities and property developers have increasingly chosen to employ the term 'urban regeneration' to refer to such processes. Urban regeneration projects have thus generally been presented as being beneficial for existing residents in terms of the upgrading they would receive to their quality of life, and schemes like this are usually presented as being in the residents' interests. It is worth noting that this very idea of regeneration implicitly classifies the existing residents of such areas as contributing to its degradation and perhaps even degeneracy.

[2]Latin American cities are often feature mixed use neighborhoods with the city itself possessing a defined urban nucleus. Several Latin American cities, including Buenos Aires, are however beginning to follow North American tendencies of sprawl and zonification, especially around their periphery.

This paper incorporates the ideas presented by Lederman (2015) and Herzer *et al*. (2015) that much of the hype surrounding the beneficial impacts of urban regeneration for existing residents is largely rhetorical, and that such projects are by nature not inclusive, given that residents are often left out of the consultation and conceptualization process of such urban renewal schemes. Authors such as Kanai and Ortega-Alcázar (2009) and Dinardi (2015a) even argue that urban regeneration projects are often responsible for an increase in social divisions that further accelerates the process of gentrification.

1.3.2 The Latin American Perspective on Gentrification

At the same time, however, academics have also noted that gentrification differs from place to place and that the form of gentrification occurring in Latin America is somewhat different from that in the Anglophone world (Janoschka, Sequera & Salinas, 2014). Allen (2008) offers the view that researchers working on urban issues in Latin America are not simply passive, neutral observers of such urban phenomena and that in many cases they are active participants in the struggle against exclusionary projects such as gentrification. Furthermore, the perspectives from the region regarding such processes are inevitably tinged by the experience of neoliberal policies undertaken in the last two decades that have produced a specific model of urban development that focuses on the 'reconquest' of the historic city centre by the upper classes (Borsdorf & Hidalgo, 2010; Bromley & Mackie, 2009; Crossa, 2009). Jones and Varley (1999), the pioneering authors on gentrification in the region, introduced the idea of symbolic gentrification through the process of conservation programs in the *centros históricos*. They posit that heritage conservation effectively serves as a legitimizing smokescreen for transforming the city centre for the residential and recreational needs of a higher social class. This in itself is a symbolic act of repositioning the elites at the heart of urban politics. When one considers the way Hispanic cities are planned, this symbolism takes on greater meaning as all the key functions of political, economic and religious power tend to be concentrated in the historic centre. Furthermore, what makes this process distinctive to Latin America is the leading role that the state plays in the process, for it is the state which is ultimately in charge of the issue of patrimony and has the power to initiate projects in the name of heritage protection (Janoschka *et al*., 2014). What this demonstrates is that gentrification is driven by the quest for economic profit, rather than out of any intrinsic desire to promote culture.

In an attempt to contextualize gentrification within the Latin American context, some scholars have consciously chosen to reject the Anglophone epistemological construction and sought to establish their own terms (Jaramillo, 2006). Bortolozzi (2009) and Leite (2010) have proposed the term *ennoblecimiento del espacio* (spatial ennoblement) whilst Argentine academics Bracco (2012) and Schettini (2014) have posited the idea of *recalificación* (requalification). Both terms are similar to gentrification but may be seen

in some ways to be a description of a slightly more benevolent phenomenon. Essentially both academics have argued that such processes result in changing the use of the space without the attendant full displacement of the existing residents. This conceptual theory argues that urban regeneration projects are spatial interventions, but that precisely because they only target specific localities within a particular neighbourhood, the impact of such projects is distributed unevenly across the larger area. Janoschka *et al*. (2014) have termed this "the variegated geography of gentrification" (1249). Essentially, enclaves are created which are largely frequented by people extraneous to the locality and which generate an image or perception of the wider neighbourhood without the effects spilling out into adjacent areas.

Girola, Bracco and Yacovino (2013) argue that this *recalificación* takes place within the larger framework of the protection of patrimony, essentially linking the phenomenon to specific areas where there is a high degree of cultural patrimony and explaining the variation that Janoschka *et al*. noted given that the phenomenon would be strongest in localities such as specific streets or buildings with the greatest patrimonial value. *Recalificación* can therefore be seen as a form of targeted, strategic gentrification with the intention to use existing cultural and geographical assets from the surrounding neighbourhood whilst creating a zone that is substantially different from but inherently more appealing than what it once was (Leite, 2007). Prado (2012) bolsters this argument by suggesting that *recalificación* in historic neighbourhoods is really a form of global gentrification aimed at not just the domestic elite, but also at attracting a certain class of foreign migrant, generally North American or European, to settle within or utilize these newly 'reconquered' spaces. In his study of *ennoblecimiento del espacio*, Leite (2007) notes how the original residents are pushed to the periphery of gentrification projects and excluded from the spaces engendered by the spatial interventions, further highlighting the level of social inequality. The original inhabitants therefore still live in the neighbourhood, but are effectively excluded from its public space (Leite, 2007). This results in the uncomfortable situation where foreign and or wealthier residents are embedded into the framework of what is largely a working-class neighbourhood, with both groups maintaining their distance and separation despite the spatial proximity.

In addition, authors including Scarpaci (2005) note the challenges that academics conducting fieldwork in Latin America face when dealing with the issue of gentrification. The term is often familiar to academics and to the well-educated people, but the term itself, or its Spanish equivalent, *gentrificación*, is often greeted by puzzled looks from local residents. As Scarpaci (2005) notes, locals themselves often have a plethora of their own terms they use to describe phenomenon that scholars call gentrification, *recalificación* or *ennoblecimiento del espacio*. Scarpaci (2005) argues that locals do make the distinction between positive changes and neutral or negative ones. The former is termed as *reanimar al barrio*, or neighbourhood revitalization, and the latter simply as *cambios en el barrio*, literally changes in the neighbourhood (Ibid.). Scarpaci's overlay

therefore adds an additional layer of complexity to an analysis of gentrification and its related forms in the Latin American context. There is the overarching, widely-used concept of gentrification, but also the more nuanced Latin American academic terms of *recalificación* and *ennoblecimiento del espacio*. But the people who are actually affected by such changes use their own terms. This leaves the researcher with a whole host of terminology that can be used to describe with accuracy the precise nature of change. These terms also remind us that not all urban change is negative, and that some processes of change may have nothing whatsoever to do with tourism but may eventually have the unintended effect of making an area attractive to outsiders.

Scarpaci's influence on this investigation, along with the ideas of Bracco (2012) and Schettini (2014), has been twofold. Firstly, it has influenced the methodology and expanded the range of terms employed in interviews and informal conversations when discussing gentrification and its related phenomena. Secondly, it has brought this investigation to examine how specific city branding goals have led to certain forms of gentrification in different localities. For purposes of analytical clarity, this paper will use the term gentrification as a broad umbrella term to include all of the various sub terms, but specific terms will be used subsequently in the analysis in chapters 2 and 3.

1.3.3 City Branding and Gentrification, An Intertwined Helix

Having undertaken an exploration of the idea of gentrification, it is therefore necessary to demonstrate how city branding and gentrification are related and intertwined concepts. To do this, one must first understand how gentrification has created spaces conducive to the image cities seek to possess and develop as part of their branding campaign. In the existing literature, there appears to be a general consensus that the strategy of urban regeneration effectively serves as a framework that allows for the creation of new and unique cultural areas in neighbourhoods that were once considered marginal or undesirable to residents and visitors to the city who belonged to the upper echelons of the socioeconomic order (Lederman, 2015; Troncoso & Schettini, 2011; Valenzuela, 2015). Lederman (2015) goes further by labelling such efforts as spatial interventions by urban authorities or developers that are intended to create desired urban spaces for cultural and residential projects that prioritize the wants of tourists and wealthier residents before the needs of the existing local residents. At the very least, he argues, the cultural products and spaces created as a result of such process inevitably cater to the consumption preferences of those external to the neighbourhood. This paper therefore argues that urban regeneration projects function as effective beachheads that seek to introduce pockets of space pertaining to an external social class within neighbourhoods that were once predominantly working class in character, resulting in a gradual alteration in the socioeconomic profile of the residents and visitors to the locality.

It is however the work of Herzer *et al*. (2015) that links the issue of urban regeneration and its gentrificational properties with the desire to attract tourists. These authors posit that because the expansion of touristic zones within urban areas of Latin America results in the subsequent rise in property and rental prices in the targeted zone and its peripheral areas, such prices can be used as a primary indicator in determining whether gentrification is taking place. Price increases cause living costs to become unaffordable for existing residents and lead to an exodus that makes room for new residents or tourists to take over the vacated spaces. Mowforth, Charlton and Munt (2008), as well as Janoschka *et al.* (2014), argue that in the Latin American context the collaboration between the state, property owners and developers as well as the private business sector, with regard to a desire to see rising property prices in marginal neighbourhoods deemed to have potential, constitutes an institutionalization of gentrification as a facet of municipal policy and urban planning. Sager (2011) takes this one step further and explicitly connects this idea to the notion of city branding with his idea that cities which seek to implement an effective city branding strategy have at the same time embarked on processes of exclusionary zonification in order to guarantee and promote the existence of certain types of residences and businesses in a particular locality. This paper fuses both theories in order to advance the argument that gentrification is an urban phenomenon employed by city authorities in order to create desired spaces that would fulfil the goals and image of the city as projected through the city branding framework. Gentrification is thus supported by the state in part because it contributes towards enhancing the tourism potential of the city, and receives buy-in from key sectors of the city's socioeconomic elite as it expands the spatial environment in which they would like to live, work and play.

Conclusion

City branding is thus a two-pronged strategy, as it not only helps to cement a city's image abroad and boost its standing in the cultural tourism market, but also contributes to the fulfillment of elite desires by projecting their idealized and desired image of the city. Gentrification meanwhile serves as an ideal method for the recuperation of spaces that have tourism potential due to their existing cultural assets but also allows for the opening up new areas for the benefit of the upper classes. These two concepts are bound together in a mutually reinforcing cycle, as growing gentrification allows a city to advance towards its goal of consolidating a particular image. Having laid out this theoretical framework, the following chapters therefore seek to establish whether the situation in Buenos Aires is more of a process of state-driven gentrification as a result of city branding, or whether the two phenomena are more complementary, i.e. whether organic gentrification is aided by city branding.

CHAPTER 2

City Branding and Gentrification in Buenos Aires since 2001

Having laid out the theoretical framework in the preceding chapter, this chapter will focus on how city branding and gentrification took place in the city of Buenos Aires. Beginning with an examination of the adopted form of city branding, the first section will detail how municipal authorities planned to achieve their desired outcome. The subsequent sections will explore how these aims led to the projects of urban regeneration in the neighbourhoods of San Telmo and La Boca and what the literature has made of these urban transformations.

2.1 City Branding through Buenos Aires' Cultural and Tourism Plans

Often colloquially called the 'Paris of South America', with its elegant European architecture, bustling cultural scene, and a smorgasbord of shopping and gastronomical offerings, Buenos Aires has long been one of Latin America's urban jewels. The city's fame has seen it rated by travellers as the most popular destination in South America (Méndez, 2016)[3] whilst the World Cities Culture Forum in 2012 declared Buenos Aires the most visited city in Latin America with over 2.8 million international visitors annually. On the Global Cities Index[4], Buenos Aires has shown itself to be the best performing Latin American city, advancing from the 33rd position in 2008 to the 21st position by 2016 (Global Cities Index, 2016).[5]

Yet, this tourism success emerged in the wake of the 2001 Argentine economic crisis that seemed to be the nadir of a country that had been in considerable decline for several decades. Scholars like Schettini and Troncoso (2011) argued that the crisis provided the government with the necessary impetus to launch a city branding campaign in tandem with renewed efforts at urban regeneration. Dinardi (2015b) proposed the idea that cultural tourism was not seen as a panacea for the city's problems, but that it could help rehabilitate the country's image abroad and ameliorate the dire economic situation.

[3] Méndez mentions that the majority of tourists flock to the attractions in the Monserrat and San Telmo neighbourhoods.

[4] The Global Cities Index ranks 125 cities on a composite score based on their business activity (30%), human capital (30%), information exchange (15%), cultural experience (15%) and political engagement (10%).

[5] Buenos Aires now ranks higher than cities such as Amsterdam and Istanbul. Its closest Latin American competitor is São Paulo in 34th place, with Rio de Janeiro, arguably Buenos Aires' major competitor for regional tourism, in a distant 50th place.

Both sets of authors posited that the dramatic changes to both the tourism industry and urban geography was the result of visionary leadership in the city government that created the *Plan Estratégico de Cultura de la Ciudad* (Strategic City Culture Plan) that served as the coordinating framework for the city's cultural development. As an accompaniment to the aforementioned plan, the city also put forth the *Plan de Marketing de Turismo* (Tourism Marketing Plan), which outlined how the city aimed to attract tourists. The following subsections will examine the different aspects of both plans and how they sought to consolidate the city's brand as the 'Cultural Capital of Latin America'.

2.1.1 The Blueprint for City Branding: The Strategic City Culture Plan

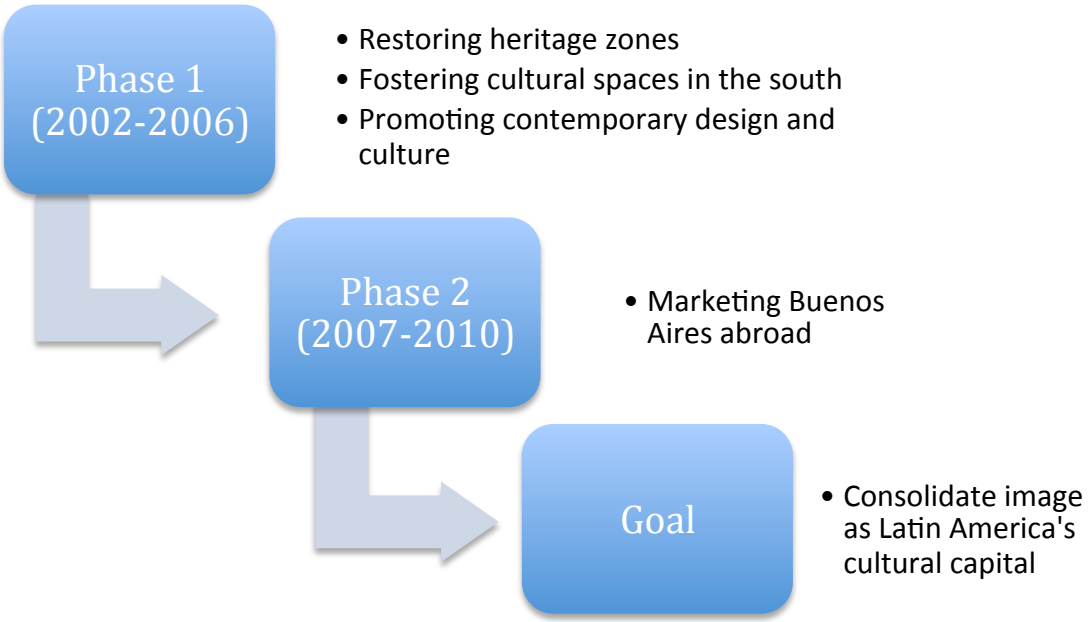
The Strategic City Culture Plan adopted in 2001 laid out the city's quest to be Latin America's cultural capital by leveraging on its various assets. In its section 6.1.3, the plan noted that Buenos Aires has always been a centre of culture in the region; that the vast majority of Argentina's cultural assets and creators are in the city; the high socioeconomic and educational level of the majority of the population and their predisposition for cultural consumption[6]; and that the private sector has always been willing to invest in cultural goods and has shown willingness to support the state in heritage conservation and revitalization (Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2001). Buenos Aires therefore possessed a significantly rich resource base of culture and the necessary buy-in from key elements of the population in order to embark on its branding and cultural tourism campaign.

The plan also emphasized the major challenges the city would have to overcome in order to cement its status as the cultural capital of the region. A primary problem, and one that necessitated a city brand, was the fact that Buenos Aires lacked any single, cohesive, appealing cultural image it could project externally, besides its historic connection to tango (Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2001). Also critical for the purposes of this investigation were the two other major problems listed by the plan. Firstly, the majority of the city's existent cultural attractions were concentrated in the northern neighbourhoods, even though the historic centre and the majority of cultural producers were located in southern neighbourhoods such as San Telmo and La Boca (Ibid.). Secondly, in the aforementioned regions where there were latent, untapped cultural resources, accessibility was limited due to issues with personal security, cleanliness and even lighting (Ibid.). This combination provided the legitimating reasons for state intervention in the form of urban revitalization in order to lay the foundations for mass commercial cultural activity. The plan also noted that touristic activity, and even the ability to attract non-residents to the area should cultural activities be developed, would be limited if there was an absence of complementary

[6] The Plan stated that 49% of the population belonged to the middle class and 23% to the upper classes (33).

services such as restaurants, shops and bars (Ibid.). This demonstrated that the success of state-led urban regeneration would require the participation of the private sector.

The objectives of the Strategic City Culture Plan were succinctly summarized within the *Visión 2010*, through the slogan of "Buenos Aires, Centre for the Creation, Production and Diffusion of the Cultural Life of Latin America and the Hispanic World" Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2001: 35). The following diagram demonstrates how the plan was conceptualized:



This chronological division demonstrated that the city government understood that the city's cultural assets in the southern neighbourhoods had to be developed to a degree before it could be marketing for external consumption. The subsequent programs of urban regeneration discussed in the following subsections were therefore subcomponents of phase 1 that were critical for the achievement of the plan's end goal.

2.1.2 The Strategic City Culture Plan: Perspectives from Academics and City Planners

Given the importance of the plan to cultural and touristic development, it is unsurprising that there has been some literature about the topic. Schettini and Troncoso (2011) note that the following the publication of the plan, the city's tourism advertisements came to reflect a city that blended both tradition and novelty, emphasizing Buenos Aires' cultural dynamism. Complementing this, Bowman (2013) noted that the city also sought to highlight its various cultural facets from producers across socioeconomic lines, "nourishing high culture, street level culture, microculture, and a diversification of the creative class" (2013: 130). This appears to echo Bowman's concept of authenticity by

showcasing a holistic approach towards culture by not privileging any one form over the other. The choice of the word "nourish" suggests that cultural development was being supported rather than directed by the state. Bowman therefore argues that cultural development was still to a large degree an organic rather than constructed process.

Indeed, Bowman (2013) noted that Hernán Lombardi[7], a major figure involved in the implementation of the second phase of the plan, argued that authenticity would be best ensured if residents rather than tourists were to be the primary consumers of the cultural goods across the different genres and that this could only be done by supporting all forms of culture. The city government, at least officially, therefore supported a campaign of cultural development that was meant to benefit both residents and tourists by ensuring that cultural production and consumption would be primarily orientated towards local needs. These statements will therefore be taken as a rubric in both the latter sections of this chapter and in Chapter 3, to see if the publicly stated version of the Strategic City Cultural Plan matches the results seen on the ground.

2.1.3 The Tourism Marketing Plan

The accompaniment to the Strategic City Culture Plan was the Tourism Marketing Plan published in 2005, which was centred on the city's plan to attract international tourists. In the 2007 report from the Subsecretary of Tourism that examined the plan, the four key goals of city branding itself were laid out. The plan calls for Buenos Aires to solidify its image as the gateway to the rest of Argentina; to be the cultural capital of Latin America by becoming its main cultural reference point; to leverage its status as UNESCO's first City of Design and to become the region's design capital; and finally to consolidate the idea of a unique *porteño* lifestyle that is both chic and contemporary as well as historically grounded and authentic (Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2007). The combined strategic directives and ideals set forth in both plans therefore demonstrate that the city government had a clear vision of what it wanted Buenos Aires to be. For the purposes of this paper, the investigation will centre upon how the pursuit of the second and fourth goals has shaped urban development in the neighbourhoods of San Telmo and La Boca.

2.2 Urban Regeneration in a Historic Area: The Case of San Telmo

2.2.1 San Telmo: Its History and Geography

San Telmo is the oldest neighbourhood of Buenos Aires and is defined from the rest of the city by its narrow cobbled streets flanked by low-story colonial houses. Following a

[7]He served as Minister of Culture for the CABA as well as head of the city's tourism agency, the Ente del Turismo, from 2007-2015.

yellow fever epidemic in the late 19th century that led to the departure of the area's wealthier residents, the neighbourhood quickly became one of the city's grittiest areas (Wilson, 1999). San Telmo today retains its general profile as a working-class area with a growing middle class population (Malfa, 2004). Despite all the vicissitudes of the past century, San Telmo maintains its unique charm that it exudes through a sense of faded grandeur. In the words of the famed Argentine writer, essayist and poet Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), San Telmo was one of the neighbourhoods that retained an element of old Buenos Aires and encapsulated the spirit of the city of his childhood (Borges, 1980).[8]

Map 1: Map of San Telmo (Buenos Aires Habitat, 2017b)

Beyond its historic nature, the neighbourhood occupies a central geographical position. It lies but a stone's throw away from the Microcentro, the city's economic and governmental heart. To the west of Avenida J.L.A. Huergo lies Puerto Madero, the city's most expensive district; to the east is the Avenida 9 de Julio and one of the city's main thoroughfares; its northern border is a mere three city blocks away from the Casa Rosada, the Argentine presidential palace; and its southern border is marked by Parque Lezama, one of the city's most popular and beautiful recreational parks (Wilson, 1999). The combination of an attractive geography and its historical nature ensures that San Telmo boasts great potential not just for tourism, but also as a cultural and residential

[8]In the chapter *La ceguera* in *Siete noches*, Borges wrote, "when I think of Buenos Aires, I think of the Buenos Aires that I knew when I was a child: of low houses, of courtyards, of covered cisterns, of grated windows, and of this was once all of what used to be Buenos Aires. Now, this is only preserved in the southern neighbourhoods [San Telmo, La Boca, etc.]; and in a way, I felt that I was returning to the neighbourhood of my elders" (Borges, 1980: 54).

space for the city's upper-middle and upper classes.

2.2.2 Tourism in San Telmo before 2001

Despite the dilapidated nature of San Telmo, its historical nature has meant that there was always a trickle of tourists who visited this area. Scarpaci (2005) noted the proliferation of antique shops and second-hand bookstores that practically dominate the commercial life of the neighbourhood. This combined with the many historic cafes present in San Telmo formed the initial basis for the small-scale tourism that took place through much of the 20th century.[9] Tourism saw an uptick in the 90s, as Scarpaci (2005) noted the marked increase in the touristic presence in the area of Plaza Dorrego, traditionally seen as the public gathering space and heart of San Telmo. Furthermore, he noted that the formerly cracked facades of the buildings around the plaza had just received a new coat of paint courtesy of the various business owners and residents. This demonstrates that some effort had already been undertaken by private actors towards sprucing up San Telmo, a decade before the launch of the Strategic City Culture Plan. Furthermore, in a survey of land use in 1996, Scarpaci (2005) found that San Telmo had a disproportionately high percentage of restaurants, accounting for 12.98% of the total land area. Thus, contrary to official perspectives on San Telmo as seen in the Strategic City Culture Plan, the years preceding the economic crisis had already seen organic efforts on the part of the private sector to attract tourism based upon the neighbourhood's historicity and its unique commercial and gastronomical offerings.

2.2.3 Post 2001 and the Management Plan for San Telmo-Montserrat

Post 2001, the government played a major role in designating San Telmo as a heritage zone and supporting the nascent regeneration efforts undertaken by the private sector in the neighbourhood. The state's role in San Telmo's urban regeneration was therefore not as its conceiver, but rather as its supporter, investing in physical upgrading as well as sponsoring marketing programs that would highlight the historic and gastronomical aspects of the neighbourhood. Malfa (2004) argued that this took place through the framework of the *Plan de Manejo San Telmo-Montserrat* (Management Plan for San Telmo-Montserrat).

Ansolabehere (2016) remarked that San Telmo already had a bohemian atmosphere due to its bars and cafes and that this aspect, along with the neighbourhood's historicity,

[9] In 1998, the city government established a list of historic cafes, bars and confectioners' shops that were considered to be part of the city's patrimony. San Telmo is host to a disproportionately high number of them given its geographical size, counting a total of 10 out of the 73 localities spread out across the city's 48 neighbourhoods. The city chose these places because they were seen as representative of authentic *porteño* life and could be used as tourist attractions. This suggests that, even prior to 2001, the government was already taking tentative steps towards the development of cultural tourism (Legislatura de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 1998; Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2014).

came to form part of the San Telmo sub-brand that the *Plan de Manejo* sought to preserve and market. 'Bohemian' came to be the adjective attached to San Telmo and the neighbourhood was quickly included, along with Recoleta and La Boca, in an axis of historical and cultural tourism in Buenos Aires (Instituto Nacional de Promoción Turística, 2017).[10]In addition to being 'bohemian', San Telmo's sub-brand increasingly became linked to the idea of it being the *Casco Histórico de Buenos Aires* (Historical Centre of Buenos Aires). The subsequent creation of the *Dirección General Casco Histórico* (Directorate General for the Historic Centre) was therefore tasked with improving living conditions and the general physical state of San Telmo in order to "recuperate (its) residential attraction" and "to revitalize its potential for touristic and cultural activities" (Malfa, 2004: 35). This is thus the clearest indication that urban regeneration in San Telmo was being directed and supported by the city government and that it was clearly oriented towards improving its touristic and residential qualities in order to attract a different sort of clientele to the neighbourhood.

From 2001 to 2004, cohering with phase one of the Strategic City Culture Plan, the *Dirección General Casco Histórico* implemented a whole series of urban regeneration projects in San Telmo. The streets of Balcarce, Chile, and Bolívar and Avenida San Juan and the areas around Plaza Dorrego and Parque Lezama were cleaned up and properly illuminated with the stated intention to turn these areas into part of a general touristic and cultural circuit (Martínez, 2005). Key architectural patrimonial sites such as the *Museo de la Ciudad* (City Museum) on Calle Defensa were renovated and reopened to the public (Martínez, 2005).[11] Malfa (2004) also noted the creation of neighbourhood cultural centres such as the *Centro Cultural Plaza Defensa*, which was to be a dual use cultural space for both residents and tourists and where local cultural works could be exhibited. This ties in with the idea of culture being commoditized and with the daily life of residents being put on display and turned into a spectacle for the benefit of the tourist. It demonstrates how the city government intended cultural tourism in San Telmo to be a multifaceted experience that included elements of residential cultural expression to enhance the authenticity of the space as a place where culture was still being developed.

The creation of these cultural circuits and spaces and the attendant physical improvements can be seen as a way of opening up local spaces to those foreign to the area. Recalling Scarpaci's (2005) concept of living museums, it would seem that the processes taking place in San Telmo tended towards such a direction. History and the tangible and intangible cultural patrimony of San Telmo were being put on display and the experience marketed as a way of exploring Buenos Aires' history in an authentic

[10] "San Telmo contiene todo el sabor de la capital imaginada" (San Telmo contains the entirety of the imagined capital) is how INPROTUR describes the district on its website.

[11] Calle Defensa is arguably one of San Telmo's most famous streets and home to the enormous Sunday market that stretches along its length, making the buildings along this route some of the most visited and viewed in the neighbourhood (Wilson, 1999).

manner. However, San Telmo is hardly unique in this aspect for La Boca seemed to be undergoing a similar process.

2.3 Spatial Interventions in the Name of Cultural and Touristic Development: The Case of La Boca

2.3.1 La Boca: Its History and Geography

Along with Recoleta and San Telmo, La Boca forms part of the trinity of neighbourhoods that is seen as the historic axis of Buenos Aires (INPROTUR, 2017).[12] However, unlike the other two neighbourhoods, La Boca's residents are largely on the lowest rungs of the socioeconomic ladder (Redondo & Singh, 2008). Tourism in this neighbourhood has historically been centred in the enclave of *Caminito,* which consists of a few city blocks. The neighbourhood is seen as a poor area that is unsafe after dark and mortally dangerous outside of *Caminito*. In the mid-1980s, this was one of the neighbourhoods facing the worst problems of urban decay, with 50% of its residents living without access to basic services (Leveratto, 2005). Yet La Boca is seen to encapsulate the spirit of the immigrant Buenos Aires of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as well as being the birthplace of tango, the dance form which put Buenos Aires on the global cultural map and which continues to play a major role in defining the image of the city today (Wilson, 1999).

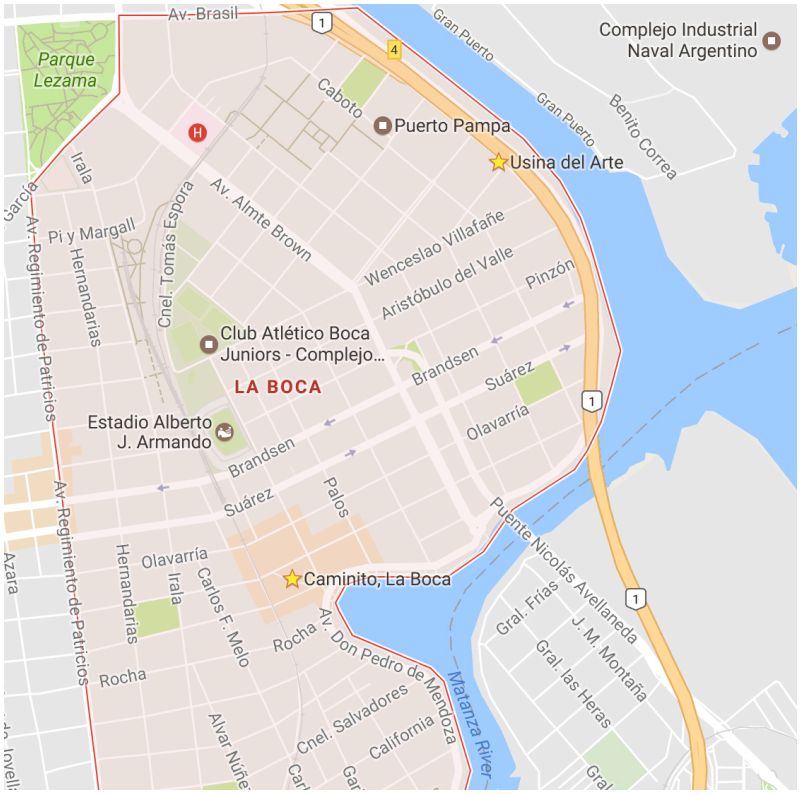
Map 2: Map of La Boca (Buenos Aires Habitat, 2017a)

[12] "Hacia el río, el barrio de La Boca alberga la Buenos Aires mítica" (Towards the river, the neighbourhood of La Boca hosts the mythical Buenos Aires) is how INPROTUR describes this district on its website about traditional Buenos Aires.

La Boca used to be home to the city's port and like San Telmo, La Boca occupies a strategic and geographical location in the city, being only a 10-minute drive from the centre (Leveratto, 2005). It is bordered to the north by the wealthy area of Puerto Madero and also by San Telmo; to the south by the river known as the *Riachuelo*; to the west by the Rio de la Plata; and to the east by the largely industrial estate of Barracas. Though less central than San Telmo, La Boca's proximity to both the city centre and the neighbourhoods of San Telmo and Puerto Madero lends it potential residential attractiveness, though this is diminished by the strong negative perceptions that La Boca engenders in the minds of other *porteños.*

2.3.2 Post 2001: Sprucing Up the Area and the Usina del Arte

With the launch of the Strategic City Culture Plan and the Tourism Marketing Plan, the city government began to focus more attention upon La Boca. The neighbourhood's history, its status as home to many of the city's artists[13], its distinctive, colourful buildings, its reputation as the birthplace of tango, and the perception in the eyes of *porteños* that La Boca contained some of that authentic old Buenos Aires that Borges (1980) remarked on ensured that the government would seek to foster cultural and touristic development in this area.



Map 3: Highlighting the area of Caminito and the *Usina del Arte*

[13] In the 1960s, La Boca increasing became home to artists and has retained an image of bohemian squalid charm as well as being a site of artistic production (Wilson, 1999).

Post-2001, the government sought to expand the touristic zone outside of *Caminito*. From the Paseo Garibaldi which forms the nucleus of *Caminito*, the government refurbished the façades and lighting as well as providing additional police presence along the streets of Magallanes, Rocha, and Benito Quinquela Martín in the hopes of expanding the touristic zone westwards to include the many art studios that were previously avoided due to security issues (Leveratto, 2005). These efforts in 2001-2002 were accompanied by plans to turn an abandoned power station in the northern part of the neighbourhood into a cultural centre. Though only fully opened in 2013, today the *Usina del Arte* is one of the city's most important cultural centres and performance halls. Despite these attempts to expand the tourist experience beyond that of *Caminito*, these were but small, highly localized projects of spatial intervention and were only partially successful in drawing residents out of the original enclave. Arguably, one could see the construction of the *Usina del Arte* as the creation of yet another enclave. These small-scale transformative projects were however to take on a whole different scale in 2012.

2.3.3 The District of the Arts

In 2012, legislation setting forth the creation of the *Distrito de las Artes* (District of the Arts), laid the foundations for an area that would bind sections of La Boca and San Telmo together through the creation of a series of cultural and touristic routes (Legislatura de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2012).[14] Though still in its infancy with limited implementation as of 2016, the plan calls for the creation of 20 new cultural spaces in both neighbourhoods with routes linking a total of 180 sites of cultural production and consumption (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2017b). When completed, this will be the largest cultural and urban regeneration project undertaken by the city to date.

[14] More than two thirds of the district was to be in La Boca, as shown in Map 4.

Map 4: Map of the District of the Arts with the coloured icons marking the various cultural sites within the district (Gobierno de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, 2017a)

When examining the map, one can see that it forms an arc in La Boca, connecting the artists' studios in the west with *Caminito* in the centre, before heading up towards the *Usina del Arte* in the north. The district goes on to link the two neighbourhoods via Parque Lezma and onwards towards Plaza Dorrego and Calle Defensa in San Telmo. The merging of parts of San Telmo and La Boca demonstrates a clear intention by the government to consolidate the cultural attractions in both historic neighbourhoods and is a clear attempt at promoting the image of the city as a cultural capital. Its construction suggests however the creation of two large mega zones, with the areas marked by their cultural and touristic value, or lack thereof, suggesting that some spaces were to be left out of this regeneration process.

This sense of neglected is supported by Leveratto's (2005) observation that private sector investment has still been limited to the area surrounding *Caminito*. In addition, she states that the real centre of neighbourhood life, revolving around Olavarría street and Avenida Almirante Brown, has received no funding or upgrading from the state due to the lack of cultural attractions there. This is a clear demonstration that the state is simply cherry-picking locations which have touristic potential rather than looking at areas where urban regeneration is most needed for the people actually living in those areas. Rather than promoting development, such projects appear to be crystalizing the socioeconomic divisions between residents and those external to the neighbourhood.

Given that urban regeneration projects are decided based on a locality's touristic potential, this paper posits that the use by Janoschka *et al*. (2014) of the term 'the

variegated geography of gentrification' has real relevance when it comes to understanding processes of urban change in Buenos Aires (1249). Since gentrification is dependent on the occurrence of regeneration, this suggests that *recalificación* or targeted gentrification would be the most likely outcome in Buenos Aires. This reclassification of space is most evident through the change in property prices, which the final section of this chapter will examine as one of the key indicators of residential gentrification.

2.4 Measuring Gentrification: Rising Property Prices and Changing Socioeconomic Composition

The projects embarked upon by the state naturally have an impact on residents. This section examines how these projects have led to an increase in rental and property prices in both San Telmo and La Boca and how this could be the basis for gentrification.

In a 2002 report by the Centre of Studies for Metropolitan Economic Development in Buenos Aires (CEDEM), it was highlighted that property prices had a direct correlation to the type of socioeconomic class that lived in a particular area and that regardless of geographical location, a neighbourhood with a largely working-class or poor profile would have correspondingly low property prices due to its perceived undesirability. This would explain why, despite their favourable location vis-à-vis the city centre, San Telmo and La Boca, especially the latter, generally exhibited low property prices in the period prior to 2001.

Ostuni, Imori, Silva, and Bañuelos (2008) undertook two sets of studies from 1999-2000 and 2003-2004 regarding the property market in both neighbourhoods. Given that these dates correspond to the pre- and post-launch of the Strategic City Culture Plan and its attendant urban regeneration schemes, this paper seeks to utilize their data to set the context for a later examination based on fieldwork material in Chapter 3.

2.4.1 Property Price Changes in San Telmo

In San Telmo, the price differential reflects the differences between areas which had undergone renovation and those that had not. For example, properties around Plaza Dorrego and Parque Lezama garnered a monthly rent of between USD80 to 100 more than properties located in non-regenerated areas (Ostuni *et al*., 2008). Furthermore, the authors note that in the wake of these projects, San Telmo became one of the areas in the city with the highest activity on the property market, signifying that many people were either renting or selling their properties in the years 2003 to 2004, when the first of the urban regeneration schemes had been completed.

2.4.2 Property Price Changes in La Boca

Ostuni *et al*. (2008) noted that in the years following the upgrading of areas around *Caminito*, 60% of all the properties being offered for sale or for rent in La Boca were concentrated there. Furthermore, the authors noted that the houses being offered on the market in 2003-2004 were in considerably better shape than those on offer in 1999-2000 (Ibid.). One can therefore conclude that urban regeneration benefited a select group of residents who were lucky enough to have properties in the regenerated areas. The data suggests that a significant percentage of those residents cashed in on the opportunity and sold or rented their now more highly valued properties.

Furthermore, according to Di Virgilio, Herzer, Ostuni, Redondo and Rodríguez (2008), the people who moved into these areas around *Caminito* post-2001 paid higher rents than others in the neighbourhood. Despite still being considered as members of the lower class, these newer residents were 62% likely to be better off than other residents in La Boca (Di Virgilio *et al*., 2008). Indeed, these authors state that this residential change is supported by the state as part of a targeted plan for the elimination of the poorest elements of La Boca from the district in a desire to clean it up for tourism and other uses (Ibid.). This displacement is even viewed positively by some of the wealthier members of La Boca, who believe that the quality of their living environment, as well as property prices, would continue to rise if these undesirable elements were relocated (Ibid.). One therefore sees the case of urban regeneration dividing the community based on individual perceptions on how they would stand to benefit from the changes.

The data from both neighbourhoods strongly suggests that the form of gentrification known as *recalificación* could be taking place, as a wealthier class moves into new residential opportunities based in the regenerated areas of each neighbourhood. Such a group would be attracted to the centrality of these newly refurbished properties, which would increasingly acquire a slew of commercial and recreational activities catered not to the poorer, earlier residents of the neighbourhoods, but to tourists and wealthier *porteños*. The changing residential profile would in turn reinforce the cycle of increasing prices as members of the same social class begin to associate the area as one of their own spaces and find it increasingly desirable to live there. Chapter 3 will therefore seek to examine if these increased property prices did indeed lead and aid in the process of *recalificación* and what the present day situation is like in both San Telmo and La Boca.

Conclusion

The city branding campaign and the attendant urban regeneration projects have been widely acclaimed as a success for the tourism industry in Buenos Aires. However, as we have seen in the preceding sections, this success is to a large degree a result of state intervention in urban development, which targeted certain localities that were deemed to be worthy of being included in the cultural capital project that the city had embarked

upon. The following chapter will examine data gathered from fieldwork conducted in 2016 and examine how this revalorization of certain spaces has affected the lives of residents and the nature of these neighbourhoods and to what extent these changes can be attributed to government schemes launched in the name of creating the cultural metropolis that city branding called for.

CHAPTER 3:

The Impact of City Branding in San Telmo and La Boca Since 2011

This chapter draws upon fieldwork material gathered in Buenos Aires from November 2016 to January 2017 and focuses upon the development of city branding and urban regeneration following the conclusion of the Strategic Culture Plan in 2010. The material presented here stems from semi-structured interviews with academics working on urban development and tourism as well as people who work in the tourism sector. The views of public functionaries working on tourism and urban planning were also solicited through emails containing a list of predetermined questions. A substantial component of the investigation was also shaped by a series of informal conversations with the residents of San Telmo and La Boca and the investigator's personal observations. The latest obtainable material on tourism promotion also proved invaluable in understanding how each neighbourhood has been presented to an external audience. Through this multisource prism, this chapter hopes to flesh out the contemporary situation of urban regeneration and to determine if city branding in the name of tourism promotion is a factor behind its occurrence in these two localities.

3.1 The Outlook on City Branding and Urban Development

3.1.1 Perspectives from the State

Given that the state was the principal actor behind the city branding campaign, it is crucial to examine how it has perceived this marketing campaign. Isabel Vegas, Director of Communication for the *Ente de Turismo de la Ciudad* (City Tourism Entity), stressed that Buenos Aires' city branding campaign was a major success story. She remarked:

> "In the area of tourism, there has been a conscious intent on the part of the government to construct an image of the city of Buenos Aires abroad. Buenos Aires is Latin America's most sophisticated city and has a wealth of cultural offerings that positions it strongly in the region's tourism market. Certainly the city branding campaign has been an important part of the tourism success since 2001 and it has exceeded our initial expectations." (Isabel Vegas, personal interview, January 4, 2017)

There is a clear emphasis on cultural tourism and the adopted form of city branding coheres with Sevin's (2014) idea that it is the state which leads the process of turning a

place into a desired destination through the successful consolidation of a positive set of cultural factors. Furthermore, Vegas noted that:

> "Neighbourhoods like San Telmo and La Boca are naturally attractive for tourists due to their historical nature. The city government has sought to emphasize the value of such historical patrimony through the promotion and preservation of these areas so that visitors can enjoy the distinct offerings available in each individual neighbourhood" (I. Vegas, personal interview, January 4, 2017).

This emphasis on the unique characteristics pertinent to each neighbourhood supports the assertion made by McKercher and Du Cros (2002) that urban cultural tourism is essentially based on the distinctiveness of each particular neighbourhood. The neighbourhoods are therefore subunits of city branding, forming component parts for the broader attractiveness of Buenos Aires.

Furthermore, the idea highlighted in the Strategic Culture Plan that this process of urban regeneration would benefit both locals and foreign was stressed by Vegas when she noted that:

> "The southern neighbourhoods have long been one of the most forgotten of the city. But the government has over the last decade sought to rectify that and improve the lives of the residents who live in them. The government has improved streets and sidewalks, created green spaces, and introduced street lightning amongst many other amenities. This of course has positively bettered the tourism experience in these areas but the primary beneficiaries are the residents" (I. Vegas, personal interview, January 4, 2017).

Indeed, Vegas' statement can be said to exemplify the city's internal brand that it projects towards the *porteños* themselves through the slogan "BA. Vamos Buenos Aires", which frames the idea that development is a rising tide that lifts up all boats and that progress itself is shared. This idea of inclusive development therefore seems to challenge what Herzer *et al.* (2015) have posited about city branding and its related projects leading to a hierarchy of losers and winners. Looking at Vegas' following statement, it is clear that the state's position is that there are no losers in this process, and that in fact, residents stand to gain the most out of it.

> "Attracting tourism benefits the residents for it leads to economic development through the generation of employment opportunities in the various subsectors of tourism such as shopping, cultural performances and gastronomy. Tourism is an inclusionary process that creates greater equality of opportunity for all" (I. Vegas, personal interview, January 4, 2017).

Given that Vegas is a major spokesperson for the state's tourism policy, her comments naturally reflect the most positive aspects of city branding. In order to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the issue, this investigation first turns to the academics, and

in later sections, to the residents themselves, who presented various arguments that challenged the state narrative.

3.1.2 Perspectives from the Academics

The perspective from the Argentine academy is that city branding was only partially responsible for the uptick in tourism. Nonetheless, most agreed that this increase in tourism was a factor in stimulating or accentuating processes of urban change. The scholars agreed that city branding by its very nature was meant for external consumption and that many locals were entirely unaware of it (Troncoso, Personal Interview November 25, 2016; Schettini, Personal Interview, December 12, 2016). Nonetheless they noted that the branding process, and the urban regeneration projects it engendered, had a variety of impacts on *porteños*, be they residents or persons extraneous to these localities.

Bracco argued that the growth of tourism was largely organic in response to the fall in the value of the peso following the 2001 crisis that saw Argentina become a rather cheap travel destination (Personal Interview, December 6, 2017). This was also the opinion from various tourism operators, making it difficult to determine if the hike in international tourism was a result of economic reasons or cultural attractiveness stemming from city branding. Nonetheless, tourism figures today remain steady despite the peso having dramatically recovered from its former value, pointing to the fact that asides from economic cost, the city has become inherently attractive to potential visitors and this could have been a result of the state's branding campaign.

Whilst this investigation is unable to ascertain the true impact city branding has had on international tourism, it has however uncovered its important domestic impact. The attractiveness that stems from marketing and image creation has influenced *porteños* themselves, as noted by Dr. Bertoncello, the director of the Institute of Geography of the University of Buenos Aires.

> "The change in perception of certain neighbourhoods is seen in the publicity about them. We read and use these guides to find new places to eat, to drink and to shop. The touristic perception therefore also influences the perception of other *porteños*. We share the same space with them. The tourists value our presence due to the issue of authenticity and the idea of the interaction with the other. We on the other hand go to places like San Telmo to see the tourists. The international tourist is itself an attraction for *porteños*" (Rodolfo Bertoncello, personal interview, December 15, 2016).

Ironically, the presence of tourists in formerly rundown areas legitimized them as increasingly important spaces in the eyes of residents of the larger city. Essentially if the wealthier foreigners found such places 'hip' and 'trendy', then the *porteño* middle and

upper class tended to adjust their perceptions accordingly.[15] The two groups therefore reinforced the presence of the other and transformed the affected neighbourhoods into destinations not just for tourism but also as attractive spaces for the city's residents as well. This demonstrated that beyond image promotion abroad, the state's marketing process also played a vital role behind image rehabilitation domestically, effectively promoting the process of spatial rehabilitation. The discovery of this strong domestic interest behind such projects was a major revelation in the course of this investigation the fact that tourism is not the sole driving factor behind urban regeneration will be further discussed in sections 3.2 and 3.3.

3.2 San Telmo: The Phantasmagoric Collage of the Touristic and Residential

3.2.1 The Creation of the 'Authentic Living Museum'

On a tour of the *Mercado de San Telmo*, Mr. Sierralta, owner of *Librería El Rufián Melancólico*, stressed that the building was a metaphor for the transformation that the neighbourhood had undergone. Residents have to share this space, once the local preserve for grocery shopping, with tourists seeking to peruse the growing number of antique stores that have colonized the area. The market is now a shared locality, one where authenticity is showcased not just in the Italian façade or the old corrugated iron pillars, but also by the fact that local residents can be seen doing their shopping in this area, reinforcing the 'living museum' idea that Scarpaci (2005) posited. Scantelbury's (2003) idea of the commodification of heritage is thus clearly seen in the way patrimonial sites like the market have been bundled up into the touristic package. Borrowing Stebbins' (1996) dichotomy of the cultural tourist versus the cultural dabbler, this perceived ability on the part of tourists to partake in the basic, everyday aspects of neighbourhood life heightens the sense that one is being a cultural tourist rather than dabbler, i.e. that one can fully immerse oneself in the 'true' local experience. As Baud and Ypeji (2009) put it, cultural tourism process effectively turns the 'resident into spectacle'. This is a crucial part of San Telmo's touristic appeal, as tourists and other *porteño*s are drawn to this idea of intermingling with each other and the residents in this historic environment.

However, as a result of the attempts to turn the area into a touristic hotspot, it would appear that the "showcasing" element so vital to a museum has taken clear precedence over the needs of the residents who have been effectively co-opted into being "exhibits".

[15] This investigator was reminded of how tango was originally frowned upon and dismissed by the upper classes of Buenos Aires but they soon took to it and elevated it into a national art form after the dance became popular in European capitals.

Sierralta noted this in his comments on the changes regarding how traffic and people are now permitted to move within the neighbourhood.

> "There has been a distinctive effort at banning vehicles and even buses from parts of San Telmo. There is a shift towards the pedestralization of certain areas. Today, public transportation is limited to the periphery of the neighbourhood, and most buses are now only available on Avenida Paseo Colon and Avenida 9 de Julio" (Jorge Sierralta, personal interview, December 3, 2016).

This pedestralization of neighbourhood space is linked to the creation of the walking cultural circuits and has made it easier for tourists to navigate between the attractions. This has however made it harder for the residents to access their neighbourhood, especially affecting the older residents, who form a sizeable number of the population giving San Telmo's traditional past attractiveness as a 'retirement neighbourhood' and has resulted in a residential shift towards the periphery.

Furthermore, Sierralta noted that the weekly *Feria de San Telmo*, which was previously restricted to the area around Plaza Dorrego has now spread out across the length of Calle Defensa, choking a key thoroughfare in the neighbourhood as the street stands prevent any movement of vehicular traffic (Personal Interview, December 3, 2016). Indeed, in informal conversations with residents of Calle Defensa, many have said that they prefer to leave San Telmo on Sundays when the fair is in progress to get away from the noise and congestion.

Rather than outright displacement, one observes that residents vacate spaces that have turned into touristic rather than residential zones in the pursuit of the goal of liveability. The exodus of residents from the growing touristic zones challenges the viability of the 'living museum' idea and threatens to turn San Telmo into another sanitized, commercialized tourism locality rather than preserving its status as a historic, living, residential neighbourhood. The physical avoidance of space that residents have demonstrated signify their rejection of the idea that they exist as a spectacle to enhance the tourist experience. Authenticity is hence lost when tourism development alienates rather than includes residents.

3.2.2 Commercial Gentrification: San Telmo the Gastronomical Hub

Asides from the physical changes with the revalorization of space, there has been an accompanying change in the commercial and residential profile of certain areas of the neighbourhood that constitutes a form of both commercial and residential gentrification. Bracco noted that from the 90s onwards, the neighbourhood has slowly been gaining a profile as a *barrio en la moda*, and that it was becoming an up and coming location (Personal Interview, December 6, 2016). Changes therefore began to increasingly prioritize the needs of this new visitor class over the original inhabitants

and this subsection will prove the clear correlation between the locations of commercial and residential gentrification that collectively form a process of *recalificación*.

One of the clearest examples of commercial gentrification is in the growth in the number of cosmopolitan dining ventures, drawn to the area by the increasing number of tourists and wealthier *porteños*. This transformation of the neighbourhood into a gastronomical hub has not however resulted in the increasing economic opportunities for residents that Vegas had touted. As Sierralta noted:

> "Almost none of these new businesses are established by the people of San Telmo, or even by other Argentines, but rather by foreigners. A Frenchman owns this café where we are at; the café on my street (Calle Bolívar) and the new burger joint (El Banco Rojo) are owned by North Americans. These offerings cater to those who can pay. Not to the residents. Coffee here used to cost nothing, now it's as expensive as in Recoleta or Palermo" (J. Sierralta, personal interview, December 3, 2016).

Not only are foreigners largely capitalizing upon these new business opportunities, but existing residents are effectively priced out of these new dining options. De facto exclusion based on purchasing power have therefore turned sections of the neighbourhood like Calles Bolívar, Estados Unidos, Venezuela, and Chile, into areas where locals simply have no reason or ability to be on. Space has thus repurposed for external consumption and benefit and this as the following subsection will show has a direct casual effect on residential gentrification.

3.2.3 Residential Gentrification: Population and Property Price Changes

Paralleling the change in the commercial makeup of the central core of the neighbourhood, there has also been an effective replacement of the population in the areas that have undergone urban regeneration. As Sierralta notes:

> "Many young professionals, especially the wealthier intellectual types, are moving in. They are probably attracted by the bohemian vibe. Many of the older residents have also left as rents have skyrocketed. There are new condominiums; the old houses are being turned into luxury apartment units of 10-12 each in a *casa chorizo* or *conventillo*" (J. Sierralta, personal interview, December 3, 2016).

This mirrors what Leite (2007) described as the marginalization of the poorer residents towards the periphery, and that gentrification is intrinsically an alienating force. Buildings distinctive to the area, such as the *casas chorizos* and the *conventillos*, once symbols of the working class, were now being refurbished as remarketed as urban chic. This influx of young professionals emphasizes the point made by Lederman (2015), Troncoso and Schettini (2011) and Valenzuela (2015) that there is a phenomenon of the

retaking of historic neighbourhoods in the city centre by the elites. What one sees in San Telmo is thus a process of population replacement, not through forced displacement but gradual dislocation due to rising living costs.

This transformation in the neighbourhood's outlook has led to Mrs. Frasia, an architect involved in restoring and selling properties in San Telmo, terming the new residential, commercial and gastronomical offerings of the neighbourhood as a "cheaper Palermo" (Frasia, personal interview, December 2, 2016). She noted how property prices have skyrocketed in the neighbourhood, increasing by between 300-400% in some areas (Ibid). Furthermore, Sierralta pointedly noted that due to the preservation laws written into the *Plan del Manejo*, many residents cannot afford to develop their houses and are increasingly selling their homes, accelerating the process of residential change (Personal Interview, December 3, 2016). This population replacement is seen by Bertoncello as a state-private sector partnership, where changing laws, rising prices and a desire to open up new residential spaces have marginalized the original inhabitants. As Bertoncello notes:

> "The government has created the conditions for this phenomenon with its policies of patrimonialization and the liberalization of the Argentine property market through its neoliberal programs. They used to be many *inquilinatos* who used to live here, people who paid close to nothing for rent. The laws that protected them were changed in the late 90s and early 2000s […] After all, the market is only concerned with revitalizing some spaces in order to make them attractive to those who can pay" (R. Bertoncello, personal interview, December 15, 2016).

What this demonstrates is that the politics of patrimonialization, which has a positive effect on tourism, are intricately interconnected with the market's desire to revitalize certain areas so as to convert them into more attractive spaces that can be sold or rented out for greater profit. This highlights the validity of Valenzuela's (2015) theory that the processes of city branding and gentrification are the result of a strong alliance between state and private sector interests, with the state's actions setting the foundation for the advancement of the market's interests. It also supports Herzer *et al.* (2015) idea that there is inevitably a set of winners and losers when certain spaces become revalued. The alignment of goals between the government and the private sector constitutes a powerful motor behind the *recalificación* of the revitalized zones and allows the state to outsource the task of transformation to non-state actors.

Accompanying this inflow of wealthier *porteños* is an increase in tourist accommodations in San Telmo, demonstrating the growing popularity of San Telmo with tourists. Besides the growth of Airbnbs and boutique hotels in the area, Mr. Dutil, manager of Circus Hotel, also noted tourism's impact on the rental market.

> "The foreigners can pay in dollars, they take short rents, and they aren't familiar with the local laws. In contrast, the Argentine pays in pesos, seeks a rental period of usually two

> years, and is supported by laws that privilege the renter over the landlord. Renting to tourists or foreigners is therefore a far more profitable option" (Facundo Dutil, personal interview, 28 November, 2016).

Housing options therefore privilege the foreign over the local and due to the disparities in purchasing power, locals find themselves shut out of properties in the regenerated zones or even out of the neighbourhood in its entirety. The retreat of the state which used to protect the rights of residents has therefore allowed market forces to triumph over housing rights, demonstrating that under an administration adopting neoliberal policies, the only ones who truly benefit from schemes like these are those who can pay the most.

The existence of both the commercial and residential forms of gentrification in San Telmo demonstrates the utility of the employment of Herzer *et al*. (2015) and Salinas Arreortua's (2013) dichotomy of gentrification to understand the various sub-process that are occurring in San Telmo. The two forms of gentrification reinforce one another, though in San Telmo's case, it would appear that commercial gentrification heightened the area's appeal that promoted the advancement of residential gentrification.

3.2.4. The Variegated Geographies of Gentrification

This process of change is however not homogenous and it impacts different parts of San Telmo in different ways. As Mr. Dutil noted, tourism in the neighbourhood is concentrated in the area north of the Avenida Independencia and in the southern part around Parque Lezma and Avenida Caseros (Personal Interview, November 28, 2016). This is also the area where revitalization efforts were most pronounced, demonstrating a correlation between the two factors. This differentiation in the revalorization of space in San Telmo also demonstrates the validity of Janoschka *et al*.'s (2014) idea of the "variegated geographies of gentrification (p. 1249), with the commercial and residential gentrification in San Telmo reconfiguring the way certain areas of San Telmo are perceived and used.

Given the evidence presented, this paper posits that what is occurring in San Telmo is a process of selective *recalificación*. The tripartite conglomeration of improved housing, greater commercial and gastronomical options, and growing cosmopolitism have therefore altered the image of San Telmo from an undesirable place to a new, exciting, and coveted destination for both tourists and other *porteños* alike. This paper argues that the physical changes implemented by the Directorate General for the Historic Centre and the state's branding of San Telmo as the historic centre provided a boost to the initial private sector led urban regeneration and that these state efforts therefore supported, rather than directly caused the process of *recalificación* given the private sector's role in commercial and residential gentrification. As San Telmo becomes ever more popular with tourists and as its gastronomical scene continues to blossom, it

seems likely that this process of revalorization will spread out from the neighbourhood centre and continue pushing out the less well to do residents. San Telmo is therefore an area torn between its old and new identities, with the notion of how its space should be used being contested and increasingly taken over by those promoting its newer, more fashionable identity.

3.3 La Boca: The New Puerto Madero?

There is perhaps no greater reminder that tourism in La Boca still remains in its enclave form than the noticeable presence of police in the areas around *Caminito*. Upon leaving the zone, this investigator was asked to follow a police officer back to the Paseo Garibaldi as anything outside of *Caminito* was far too dangerous. Tourism's challenge here is not so much the dilapidated infrastructure as it was in the case of San Telmo, but rather the perception that the residents themselves were a menace that retarded the development of the area. This perspective is crucial in understanding the state's policies regarding urban regeneration in La Boca and why a large segment of local residents are resentful of it.

3.3.1 Spatial Interventions in Creating Elite Spaces: The Usina del Arte

Given that the *Usina del Arte* has been one of the most significant cultural projects undertaken by the city and a stated attempt to move away from the enclave of *Caminito*, it became a centrepiece of my interview with Dr. Thomasz, a long-time resident of La Boca and an urban anthropologist. She was however quick to dismiss ideas that this project was driven solely for tourism:

> "The *Usina del Arte* is meant to recuperate space in a neglected area. It was not built for the residents for we were not included in the discussions prior to its establishment. It is not visited primarily by tourists, but by other porteños who live elsewhere in the city. It is place for people with resources, it has offerings for the elite. It is a closed space for us" (Ana Thomasz, personal interview, December 7, 2016).

Given its elite nature, it is unsurprising that the neighbourhood's artistic producers whom this investigator spoke to also rejected the project. With its cultural irrelevance and the prohibitively expensive cost of entry, residents understandably viewed the *Usina del Arte* as an alien space. Projects like these therefore represent an effective imposition of the culture of the elite class of the city upon a socioeconomically more disadvantaged zone. This belies the idea put forth by Lombardi that the city sought to promote and preserve authenticity and highlights the perceived illegitimacy of such projects in the eyes of the residents.

Furthermore, it demonstrates that the enclave model of tourism centred on *Caminito* is still fully in force as the *Usina del Arte* has shown itself to be relatively unsuccessful in spreading tourism beyond the traditional zone. In addition, given that state officials like the police seem to be actively discouraging people from wandering beyond the *Caminito* area, it lends greater credence to the idea that perhaps the *Usina del Arte* has a far stronger domestic rather than touristic impulse behind its foundation.

3.3.2 Spatial Transformations and the Construction of the District of the Arts

Yet the *Usina del Arte* is but a herald of a much larger change, a change driven by the launch of the District of the Arts. In many ways, the creation of this district appears to parallel the process of *recalificación* that took place in San Telmo. The key distinction between the two neighbourhoods is the manner in which residents are treated. Whilst residents were marginalized and priced out of their areas in San Telmo, Thomasz suggests a far harsher policy at work in La Boca.

> "Part of the project calls for the creation of a passageway, the Paseo de las Artes, linking Puerto Madero to *Caminito* via a pedestrian walkway that will function as a new cultural walking route. The plan is for restaurants and shops to develop along its length. But, this path will cut through the *asentamiento La Madrid* (a slum). These residents are to be evicted, perhaps even forcibly [...]To me, its (the District of the Arts) creation is not to attract tourists, but rather to attract investment. It is more than the machinations of the private sector for the state is the primary actor in the conceptualization and implementing of this project of aestheticization and repurposing of whole sections of La Boca" (A. Thomasz, personal interview, December 7, 2016).

Bracco termed this as a process of *renovación*, which involves a state-private sector partnership, where the private sector is allocated land by the state for development and where it is more or less given free reign (Personal Interview, December 6, 2016). Unlike San Telmo where the state piggy backed on private sector efforts and sustained a conducive environment for urban regeneration, here in La Boca the state is effectively reconquering space from the residents and turning it over to the private sector, constituting a process of forced gentrification. Furthermore, this specific project appears to be specifically created to benefit the wealthy residents of Puerto Madero by facilitating their access to the projected commercial and cultural offerings in the refurbished parts of La Boca. Thomasz echoed this sentiment when she stated that

> "The District of the Arts may see the creation of some 'cultural centres', in inverted commas of course. Much of this space will not be zoned for culture, but turned over to the private sector to do as they wish. An example would be this complex called Puerto Pampa (two blocks away from the Usina). It has luxury apartments, office space and amenities. This is symbolic of what will happen here. It's a spill over of Puerto Madero. It is colonization" (A. Thomasz, personal interview, December 7, 2016).

The District of the Arts thus appears to be a front for the expansion of the elite area from Puerto Madero southwards. The aesthetic that is prevalent in the swanky, posh area of Puerto Madero has found expression in projects like Puerto Pampa and it seems likely that this process of structural and human 'sanitization' will lead to the continued marginalization and expulsion of the poorer parts of La Boca. Furthermore, this shows that unlike in San Telmo where attracting tourism was an important causal factor, tourism in La Boca appears to be but a minor augmenting factor behind these changes.

The idea that the District of the Arts is oriented more for local elite rather than touristic consumption is supported by the latest tourism material from INPROTUR and the City Tourism Entity. All the scenes of La Boca are taken from within the enclave of Caminito with a fleeting cameo of the Usina del Arte and the football stadium (INPROTUR, 2016a, 2017b; Gobierno de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2016). Though the official narrative may focus on the tourism potential of the District, the reality of its domestic orientation emphasizes the point made by Borsdorf and Hidalgo (2010), Bromley and Mackie (2009) and Crossa (2009) that there is distinct attempt to use projects of urban regeneration in the name of culture as a smokescreen to mask the designs of the upper class in acquiring advantageous geographical spaces for themselves.

Exclusion rather than inclusion is hence the key outcome of such politics and in conversations with locals, it is clear that many are manifestly angry at such projects. As one individual remarked, "the rich already have Palermo, Recoleta and Puerto Madero and now they still want to take our neighbourhood as well?" This highlights Kanai and Ortega-Alcázar's (2009) and Dinardi's (2015a) idea of how such projects inevitably highlight the stark disparities between the different socioeconomic classes. Such projects of spatial intervention have therefore exacerbated tensions between two different classes who, previously separated geographically, are now thrown into the same space together.

3.3.3 Changing Property Prices and the Hierarchy of Winners and Losers

Just as in San Telmo, the process of urban regeneration in La Boca can be described by Janoschka's concept of 'the variegated geography of gentrification'. Thomasz herself notes how property prices and development cohere strongly with the degree of urban rejuvenation of particular areas.

> "Property prices have certainly increased along the planned route of the District of the Arts. The area just south of Parque Lezama and the length of Avenida Benito Pérez Galdós leading to the Usina have undergone an extensive program of beautification and rental prices there the most expensive in the neighbourhood" (A. Thomasz, personal interview, December 7, 2016)

Unlike most of the rest of Buenos Aires, Thomasz noted that the majority of the residents of La Boca were renters, or more commonly also known as *inquilinatos* (Thomasz, personal interview, December 7, 2016). Rising rents has pushed these people out of not just La Boca but even out of the city. Alongside forced gentrification or *renovación*, the same process of marginalization and peripherization that one sees in San Telmo is thus also evident here.

At the same time however, not everyone in the neighbourhood has viewed these changes negatively. The small middle class segment of the population, who largely owns their own properties, have reaped the benefits of the property and rental price hikes, which some residents say has reached to between 100-200% in the areas surrounding the *Usina del Arte*. Furthermore, the group of small business owners in the neighbourhood whom this investigator interviewed all privately stated that they were in favour of such changes as not only did it promise more potential customers, it would also allow them to raise prices as the new clientele would be able to afford it.[16]The transformation of parts of La Boca for the benefit of external parties and the economic gains on the part of a minority of the residents demonstrates Herzer *et al*.'s (2015) theory of how the processes of urban regeneration will always result in the creation of a set of winners and losers. It is therefore unsurprising that the projects have spilt the residents into two opposing camps based on their individual calculations of what they would stand to gain or lose from these changes.

Older residents in particular have expressed anxiety at what they view to be the bifurcation of their neighbourhood as a result of this issue. Recalling that the people of La Boca were historically one of the most socially organized and united populations, they feared that their bargaining power with the city government would decrease if the residents began to segment themselves into groupings as a result of these spatial interventions. Unlike San Telmo where residents seem resigned to move to the periphery to avoid conflict and to avoid having to deal with the changes taking place at the neighbourhood's core, the chances for conflict in La Boca appear to be greater due to the use of forced gentrification in order to support the interests of the city's elite class and the fracturing of residential solidarity based on a cost-benefit analysis of the changes.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is clear that both San Telmo and La Boca have undergone different processes and have been affected to different degrees by the projects of urban regeneration that were launched under the framework of city branding. Both

[16] The small business owners whom this researcher had a series of informal conversations with included 3 small café owners, 2 mini mart owners, an owner of a small restaurant and the owner of a stationary shop.

neighbourhoods have lost spaces to the new class of residents and tourists, with La Boca likely to face greater impacts if the District of the Arts is fully established. What is clear is that though tourism and urban regeneration has brought benefits to some, it has negatively impacted many others and that the model of touristic and urban development in both neighbourhoods belies the official outlook that such programs are inclusive or that they prioritize the residents' needs.

CONCLUSION
Excluded from the Dream: The Repercussions of Tourism and Gentrification

This paper began by positing the hypothesis that city branding was, if not the cause of gentrification, at least an amplifier. After analysing both the literature and the fieldwork material, this paper concludes that city branding, and the resultant urban regeneration projects that it engendered, was responsible as an amplifying factor for types of gentrification that differed in form between San Telmo and La Boca as well as in its intensity and geographical spread within each neighbourhood. This investigation has highlighted the complexity of this issue and has expanded upon the initial hypothesis by demonstrating that the examined process of urban change is a complex one caused by a confluence of several different factors.

Cultural tourism as promoted by the state in both San Telmo and La Boca conforms to the models proposed by Baud and Ypeji, Scarpaci, and Scantelbury. The commodification of culture and the quest to turn the residents and their daily lives into part of the touristic attraction was certainly part of the urban regeneration process. Bowman's idea of a 'living museum' is hence an appropriate label in describing what has happened in San Telmo as a result of the district being marketed as a historic centre. La Boca on the other hand suggests that cultural tourism is still limited to the traditional zone of *Caminito* and that the regeneration there is far more connected with domestic desires rather than for tourism promotion.

Cultural tourism and the resultant commodification of spaces and the people who live in them is echoed by the way Buenos Aires has been transformed into a destination that can be experienced and consumed by the cultural tourist through its city branding campaign. In fulfilling its image as a cultural capital, this branding campaign fulfils the distinctiveness criteria that Moraes Ocke and Ikeda, as well as Sevin, proposed. As Dinardi argued, by turning culture into a unique selling point, Buenos Aires' city brand has managed to carve out an idealized image of BA as a cultural mecca. Yet, the process of city branding has also led to what Herzer *et al.* have noted to be the exclusion of those who were perceived to tarnish this image. The gradual, and in some cases forced, dislocation of residents to the periphery or even out of the neighbourhood entirely and the sense amongst residents of a changing neighbourhood identity that is beyond their control demonstrates the reality of Herzer *et al.*'s argument that city branding and its attendant process of urban regeneration will always create a set of winners and losers.

From an examination of the situation in San Telmo, it is clear that Herzer *et al.* and Salinas Arreortua's concepts of commercial and residential gentrification have proven to

be useful theoretical concepts as both phenomena are prevalent in the area. However, by adding Bracco and Schettini's idea of *recalificación*, this investigation has been able to show how the changes in San Telmo represent the targeted revalorization of space for the benefit of tourists and wealthier *porteños*. Leite's refinement of the concept by showing how there is only partial displacement of residents under *recalificación* finds expression in San Telmo as residents are largely pushed to the periphery rather than being entirely driven out. By contrast, the situation in La Boca is more similar to traditional processes of gentrification with the forced displacement of residents and the state transfer of space to the private market highlights a process of *renovación.* Just as Borsdorf and Hidalgo, Bromley and Mackie, and Crossa have argued that urban centres through Latin America are being retaken by the wealthier classes, one notices the same phenomena taking place in Buenos Aires as middle and upper class *porteños* increasingly seek to live and work in areas like San Telmo and La Boca. This revalorization of space in favour of these external elements demonstrates the validity of Lederman's theory that the state has sought to use urban regeneration as a targeted policy of spatial interventions that not only result in an increase in tourist spaces but also in engendering the desired environment for the city's more advantaged residents. Borrowing Janoschka *et al.*'s term of the variegated geographies of gentrification, one can conclude that the retaking of this space differs from locality to locality and that the impacts are unevenly distributed across each neighbourhood. Change is therefore distributed unevenly, resulting in the emergence of hybrid neighbourhoods bifurcated into the local and the foreign and with spaces where the two come into contact with one another as the internal boundaries of these two spaces shift in favour of the foreign.

Triangulating the information drawn from both the academic literature and the corpus of fieldwork material from state, academic, private sector, and residential perspectives, this paper wishes to emphasis certain key conclusions. Firstly, tourism has clearly increased and become an important factor in influencing urban development since 2001, though it is unclear exactly how significant a role city branding played in that process. Secondly, the projects of urban regeneration though touted as being beneficial for residents are clearly prioritized towards the needs of tourists and other wealthier *porteños*. Thirdly, though state led urban regeneration in both neighbourhoods has been driven in part by a desire to cement the cultural capital status promoted in Buenos Aires' city brand, private sector regeneration has been an important complement to this process. The state in many cases can be said to have simply built a favourable environment for market forces. Fourthly, the material suggests that as much as tourism played an important part in such transformations, the desire to expand the spaces available for the *porteño* middle and upper class for their residential and recreational needs has been just as, if not perhaps even more important as the primary factor, especially in La Boca. Fifthly, the projects of urban regeneration have had differing impacts in different regions of each neighbourhood and have impacted different residential groups in different ways, resulting in uneven processes of *recalificación* in San Telmo and in La Boca and creating a variegated set of winners and losers.

The clear winners since 2001 as a result of these programs are the tourists and the *porteño* middle and upper classes who are now enable to enjoy a more refined, diverse, and safer cultural experience in both neighbourhoods. In addition, the wealthier *porteños* have now found new spaces where they can socialize, live, work and play, resulting in a spill over of their territory from the northern neighbourhoods into the southern ones. The state too has gained as it can now flaunt its capital as not just a tourism success, but also as a growing cultural capital with a diversified range of cultural opportunities. Landlords have found that their properties are now more valuable and are now able to garner more income. Private sector entrepreneurs in the housing, tourist accommodation, gastronomical, artistic, and shopping sectors have found new opportunities to establish and/or grow businesses with the increasing number of clients who can afford to pay more than the older residents. Tourism and urban regeneration has therefore benefited a slew of people.

However, the accomplishment of this dream set forth in 2001 has not led to rewards for all and indeed many have found that their position has deteriorated. Renters have been especially hard hit and indirectly 'expelled' from these neighbourhoods due to the increasing rents and living costs. Slum dwellers and squatters on the other hand face eviction and expulsion from their homes. The majority of residents have found their neighbourhoods increasingly becoming more foreign as the commercial and physical profile of the people who frequent the area change, leading to fears of a loss of neighbouring identity or an overcommercialization of local culture. Monetary concerns therefore pose a real challenge to the maintenance of the neighbourhood's existing populations and the threat of population replacement increases as each neighbourhood becomes ever more appealing to those external to it.

Despite the conclusions reached by the paper, this author also believes that it is important to point out the limitations of this investigation as well as the potential future research directions that others might wish to pursue. During the course of the fieldwork, a majority of opinions and perspectives stemmed from academics, private sector individuals and residents. The inclusion of more public sector perspectives, particularly those who work in the cultural, touristic, and urban development fields would have added greater depth to the analysis and presented a more holistic picture. Furthermore, this paper posits that it would perhaps be advantageous to solicit perspectives from such individuals on a more confidential, anonymous basis as that might provide them with the necessary security to reveal more critical perspectives instead of reemphasizing the official state view. Regarding the search for source material, this investigation had originally hoped to gather the latest information about the change in property and rental prices in both neighbourhoods, but unfortunately such data proved elusive as the last extensive work on this topic was conducted by the team led by Herzer *et al.* in 2003-2004. The inclusion of such data in a future study would therefore prove invaluable in generating a more accurate map of the processes of gentrification.

In addition this paper acknowledges that the selection of only two neighbourhoods for analysis, a necessary choice due to the length and scope of this work, presents an incomplete picture of the processes of touristic and cultural development and gentrification in the larger city of Buenos Aires. Future academic work on this subject would perhaps also do well to include the neighbourhood of Barracas, adjacent to both San Telmo and La Boca, into a more comprehensive analysis. Barracas has been designated as the intended home of the city's District of Design, but because no concrete plans are yet in place, this paper has for reasons of both relevance and brevity chosen to omit it from this spatial study. Given that turning Buenos Aires into a Latin American capital of design is one of the key goals of the Tourism Marketing Strategy, and that it seems to be the city's next big urban regeneration project after the completion of the District of the Arts, Barracas would appear to be the next frontier in examining the impacts of culture and tourism induced urban regeneration. Perhaps future studies would be able to use the studies conducted on San Telmo and La Boca to explain and understand the changes that will take place in Barracas and perhaps advise policy makers to avoid making the same mistake if they truly wish to pursue an inclusive developmental and tourism strategy.

In light of the evidence presented, this paper concludes that in the city's use of urban regeneration projects to consolidate its desired image as Latin America's culture capital, there are strong hints of what Sager termed a process of exclusionary zonification. The processes analysed in this paper fundamentally highlight that there is a contestation over the use, value and meaning of space in these southern neighbourhoods, with the state, tourists, private sector interests and members of the upper classes on one side, and the majority of the original, local residents on the other. The creation of spatial enclaves in both neighbourhoods, and the de facto establishment of spaces designed and catered to the interests of those external to the neighbourhood demonstrate a form of conquest rather than inclusion. The residents seem to be on the losing side and the unique characters of their neighbourhoods, which form an intrinsic part of their charm for those foreign to the neighbourhood, risk being subsumed, debased and repackaged in an altered form for the enjoyment of the new "occupier". Comprehending these issues in the context of Buenos Aires might therefore prove useful in furthering academic understanding of similar urban processes taking place in other global cities and help develop policies to ameliorate such negative impacts.

If the city government of Buenos Aires truly intends to seek a policy of inclusive tourism and development, it will have to rethink this de facto policy of zonification. It will do well to look at the city's domestic tourism branding campaign, where it calls the metropolis "BA. La Ciudad de todos los Argentinos" (BA. The City of all the Argentines). The sense that this investigator got from his interactions with the various residents who call San Telmo and La Boca home is that they are proud that their city is seen as the cultural capital of Latin America, but that they would be even prouder if they could see their

neighbourhoods and Buenos Aires, as truly *their* neighbourhood, and as *their* city. After all, a city is more than just a conglomeration of physical structures, for it is its people that define what it truly is. An inclusive city would be one where all *porteños* can feel that they truly belong and would elevate Buenos Aires to a position of being Latin America's most enviable urban gem.

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ANNEX

I. List of Interviews Conducted

Interviewee	Affiliation	Place and Date	Duration
Dr. Claudia Troncoso	Researcher with the Institute of Geography of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA)	Confitería Las Violetas, Almagro, Buenos Aires 25th November 2016	1 hour
Mr. Facundo Dutil	General Manager of Circus Hotel	Circus Hotel, San Telmo, Buenos Aires 28th November 2016	1 hour
Ms. Mercedes Frasia	Founder of the 'Welcome San Telmo' guide and architect	Casa San Telmo, San Telmo, Buenos Aires 2nd December 2016	20 minutes
Mr. Jorge Luis Sierralta	Owner of Librería El Rufián Melancólico	Mercado de San Telmo, Buenos Aires 3rd December 2016	40 minutes
Dr. Mercedes González Bracco	National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) researcher (cultural patrimony)	Esquina Sur, Boedo, Buenos Aires 6th December 2016	1 hour
Dr. Ana Gretel Thomasz	CONICET researcher (urban anthropology)	Café Borgia, Congreso, Buenos Aires 7th December 2016	1 hour
Dra. Mariana Gómez Schettini	Researcher with the Institute of Investigations Gino Gemini of the UBA	Centre for Latin American Studies of the UBA, Recoleta 12 December 2016	1 hour
Dr. Rodolfo Bertoncello	Director of the Institute of Geography (Tourism and social geography)	Institute of Geography of the UBA, Caballito 15 December 2016	1 hour

II. List of Questions for Public Functionaries

1. Algunos autores han escrito sobre el proceso de *city branding* (o marca ciudad) en el caso de Buenos Aires. ¿En su opinión, hay un intento consciente en el parte del gobierno para construir una imagen de la ciudad de Buenos Aires en el mundo exterior? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué es la imagen y en qué medida ha realizado este plan con éxito?

2. Ahora es Buenos Aires una de las ciudades más visitadas en América Latina. ¿En qué medida es el éxito del turismo algo conectado con la promoción de la ciudad como una capital cultural de la región?

3. En la promoción de la ciudad, ¿hay también un plan para promover algunos barrios específicos? Yendo a un punto más específico, ¿ha habido un intento consciente para fomentar una imagen o marca particular por los barrios de San Telmo y La Boca?

4. ¿Hay diferentes fases en la promoción turística y en la industria turística de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires desde 2001 hasta hoy?

5. ¿Son los proyectos de regeneración urbana en San Telmo y La Boca un resultado de un intento para aumentar el valor patrimonial y turístico de los barrios o es un fenómeno conectado con otro intento?

6. San Telmo a menudo ha sido presentado como un ejemplo de éxito de la regeneración urbana en América Latina. ¿En qué medida ha sido un intento consciente y qué significa esto para los residentes?

7. En declaraciones del gobierno de la ciudad, se ha hecho mucho sobre la necesidad de garantizar que el turismo genere un crecimiento inclusivo. ¿En qué medida se ha logrado esto?

8. Algunas han dicho que estos proyectos han creado simplemente enclaves culturales y turísticos que excluyen a los residentes existentes. En su opinión, ¿es un problema real y en caso afirmativo, que son las consecuencias por la identidad urbana y composición socioeconómica de estos barrios?

9. ¿En qué mediada el fenómeno de regeneración urbana ha afectado los precios de vivienda y la identidad urbana en los barrios?