

## II. Argentina

### PATTERNS OF URBANIZATION IN ARGENTINA, 1869–1914

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This study probes two major questions of urban growth: What are the significant forces that give physical form to the city, and what are the characteristics of human relationships within the city. In answering the first, the study seeks to move beyond the long accepted "plaza orientation" of Hispanic cities to explore hypotheses such as the "pampean urban structure," the "commercial" city, or the "commercial-bureaucratic" city.<sup>1</sup> The response to the second question attempts to cast further light on the powerful influences of cultural continuity and class structure in determining human associations through family and neighborhood or in occupational and ethnic groupings. In the long run, comparison of the results of this investigation with research on Latin American cities, such as the Caracas or Mexico City projects, or with urban histories of distinct cultural areas such as Australia and the southern United States, may yield more meaningful discussion of urban patterns in the developing world.

This analysis focuses on three Argentine cities in the late nineteenth century: Corrientes, Mendoza, and Salta. Although all are provincial capitals and fall within the same population range, they experienced widely different influences and environments.<sup>2</sup> Corrientes, a long-established port on the Paraná River, was caught up in the external turmoil of the Paraguayan war in the 1860s and yet only gradually faced the impact of subsequent trade, immigration, and investments that so dramatically revolutionized its downriver sisters of Rosario and Buenos Aires. The western trade and political center of Mendoza, totally flattened by earthquake in 1861, rebuilt itself along the "plaza orientation" as if nothing had happened, and then in the 1880s began to feel the effects of railroad building, rising agricultural production, and immigration. Salta, the intel-

lectual, economic, and political heart of northwestern Argentina, provides an appropriate contrast. Geographically remote, culturally isolated, and economically stagnant, Salta felt few of those external forces that tugged at cities linked by rails or waterways to Buenos Aires and the outside world. Its experiences in physical formation and human relationships thus can be measured against the change or lack of change in other cities.

A preliminary basis for this study was laid during 1974–75 at the Institute for Advanced Study by coding manuscript returns from the first two Argentine national censuses for 1869 and 1895—available on microfilm from the Genealogical Society of the Church of Latter Day Saints. Field research in the three cities will be carried out in 1975–76 with support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In addition to examining government reports, published works, newspapers, and municipal and provincial archives, particular emphasis will be placed on maps, photographs, and oral accounts.

In the preliminary research, six subpopulations (one for 1869 and one for 1895 for each city) have been recorded for all “upper-class” households, defined as residential groups that have at least two servants fourteen years or older working for the household.<sup>3</sup> Interval samples of approximately one thousand cases or individuals make up another six subpopulations.<sup>4</sup> The analysis of these two different subpopulations, mapped by census takers’ districts or blocks, will afford a more precise measure of family, ethnic, residential, and occupational groupings than ever before undertaken for the history of Argentine cities.<sup>5</sup> Although as of March 1975, the presentation of data in codebooks, histograms, and cross tabulations had just begun, it is expected that the analysis will stimulate further questions, hypotheses, and comparisons to be examined in field research and in subsequent writings on the subject.

## NOTES

1. See Patricio Randle, “Estructuras urbanas pampeanas,” *Cahiers des Ameriques Latines*, January–June 1969, pp. 87–123, maps; John W. McCarty, “Australian Capital Cities in the Nineteenth Century,” *Australian Economic History Review* 10, no. 2 (September 1970): 107–37; James R. Scobie, “Buenos Aires as a Commercial-Bureaucratic City, 1880–1910: Characteristics of a City’s Orientation,” *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 4 (October 1972): 1035–73, and *Buenos Aires, Plaza to Suburb, 1870–1910* (New York: 1974), pp. 250–58.

2. Urban population of these three cities grew as follows:

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	1869	1895	1914
Corrientes	10,321	15,781	28,681
Mendoza	8,114	27,655	58,790
Salta	12,685	15,414	28,436

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Note: The data for 1869 and 1895 come from manuscript census returns and differ slightly from the published figures in the national censuses.

3. In the process of defining "upper-class," the presence of servants in the household proved to be the only factor that consistently seemed to identify such families. In terms of data given in the censuses, males of "upper-class" families almost always belonged to landowner, professional, or merchant categories; but the occupational terms used, particularly *comerciante* or *agricultor*, also embraced many individuals who, on the basis of other criteria such as literacy or property ownership, did not seem to belong to the upper classes. In preliminary coding, the presence of one servant was tentatively used to confer "upper-class" status with the result that an unrealistic number of households appeared, many of which seemed to possess dubious credentials. The subsequent increase to two servants successfully eliminated almost all households that had illiterate males or men who worked as artisans or laborers, while at the same time conserving almost all households with men practising professions, owning property, having had schooling until at least fourteen years of age, or possessing names clearly associated with the city's ruling groups.

The following numbers represent "upper-class" households coded in this study:

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	1869	1895
Corrientes	94	127
Mendoza	142	357
Salta	198	306

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4. The interval between individuals used to secure each sample was determined by dividing total population by one thousand. In order to insure random selection, a new random number was used with each new census taker to select the starting number of the interval for that section of the census returns.
5. Information coded for "upper-class" households included age, place of origin, and occupation for the head of household, spouse, two eldest sons, and oldest daughter; the numbers of nonservant and servant members of the household; the sex, literacy, property ownership, and schooling of head of household; the number of children and years married for females, and the family name of household heads. Similar information was compiled for "individuals" in the sample subpopulations, omitting names and including age, origin, and occupation for parents and/or children.