Bolivian and Paraguayan Immigrants in Buenos Aires

A Discourse Analytical Study

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Abstract

The purpose with this thesis was to investigate the occurrence of racist discourses presented and expressed in the newspapers and in the Porteño society in connection to the occupation of the park Parque Indoamericano, in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December 2010. The park was occupied by families from the nearby shanty town, Villa 20, many of them originated from neighboring countries such as Bolivia and Paraguay. The occupation acted as a protest to the passiveness and inaction of the city’s government to solve the growing housing deficit.

The prevalence of racist discourses was investigated through adopting discourse analysis as a method of analyzing the articles from four national newspapers, and upon the commentaries made by readers as a response to those articles, at the time of the occupation. Racist discourses were found in both the articles and the commentaries; however these types of discourses seemed to be more vividly and openly expressed in the commentaries, rather than in the articles themselves.

Keywords
Argentina, Buenos Aires, Racism, Immigration, Paraguayans, Bolivians, Parque Indoamericano, Discourse Analysis, Media
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background
The Argentinean history and society has for centuries been marked by migration. During the late 19th- to the early 20th century a vast number of Europeans immigrated to Argentina, most of them originated from Spain, Italy, France and Russia (Texidó 2008:13). The majority of these immigrants were young males, seeking a better life, away from the famine and poor economic conditions in Europe (Devoto 2003:51&54). The European immigration was welcomed and promoted by the Argentinean government, and it contributed to as well as strengthened the white- and European identity of the country (Sutton 2008 & Grimson 2005).

From the late part of the 20th century up until today the majority of the immigrants come from neighboring countries, most of them from Bolivia and Paraguay. The main reason for leaving their home countries is due to the lack of employment. But there is also a certain attraction to the relatively high living standards in Argentina in comparison to other countries in the region (Texidó 2008).

Racism is not a new phenomenon in Argentina, the exclusion and eradication of both indigenous and afro-descendant populations take the racist discourses and actions back to colonial times (Sutton 2008:107). However, according to some authors, the racism against people from neighboring countries has increased since the 1990s. Alejandro Grimson (2005 & 2006), an Argentinean anthropologist, argues that the immigrants from neighboring countries became the scapegoats for the social and economic crisis in Argentina during the 1990s, in the wake of the neoliberal policies implemented in the country during the 1980s and the 1990s. This crisis led to unemployment and worsened economic conditions, among others, and the Bolivians and Paraguayans who traditionally had taken the jobs the Argentineans did not desire, got blamed for stealing the jobs away from the latter, and escalating the crime and violence in the country (ibid).

This thesis will treat the subject of racism against Bolivians and Paraguayans in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina.
1.2 Objectives and Questions
The purpose with this paper is to investigate the occurrence of racism in Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, against immigrants from neighboring countries, such as Bolivia and Paraguay. I will analyze the racist discourses in the public commentary sections on the web pages of two national newspapers, *La Nación* and *La Razón*. News articles will also be analyzed; the articles will be collected from the two already mentioned newspapers together with articles from *Clarín* and *Página 12*. All articles will relate to the occupation of *Parque Indoamericano* in December 2010, and will be gathered from the same period of time. The aim is to understand some the *Porteños* (the name for the people living in the city Buenos Aires) view of the immigrants, and also if their opinions might be influenced by the newspapers.

The main questions will be the following:

- How do the racist discourses look like in relation to the Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants living in the city of Buenos Aires?
- Are there any differences in how the four investigated newspapers write about the immigrants?
- Could the society be influenced by the discourses in the newspapers?

1.3 Methodology
The sources used for this thesis are both primary and secondary ones. The primary sources consist of newspapers and public commentary sections in connection to the articles found in the newspapers, this type of source is primary due to its originality. It is created by the object of investigation, in this case the newspapers and the people who comment on them (Booth et al. 2008: 69). The primary sources are taken from the web pages of four national newspapers: *Clarín*, *La Nación*, *La Razón* and *Página 12*. They will be discussed in the discourse analytical part of this thesis. The reason for choosing these online newspapers is because *Clarín* is the leading daily newspaper in Argentina, and *La Nación* is the runner-up. Therefore these two newspapers reach the widest range of readers, and can probably offer the widest range of opinions. They also reflect different ideologies, *La Nación* from a conservative point of view and *Clarín* from a centrist (Boczkowski & Santos, De 2007: 170). *La Razón* is used
as a complement to Clarín, since the last mentioned newspaper lacks the public commentary featured from the time of the chosen articles. However, the newspaper is published by the same company that publishes Clarín (Grupo Clarín), therefore the two papers have the same stand points. Their most significant difference is that La Razón is a free newspaper, handed out in the subway, on trains and cafés (La Razón: 2012-12-10). Both papers have an online edition. Página 12 is a newspaper that differs slightly from the other two previously mentioned since it is a newspaper that focuses on investigations and analyses of the society, economy, politics, among others, and holds a center-leftist political view (Página 12:2012-11-18, Pinto 2009: 7). The selection of these newspapers will give the analysis of articles a wide range of opinions due to their different natures.

The articles are selected from the time around the occupation of the Parque Indoamericano between the 7th to the 11th of December 2010; this event will be further presented in the context part of the paper. Therefore the search word “Parque Indoamericano” has been used when searching articles from all of the above mentioned newspapers. All articles and public commentaries where published and written between the 7th to the 11th of December 2010 and gathered the 9th of December 2012.

In the Theoretical Framework and Context parts of the paper, secondary sources are used. Secondary sources consist of previously written academic reports, articles or books, which are based on primary sources (Booth et al. 2008: 69). The secondary sources are, in this paper, employed in order to support the primary sources and main arguments, but also to develop the context of the paper. The main authors used are Alejandro Grimson (2005, 2006), Fernando Devoto (2003) and Susana Novick (2008), among others on the theme of both historical and contemporary immigration to Argentina.

Discourse analysis is the central method and theory adopted in order to go through with this thesis. The main author utilized regarding this method and theory is Teun A. Van Dijk, first and foremost his books Communicating Racism: Ethnic Prejudice in Thought and Talk (1987) and Racism and Discourse in Spain and Latin America (2005), but also some articles (1993, 2001). As a complement to Van Dijks discourse analysis, Diskursanalys som Teori och Metod (Discourse analysis as Theory and method) (1999) by Marianne Winther Jørgensen and Louise Philips is used. This method and theory is employed in a critical manner, recognizing its insufficiency to be applied to all circumstances.

Another theory implemented in this thesis is the postcolonial; it is applied as a complement to the discourse analysis, in order to get a historical perspective of race and ethnicity in Latin
America. The main author for this part of the theoretical framework is Walter Mignolo’s *The idea of Latin America* (2005). As a supplement a few ideas of Diana Muliniari and Anders Neergard (2010) will be used. The purpose with the utilization of the postcolonial theory is to understand how the notion of race, ethnicity and identity has been created and implemented historically. This will give an understanding of how deeply rooted this notions are in the Latin American- and Argentinean society today.

1.3.1 Definitions

The definitions presented below are central ideas to this investigation. They are presented and defined in this chapter as in the definition of Teun A. Van Dijk and Walter Mignolo, two scholars whose theories on racist discourses and post-colonialism are developed in chapter two. The definitions, on racism, discrimination and prejudice, are also crucial in the analysis of newspapers in chapter four, to which these ideas are applied to the treatment of Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants in Buenos Aires.

**Racism**

Walter Mignolo recognizes racism as hegemonic discourses, in which a certain racial group (in his case European and white) gives themselves the authority to question another racial group. They put themselves in a superior position to other racial groups through classifications of races (Mignolo 2005: 8). When applied to the case of Argentina, the European descendants would be considered superior to, e.g. the Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants in Argentina, whom are not deriving from Europeans to the same extent as Argentineans. Van Dijk argues that racism is not only visible in discourses, but that it penetrates all structures of society. He defines it as the power domination of one racial group over another. Just like Mignolo he gives the example of white European domination over other non-European groups, even though he also avows that racism also occurs in non-European societies. Racism is based on the differences between racial groups, in which the dominant group attributes their own characteristics as superior to other groups (Van Dijk 1987: 2). Another important notion expressed by Van Dijk is that, racism today is not only based upon the racial differences, but also upon ethnical differences, which expands to differences in culture, language and origin, among others. Racism creates prejudice and discrimination of ethnic and racial minorities by the dominant group (ibid 1987: 27, 28)

1 Ethnicity and Race are defined as following according to *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*: “Ethnicity, which relates to culturally contingent features, characterizes all human groups. It refers to a sense of identity and membership...
Discrimination

The Argentine state agency “National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism” (INADI), defies discrimination as when a minority societal group is referred to as inferior to the rest of the society, therefore, they are less prone to access their fundamental right and possibilities. This process is created through pre-existing societal structures and hierarchies (INADI 2012: 14-16). Van Dijk recognizes discrimination as a consequence of racism. Whereas, an ethnic or racial minority group is discriminated by the rest of the society, which results in a difficulty to settle in- or enter a country, less access to resources, worse living conditions and opportunities than the rest of the society (Van Dijk 2005: 2).

Prejudice

Prejudices are according to Van Dijk also a product of racism. They are constructed through the dominant societal group’s shared negative attitudes, directed against a minority group. Due to the collectiveness of prejudices, they are an excellent example of Van Dijks concept of “social cognition”, which is further developed in the Theoretical Framework (ibid 1987: 27, 28).

1.4 Limitations

There are a few limitations important to elucidate before continuing the development of this thesis. The first one is that the result of this analysis cannot be treated as a generalization of the opinions of the whole population in Buenos Aires. They are restricted to the journalists writing the articles and the people who have chosen to comment on them. There is a risk that the people who comment on the articles might have strong or extreme thoughts and they can therefore not be used as a benchmark for the average person from Buenos Aires opinion on immigrants. The selection of the newspapers has been made to cover different political and ideological views. Nevertheless it is important to bear in mind that these three newspapers cannot represent all the Argentinean newspapers, the result of the analysis is merely the opinions related to the journalists and readers of Clarín, La Nación, La Razón, and Página 12 during this specific period of time, 7th to the 11th of December 2010.


in a group that shares common language, cultural traits (values, beliefs, religion, food habits, customs, etc.), and a sense of a common history.”, “Race, the idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioral differences.” (race: Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Retrieved 7th of February, 2013)
The articles and discourses in the newspapers on immigrants also involve other nationalities, for instance from Asia, such as Chinese, but also from other Latin American Countries, Colombians or Peruvians. However this thesis will only develop the case of Paraguayans and Bolivians immigrants in Argentina. Furthermore, the analysis of the newspapers will only cover the debate in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, and not the rest of the country. Important to remember is that the analysis is focused on the specific event of the occupation of Parque Indoamericano in 2010.

1.5 Disposition
The content of this thesis is divided into five separate chapters. Chapter one develops the introduction to this research, background, objectives, questions methodology, definitions, and limitations. Continuing with chapter two, this one presents the Theoretical Framework which develops the main theories used in the analysis of the newspapers, the theories that are used are Discourse Analysis and Post-colonialism. Chapter three develops the context, it presents the historical overview of immigration, racism and discrimination in the city of Buenos Aires. Thereafter the background to the immigration of Bolivians and Paraguayans to Buenos Aires is presented. This chapter also discusses the occurrence of racism and discrimination today, in Buenos Aires. The purpose is to give a background of these phenomenons in order to get a deeper understanding of the debate on immigration in the newspapers. Lastly this chapter will present the event of the occupation of Parque Indoamericano, this event will act as the foundation of the news articles and public commentaries later on analyzed. In chapter four the aim is to present the analysis of the articles and commentaries gathered from the web pages of the selected newspapers, the tool of analysis is; discourse analysis presented in chapter two and it is used in order to distinguish the racist discourses in the debates about immigrants. The last chapter of this thesis, chapter five, proposes the conclusion drawn from the materials and analysis presented in the previous chapters, its aim is to answer the questions and objective of the research presented in chapter one.
2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction
This chapter develops the theories that are used in the analysis of the news articles and public commentaries in chapter 4. First discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis are presented. Thereafter Teun A. Van Dijk’s general theories on critical discourse analysis- and racist discourse in both media and the society are developed. The last part of this chapter introduces the concepts, race, ethnicity and identity, from a post-colonial point of view in order to understand how the Argentinean identity has been developed for centuries.

2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis
The main argument, common for all approaches within discourse analysis, is that the way we talk and use our language does not merely reflect the world, but contributes to the transformation and creation of the world around us. It influences social relationships and the conception of identities (Jørgensen & Philips 2000: 7, 15). There is no objective truth due to the notion that our knowledge about the world is marked by our history and culture, and the reality is marked by or own perception of the world. Thus, the knowledge and perception of the world is formed by social interaction (ibid: 11-12).

In Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter referred to as CDA) the discourse is a central idea, which both creates and is created by the social world and social practices. These discourses contribute to the creation and reproduction of unequal power relations in regards of ethnic groups, gender and social classes for example. This type of discourse analysis is critical towards these power relations and its purpose is to uncover the use of discourses in the creation of unequal power relations and also in order to facilitate social change of the power structures in the society. Therefore, the CDA is rather subjective, with the aim of disrupting unequal power relations, it is taking the side of those who are oppressed in the society (ibid 67-70).
Teun A. Van Dijk, who is a Dutch scholar within the discipline of CDA, agrees that the main idea and purpose of CDA is to reveal and critique the power structures in the society (Van Dijk 1993). In relation to this he stresses that there is a greater significance in studying the top-down power structure and dominance, than the bottom-up, this is mostly due to the way the top-down power structures tend to maintain and preserve the inequality and structure within the society (ibid: 250). Van Dijk speaks of two levels of social order; these are the micro and the macro level. The social order on a micro level consists of the discourse itself, this could for example signify the language used in a discourse, or the way the discourse is communicated. The social order on a macro level signifies the impact of the discourse on the society, most often the reproduction and creation of unequal power relations, such as, dominance and inequalities (ibid 2001: 354).

Van Dijk asserts that CDA must be used as a multidisciplinary discipline, this means that, when doing an analysis, more than one factor must be taken into account, and this could for instance be: the society, the power structures, written text and talk. Another factor important in CDA is the “Social Cognition”, due to its function as a link between discourses and dominance in the society (ibid 1993: 251-252). “Social Cognition” is socially shared ways of thinking or interpreting, for instance ideals and ethics, the “Social Cognition” is highly influenced by the dominant group in the society, i.e. the elite. Therefore it is often controlled by the interests of the elite (ibid: 257, 280). Yet another problem facing many societies today, regarding the domination of the elite, is the distribution of knowledge and resources. The elites are the ones that have most social power; this includes resources, both economical but also educational etc. They also have hegemony over the knowledge and the production of knowledge. Due to this, the social power of the elite means control over the society physically, for instance the freedom of the people. Nevertheless, the elite also have control over the society mentally, this is due to the hegemony on public discourses (for instance in media and politics), ordinary people do not have the same opportunities to reproduce their discourses, they are instead subjected to everyday talk with friends or family (ibid: 254-256).

2.3 Racist Discourses
Van Dijk (1987, 2005) argues that racism is a form of power abuse carried out by the dominant ethnic group against an ethnic minority, and it is created and reproduced through
discourses. These discourses create discrimination and marginalization of ethnic minorities, and are created and reproduced through, the media, the politicians, and in every day talk, among others, and are hegemonized by the dominant ethnic group (ibid 2005: 9-11).

The discourses about ethnic minorities have an inclination to be stereotypical. It is not uncommon that the speaker does not base his or hers ideas and opinions about ethnic minorities on their own experiences, but on socially established notions and generalizations. Therefore the discourses based on these stereotypes also acts as its reproducer (ibid 1987: 61-62). The divergence between “Us” and “Them” or “the Other” is also common in the racist discourses, it is used in order for the ethnic dominant group to separate themselves from the ethnic minorities. “Us” represents the dominant ethnic group and it is often characterized by its good qualities, whilst its bad qualities are subdued. “Them” or “the others” are mainly associated with negative qualities, and the positive qualities get repressed (ibid 2005: 11).

There are various ways in which the racist discourses can be distinguished; the topics of discussion when speaking about the ethnic minorities, for instance. It is not unusual that the topic discussed in regards to ethnic minorities is of a somewhat negative character. There are a few topics of discourse that Van Dijk recognizes as common, when people from the dominant ethnic groups speak about ethnic minorities. These are social problems, such as unemployment, unwillingness to work, unwillingness to adapt to the culture, violence, crime and so on (ibid 1987: 53-55). Other tendencies can be distinguished in racist discourses, generalization for one, is common, the speaker attributed his or hers opinion to the whole group of ethnic minorities. Generalizations can also be used in order to emphasize the argument of the speaker. If he or she attributes the argument to a whole group, instead of to just one person or one event, then the dimension and credibility of the argument will be increased (ibid: 90-91).

Van Dijk considers the mass media, newspaper, radio and TV, as one of the main distributors and reproducers of racist discourses and beliefs. The media contributes to the reproduction of stereotypes, among others regarding ethnic minorities (ibid 2005: 5). The subjects presented in the media have a tendency to be subjective to the interests of the dominant ethnic group; therefore “the others” are completely left out of the media or only addressed in negative contexts. Another problem facing the media is that most of the journalists tend to belong to the dominant ethnic group, which makes the reports and articles rather one dimensional (ibid).
When addressing ethnic minorities negatively in the mass media, there are a few topics more common than others. One of the news topics, most influential in the construction and distribution of the racist discourses in the society, is the ethnicalization of crime. This happens, for instance, when the ethnic background of the offender or suspect to a crime, are emphasized in the media. The consequence of this is the further reproduction of the stereotype of ethnic minorities as violent and criminal (ibid 1987: 364). The media also feeds other myths and prejudices about ethnic minorities, for example, in the case of immigrants, on one hand- that the majority of the immigrants are illegal, on the other, the exaggerated amount of immigrants residing in the country (ibid).

2.4 The Postcolonial Impact on Race, Ethnicity and Identity in Latin America

The colonization of Latin America led to the creation of new hierarchies, hegemonically decided by the white, Christian, European male. They categorized people by race (skin color) but also by ethnicity, based upon communities, language, theological beliefs and culture. This racialization placed the Europeans in a superior position, in contrast to all other ethnic groups who were neither white nor Christians, they were either demonized or eliminated, referred to as “barbarians” (Mignolo 2005: 16-17, 46). But it was not until the Enlightenment (17th-18th Century) that the debate on race and ethnicity became a common theme among intellectuals in Europe. Carl Linnaeus developed his theory of a categorization of humans and Johann Blumenbach presented his work in which he wrote about the five human races. Common for many of these intellectuals was the notion that the Europeans (Caucasians) were the dominant race, superior to the non-European races (Vacano 2012: 9-10).

The Europeans implemented their own history, language, social structures, economic structures and judicial system on the colonies. Attributing the European identity to the continent, minimizing the identity of the indigenous populations and the African slaves (Mignolo 2005: 46, 47). The independence did not offer a drastic change in regards of the view of identity, race and ethnicity in Latin America. The white, European, catholic, descendants (Creoles) remained the superior ethnicity, who considered themselves as the “Latin Race”, implementing latinidad as their identity. The Latin Race and the latinidad were attributed both to the creoles and to the immigrants that started coming from Europe during
the 19th century. But the suppression of all other ethnicities, races and identities continued (ibid: 67, 129).

The racialization is considered a “Colonial wound”, a legacy of the colonial times that still exists in Latin America (ibid: 74). In Argentina, for example, there are still cases of racialization today. The privileged classes tends to create a separation of identities, “Us” and “Them”, in which the last mentioned is in many cases highly stigmatized. For example connected with criminality and violence, and it is not uncommon that immigrants from Paraguay and Bolivia are categorized as “them”, in Buenos Aires (Mulinari & Neergaard 2010).

2.5 Summary

Teun A. Van Dijk, a Critical Discourse Analyst, argues that the purpose with CDA is to reveal and critique the power structures in the society that creates inequalities, dominance, and power abuse, produced and reproduced through discourses. An example of power abuse is racism which is produced by the elite group’s dominance over an ethnic minority. One of the main distributors of racist discourse, according to Van Dijk, is the mass media, which contributes to the production and reproduction of racist discourses to the society, this theory is further on considered in the analysis of the newspapers.

The colonization of Latin America led to the implementation of categorization of people, therefore people got divided into categories depending on race and ethnicity. The people who were not white, Christian and European, e.g. indigenous- and afro-descendant people, were considered as “barbarians” and therefore not important to the Latin American history and identity. Instead the common identity in Latin America became the latinidad which equaled the attributed already mentioned, white, Christian and European. Some sort of categorization still lives on in Argentina today. It is not uncommon for the privileged class to separate “us” from “them”, where “us” represents the Argentineans and “them” represents immigrants from neighboring countries, not uncommonly from Bolivia and Paraguay. These theories are implemented later on, in the analysis of the newspapers.
3. Context

3.1 Introduction
In this chapter the Historical Context of immigration, racism and discrimination in Buenos Aires and Argentina is presented. Regarding this theme, the wave of Europeans that started to immigrate to Argentina during the 19th century and the genocide of indigenous peoples are described. Further on, a more present context is developed, this includes the Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants that move to Buenos Aires today and how the racism and discrimination against them takes shape nowadays. Lastly, the case of the occupation of Parque Indoamericano will be presented, as an example to understand the context of the articles that will be analyzed in chapter four.

3.2 Historical Context of Immigration
The Argentinean history has been deeply marked by immigration, the immigration boom started in the middle of the 19th century, when a vast amount of European immigrants came to Argentina. The registration of immigrants did not start until 1857 and is it difficult to estimate the total number of immigrants that came to the country before this period of time (Rodriguez 2006: 362). When the registrations started (1857) and up until 1914, approximately 4.6 immigrants from Europe had moved to Argentina, out of them, 2 million were Italians, 1.4 Spaniards, 170.000 Frenchmen, 160.000 Russians, the rest were from other European countries. Many of the European immigrants that had emigrated from their home countries were seeking a better life, they were moving away from the poor economic conditions in Europe due to: failure of crops, higher costs, in terms of rents and taxes, but also because of diseases. A census 1914 revealed that 30% of the total population where immigrants and the majority of them had settled down in urban areas, Buenos Aires attracted the largest number of foreigners (Devoto 2003: 47,49, 51, 54, 236, 247).

The Argentinean government welcomed the European immigrants, as a result of the economic expansion due to the agrarian boom in the country; there was deficit of labor power. Therefore the Argentinean government started to promote the inflow of European immigrants (Novick 2008: 134). A number of policies were implemented in order to facilitate the arrival of the immigrants, a hotel in the port was built, Hotel de Inmigrantes, to accommodate the newly arrived for a maximum of 6 days, the government also helped with transportations by
train from Buenos Aires to other parts of the country and with the allocation of land (Devoto 2003: 239).

After 1910 the inflow of Europeans slowly decreased, there was however another form of migration in Argentina during the 1930s. When the country started to industrialize many poor workers from rural areas all around Argentina, started to move into the cities, just like the European immigrants, many of them came to Buenos Aires (Grimson 2006: 2). After the Second World War there was another wave of Europeans moving to Argentina, now mostly refugees, the immigration kept up for some years only to a few years later stagnate, and has not increased ever since (ibid: 162-163).

3.2.1 Racism and Discrimination
During the 19th century the thought of Argentina as a European state emerged, a central idea was the one of civilization, and the European immigrants would contribute to this (Ray 2011: 142-143). However, there was an obstacle to this notion, “the barbarians”, e.g. the gauchos (the mestizo cattle breeders in the rural areas of Argentina) and the indigenous populations. The so called barbarians would disrupt the creation of Argentina as an European state and the government felt a need to intervene. The government thought that the gauchos could be educated to be civilized, but the indigenous peoples could not, at the same time they inhabited areas that could be populated by Europeans. Therefore the campaign “Conquest of the Desert” started in the last part of the 19th century. The goal was to gain control over vast land areas populated by indigenous peoples. When the Argentinean state had succeeded in their mission, the number of indigenous peoples was heavily diminished and the survivors were subjected to marginalization (ibid). In the endeavor to make Argentina a more civilized country, the government forbade the use of indigenous languages, there was also a heavy restriction in the use of foreign names (Grimson 2006: 2). Before the immense European immigration began there were two different social classes: the elite, made up from Creole Spanish-descendants, and the lower class, Indian, mestizo, and afro-Argentineans. The Europeans immigrants that settled down in Buenos Aires constructed a new class, the middle class, they did however not oppose to the subjection of the ethnic minorities and therefore this class construction remained (Guano 2003: 149).
The racist and discriminatory discourses were nevertheless, not exclusively focused on indigenous, mestizo and afro-descendant population. During the first decade of the 19th century the European immigration became more selective and more restrictive than during the previous decade. North Europeans, such as Englishmen and Germans, were considered more civilized and willing to work than Southern Europeans. Therefore the policies implemented to facilitate the arrival of immigrants were generally only offered to the “wanted” type of immigrants, e.g. North Europeans (Devoto 2003: 239). During this period of time another type of selectivity emerged, rather than the previously based on race and ethnicity. The fear of immorality and divergent political opinions grew, especially that of communism and anarchism. Therefore the government would not allow people known as communists or anarchists into the country, during the presidency of Hipólito Yrigoyen, 1916-1922 (Ray 2011: 150, Rodriguez 2006: 369).

When the mass migration of rural workers started during the 1930s, into the cities, the urban middle- and upper classes were appalled. The newcomers were not like the European-descendants, but poor and dark-skinned, a dysphemism for the new migrants became Cabecitas Negras (Little Blackheads) and were widely adopted by the higher classes. With time the name Cabecitas Negras was not only referred to in relation to race or ethnicity, but also to class, being poor equaled being black (Grimson 2006: 2).

### 3.3 Immigration from Neighboring Countries

There has always been an inflow of immigrants from neighboring countries to Argentina, meaning immigrants from countries who have borders to Argentina. Censuses show that the number of people who are born in a bordering country but that resides in Argentina has been rather even throughout the years. The census from 1869 shows that 2,4 % of the total population in Argentina was born in a bordering country, the census from 2001 shows that 2,8 % of the population was born in a bordering country (Paraguay, Bolivia or Chile). Between these years, the percentage has never fallen below 2 % and never risen above 2,9 % (ibid:5). There has, however, been a slight increase of the number of neighboring immigrants during the last few years, in 2010, 3,5 % of the total population were represented by neighboring immigrants (INADI 2012: 12). Even though there has not been a drastic change of the number of immigrants from neighboring countries, there has been one significant
change in the neighboring immigrant’s demographics in Argentina. With the descending numbers of European immigrants during the 20th century, the immigrants from neighboring countries have been a more noteworthy part of the whole percentage of immigrants in Argentina. In the census 1869, only 20 % of the immigrants in the country was from neighboring countries, in 2001, 60 % of the immigrants came from neighboring countries (Novick 2008: 134&141). The majority of these immigrants resides in Buenos Aires, 52,2 % in the Province of Buenos Aires, and 21,1 % in the City of Buenos Aires, according to the census made in 2010 (INADI 2012: 13).

3.3.1 The Bolivian Immigrants
In the census 2001, the Bolivians represented 15,2 % of the foreign population, this translates to approximately 250,000 Bolivian immigrants. The census 2010 showed that the Bolivian representation among the immigrants in Argentina had inclined to a 19,1 % of all immigrants, roughly 345,000 Bolivians (INADI 2012: 12, Texidó 2008: 20). The distribution of gender among the Bolivian immigrants is quite even, though male immigration beats female with just 1 %. A majority of the immigrants coming to Argentina are in a labor active age, which signifies 20-59 years of age. Bolivian immigrants are found in the lowest educational statistics, only beaten by the Brazilian immigrants, 41,2 % of the Bolivian immigrants have less than 6 years of education. The Bolivian laborers are most commonly found in agricultural-, commerce-, industrial-, and constructional sector, and not unusually in the informal sector, throughout Argentina (Texidó 2008: 23, 25, 30, 49).

Bolivians who have been living in Argentina for a longer period of time have started to organize themselves in order to keep the Bolivian culture and collectivity. Radio stations, restaurants, market places, traditions, celebrations, but also social organizations to protect the rights of the immigrants and unions, have all emerged among the Bolivian community in Argentina (Grimson 2001: 35).

The demography of Bolivia consists of 85 % indigenous or mestizo populations, therefore one could conclude that at majority of the Bolivian immigrants that come to Argentina are of indigenous or mestizo origin (CIA World Fact book: 29th of January 2013).
3.3.2 The Paraguayan Immigrants

The Paraguayan immigrants were, according to statistics, the major immigration group in Argentina during the beginning of the 21st century (Texidó 2008: 20). According to the census 2001 there were approximately 325,000 Paraguayan immigrants living in Argentina, which represented 21.2% of foreign immigration to Argentina, in 2010 the Paraguayans represented 30.5% of all immigrants, roughly 550,800 Paraguayans (INADI 2012: 12). A majority of the Paraguayan immigrants are residing in Buenos Aires. The immigration from Paraguay started to increase during the last half of the 20th century; many Paraguayans immigrated to Argentina due to political reasons, mostly under the dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner 1954-1989. It is not uncommon for Paraguayan immigrants to take employment in the construction, domestic, or commerce sector, occasionally in the informal sector, which is both illicit and unstable. Therefore, the Paraguayans suffered hard from the economic crisis in Argentina that began in the first couple of years of the 21st century, in 2005, 27% of all Paraguayans in Argentina were unemployed, in comparison with the general unemployment which reached 18.3% (Halpern 2005: 73-75, 80). The census 2001 demonstrated that almost 60% of the Paraguayan immigrants were female, and just above 40% were male, and a majority was of labor active age (Texidó 2008: 23).

During the 20th century the Paraguayans in Argentina started to organize themselves in political-, religious-, and cultural organizations. The organization led to more acceptance from the Argentinean society, in regards to Paraguayans as a social group in the Argentinean society (ibid: 79).

The demography in Paraguay consists of 95% mestizo population, therefore a majority of the Paraguayans that moves to Argentina would probably be of mestizo origin (CIA World Fact Book: 29th of January 2013).

3.4 Racism and Discrimination Throughout the Last Two Decades

Many Argentineans refer to Argentina as a Crisol de Razas, a racial melting pot, however, when speaking about the mix-up of different races, only the different European races are taken into account. Argentina has traditionally been seen as a country without “blacks” or “Indians”, therefore there is a perception among both the Argentineans and the government that there is no racial problem or no racism. Nevertheless, Argentina has never been a
homogenous racial country, the composition of different identities and ethnicities in the country have been invisibilized (Grimson 2006: 1, 2, Sutton 2008: 108). At the same time there is still the notion that race and class is intertwined, the concept of Cabecita Negra from the 1930s still lives on. Being black, or at least having darker skin, means being poor; today the dysphemism Negro Villero (black from the shantytown) is commonly used among higher classes to describe a poor, often with darker skin, person from the shantytowns (Sutton 2008: 108).

Race and ethnicity has been more visible gradually, in relation to when the number of immigrants from Europe started sinking. This does not mean that the number of immigrants from neighboring countries has been increasing drastically during the last decade, only that they have become a larger statistical part of the immigration statistics. The immigrants from neighboring countries, mostly from Paraguay and Bolivia, have traditionally moved to Argentina and taken the employments native Argentineans did not want, mostly unskilled labor, such as in the domestic- or construction sector (Guano 2003: 151). Nevertheless things changed during the 1990s, when President Carlos Menem implemented neoliberal policies that led to privatizations and also the pegging of the peso (Argentinean currency) to the U.S Dollar which caused hyperinflation, all these factors led to worsening conditions for the people living in Argentina, many became unemployed and poverty rose (ibid). Instead of blaming the government, the neighboring immigrants became the scapegoats for the worsening living conditions. The societal discourses stated, that the immigrants were taking the Argentineans work, but also that they composed a threat to the safety in the country, that they contributed to the violence and criminality in Argentina. Lastly that they were a threat to the white, Europeans view, of Argentineans as a whole. Contributing to this debate was not only the society, but also politicians, the media, labor unions etc (Grimson 2006: 7-9).

The economic crisis of 2001/2002 took the main focus away from the immigrants as scapegoats for the economic conditions in the country, nevertheless the racism and discrimination of certain ethnic and racial groups has not completely disappeared (Grimson 2006). There are still the discussion on “us” and “them”, mostly among the higher classes, where “them” is not uncommonly racialized, linked to certain races or ethnicities and therefore among others, the immigrants from neighboring countries. Stigmatization of “them” by the higher classes is occurring, and “them” are often associated with crime and violence (Mulinari 2010). False perceptions about the immigrants transpires in the society, some examples are; that the immigrants supposedly are stealing the employments, not paying taxes,
and that they are taking advantages of public services, such as healthcare and education. Another example are the derogatory terms used to address the neighboring, bolita is used to address a Bolivian immigrants, and paragua for a Paraguayan (INADI 2012: 22-24). The racism and discrimination are not only reflected by the society, but also by the state, a common occurring incident is the one of detention due to race or ethnicity. Policemen detain people with immigrant backgrounds without any real suspicion, but mostly due to their appearance (Sutton 2008: 109). An example of this is the case of an airport detention in July 1999, three people were arrested at the international airport in Buenos Aires, even though they all were Argentinean citizens and carried Argentinean passports. The airport police did not believe that they could be Argentinean, because they did not look Argentinean, they were accused for being illegal Bolivian immigrants, but no charges were pressed and they were released a few hour later (Guano 2003: 148).

3.5 The Occupation of Parque Indoamericano 2010

Even though Argentina has improved the living standards, unemployment rates and income distribution since both the crisis during the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, there has been a growing deficit of housing. This problem has mainly affected people from the lower classes, among others the immigrants from neighboring countries, since they cannot receive mortgages to buy their own housing (García 2012: 84). As a protest to the growing housing deficit approximately 6000 people settled in temporary squatter settlements in Parque Indoamericano, between the 7th and 11th of December, 2010. Parque Indoamericano is one of the biggest parks in the Metropolitan Area of Buenos Aires, located in the south of the city between Villa Lugano and Villa Soldati (García 2012: 85, López 2012: 37). The protesters came from Villas (Shantytowns) in the vicinity and many of them were born in neighboring countries, such as Bolivia and Paraguay. The protest had a violent outcome, and at least three of the protesters were killed in confrontations with the police, and various people were injured (López 2012: 37).

There were during and after the occupation of the park heavy criticism against the occupiers, both from the society and politicians, and the mayor (at the time being) of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri, with a center-right ideology, was one of the leading voices in this criticism. Some discusses that his argumentation were xenophobic, steering the problem away from the
housing deficit towards the question of immigration from neighboring countries (ibid). The case of the occupation of Parque Indoamericano is used in the analysis of newspapers in chapter four. A selection of articles regarding the occupation will be analyzed from a discourse analytical point of view, in order to understand how the racist discourses on Paraguayans and Bolivians look like in the newspapers and in the society.

3.6 Summary
There has always been a big inflow of immigrants to Argentina. In the last part of the 19th century to the first part of the 20th century, a vast number of European immigrants came to the country; on the other hand the immigration from neighboring countries has always been at a steady level. The difference is that the European immigrants have always been desired as immigrants by Argentina, the neighboring immigrants have not. During the 1990s, the notion that neighboring immigrants (mainly Paraguayans and Bolivians) was a threat to the country’s identity, security and economy grew both in the society and among the politicians. This led to the stigmatization, racism and discrimination of immigrants from neighboring countries. Even though this has improved during the last decade, there are still an occurrence of racist discourses and discrimination in Argentina, according to Alejandro Grimson (2006)

In December 2010, thousands of people, mainly from Paraguay and Bolivia, occupied the park Parque Indoamericano in the city of Buenos Aires, as a protest against the housing deficit in the city. This event caused heavy debates both in the society and among conservative politicians, many with a negative stance towards immigrants from neighboring countries. This is further developed in the upcoming analysis.
4. Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of the news articles and public commentaries chosen from four Argentinean newspaper’s web editions, the papers chosen are: Clarín, La Nación, La Razón and Página 12. From each newspaper two articles are selected, La Nación and La Razón are the papers that feature the public commentary function, and therefore a selection of public commentaries are analyzed in connection to these articles. All articles are centered on the time of the occupation of the park Parque Indoamericano, between the 7th to the 11th of December 2010, and all articles were accessed at the 9th of December 2012. The analysis is based on Teun A Van Dijk’s discourse analysis; the discussion on Argentinean identity will also feature post-colonial theories.

4.2 Clarín

Violent Evacuation in Villa Soldati: Two Dead and Dozens of Injured

This article is written by Pedro Paulin and published on the web edition of Clarín, 2010-12-8, describes the first day of the occupation of Parque Indoamericano. Initially around 200 families installed themselves in the park, and when the police came to evacuate the park, there were violent confrontations between the police force and the occupants. This in turn led to two fatalities, three detentions and ten injured police men. In the end the police managed to evacuate the park.

Van Dijk argues that it is not uncommon in mass media to only mention ethnic minorities in negative or sensational circumstances (Van Dijk 1987: 40). In this article we find clear evidence of this:

“…that the deceased is Bernardo Salgueiro, Paraguayan of 24 years”
“The woman, Bolivian, died of a gunshot wound to the armpit…”

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2 “Violento desalojo en Villa Soldati: dos muertos y decenas de heridos” (Translated by the author)
3 “...que el fallecido es Bernardo Salgueiro, paraguayo de 24 años”

"La Mujer, Boliviana, murió de un balazo en la axila..."
These extracts from the articles show upon a “negativization” and a general negative view of ethnic minorities, fatalities can also be viewed as sensational, and therefore of greater interest for both the media and the society (ibid: 241, 153). Since these two nationalities are the only ones mentioned in the article, one can assume that the reader gets a picture of the criminal act, as the occupation of the park is, as only related to the ethnic minorities, Paraguayans and Bolivians, and that the two fatalities therefore were participating in the occupation.

The grammatical way of writing about the occupants puts the responsibility of the violent events on them, rather than on the police.

“The day ended with serious incidents when a group of occupants retreated to Villa 20 and confronted the police: there was stone-throwing, rubber bullets and tear gas”

This sentence suggests that the responsibility and the initiative of the violent acts rest solely upon the occupants. This is due to the active tense of the sentence, which puts the occupants as the subjects of action, the selection of a passive tense would have made the content of the sentence more neutral (Jørgensen & Philips 2000: 87). The responsibility of the police is completely left out, even though one can assume that the rubber bullets and tear gas was used by the police and not by the occupants.

Parque Indoamericano Was Once Again Occupied

This article, written by Pedro Paulin and Pablo Novillo, published on the web edition of Clarín, 2010-12-09, describes the re-occupation of Parque Indoamericano. Two days after the first occupation and evacuation of the park, around 1000 persons came back to yet again settle in the park. There were negotiations between the occupants and the Porteño Government with the aim to solve the situation; nevertheless it was not successful initially.

The article also describe the event that happened two days earlier when two people were killed, the occupants blame the police force for the deaths, but the police force denies with the argument that they were only using rubber bullets.

Yet again in this article there is an emphasis on the nationality of the fatalities

“Two people die: Bernardo Salguiero, of 22 years, Paraguayan; and Rosemarie Churapuña, of 28 years, Bolivian”

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4 “La jornada terminó con serios incidentes cuando un grupo de ocupantes se replegó a la villa 20 y enfrentó a la policía: hubo pedradas, balas de goma y gases lacrimógenos.”
5 “El Parque Indoamericano quedó otra vez ocupado”
6 “Dos personas murieron: Bernardo Salguiero, de 22 años, paraguayo; y Rosemarie Churapuña, de 28 años, Boliviana.”
Just like in the previous article, Paraguayan and Bolivian are the only nationalities mentioned, and can therefore contribute to the “Negativization” of these two ethnic minorities (Van Dijk 1987: 241).

A second similarity with the previous article is the grammatical construction of sentences that attributes the negative actions of the occupation only to the occupants. The grammatical construction make the occupants the subjects in an active sentence, a passive construction of the sentence would have made it more neutral (Jørgensen & Philips 2000: 87).

“They came back during the morning and they started to divide the site into lots”
“The people entered, and as the first day, they started to measure up the park”

Nevertheless, in this article the police also plays an active part in the course of events, there is however a big difference when writing about the police and writing about the occupants. We have already examined the negative way of writing about the occupants, but when writing about the police as subjects in an active sentence, there are mainly in positive circumstances, using positive formulations.

“The federal and metropolitan (police) had managed in releasing the settlement…”
“The police protects the park…”
“But the federal entered with a water cannon and freed the site”
“But the security forces restored the order.”

What can be notable in both articles taken from Clarín is the negative contextualization of the occupants, a large part of them Bolivians and Paraguayans. They are repeatedly put in context of violent confrontations with the police, fatalities and the occupation of the park itself. What is not mentioned in any of the articles is the real objective behind the occupation, e.g the occupation as a protest to the housing deficit (see point 3.5). Van Dijk distinguishes this as a relatively normal occurrence in the mass media, the events that are reported on is mainly from a white-elite point of view. Therefore, when writing about ethnic minorities, it is more relevant to write about the group as a threat to the society in relation to crime, violence etc, instead of writing about the minorities daily problems, in this case the housing deficit (Van Dijk 1987: 44-45).

7 “La Federal y la Metropolitana habían logrado liberar el asentamiento…”
“…la Gendarmería proteja el parque…”
“Pero la Federal ingresó con un carro hidrante y liberó el predio.”
“…las fuerzas de seguridad restablecieron el orden.”
4.3 La Nación

Reported Two Deaths after an Evacuation

This article is published on the web edition of La Nación, 2010-12-08, and the author of the article remains unknown. This article covers the two deaths, which were the result of the confrontation between the police and the occupants. The article includes a commentary on the happenings by the brother of one of the deceased, a commentary from a member of the popular front, which puts the responsibility of the fatalities on the police, and a commentary from the chief of police, who denounces their responsibility.

Just like the article from Clarín this article emphasizes the nationality of the deceased man (the identity of the woman seems unknown at this point), and also the active grammatical formulation which puts the responsibility of the violence on the occupants.

“…Bernardo Salguiero, of 22 years, Paraguayan, came in dead at 19:35…”

“He also stresses that the biggest source and distributor of racist discourses to the public is the mass media, and that the media helps in the reproduction of stereotypes and generalizations (ibid 2005: 5).

“…Salguiero, that worked as a bricklayer and lived in Villa 20 with one of his 18 siblings.”

Van Dijk has made out a few tools used in racist discourse, one of these tools are generalizations. This is when a person refers to the whole group of immigrants and attributes characteristics to the group as a whole, not rarely negative attributes (Van Dijk 1987: 90-91).

He also stresses that the biggest source and distributor of racist discourses to the public is the mass media, and that the media helps in the reproduction of stereotypes and generalizations (ibid 2005: 5).

“…Salguiero, that worked as a bricklayer and lived in Villa 20 with one of his 18 siblings.”

This extract from the article could be used as a source of generalization, Van Dijk argues that one common topic, when speaking about racist discourses, is the cultural differences among the white elite and the ethnic minorities, one of them could be the amount of children the ethnic minorities has or their general way of life (ibid 1987: 54-55). Therefore, this article could give the impression and miss comprehension that all Paraguayans (since Salgueiro was Paraguayan) have a lot of children/siblings/large families.

There are 92 commentaries and 115 responses to these commentaries in relation to the article. A majority of those expresses a rather negative opinion on the Bolivian and Paraguayan
immigrants. Some use generalization, as discussed above, in their description of the immigrants. The alias **FelixTailleffer** writes (2010-12-08 21:18)

“I ask, for how long do we have to put up with the unemployed from Bolivia and Paraguay?”

This commentary does not only show upon the generalization and presumption that all Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants are unemployed, but also on the division of “us” and “them”, which are used in order to separate the Argentineans (us) from the immigrants (them) as stated by Van Dijk as a common phenomenon in racist talk, apart from “them”, words such as those people or foreigner can be used. In order to distance the speaker from the ethnic minority spoken about (ibid: 104).

The alias **violetadorada3** comments (2010-12-08 14:29)

“ARGENTINES WHERE ARE YOU?? In this case I do not see you. They are Peruvian, Paraguayan, Bolivian citizens who invade our country without having the least respect for our laws. They take our land, and then they ask us for food, health care, income for their children, and if they are not given that they do a squad and rob us of our work.”

This comment shows clearly on the separation of us an them, but also upon prejudice talk regarding opinions on, what Van Dijk calls “work and (un)employment” and “rights and duties” (Ibid: 54-55). This commentator argues that the immigrants are stealing the employment opportunities away from the Argentineans, and that the immigrants are abusing the Argentinian welfare system (health care and subsidies). A common prejudice found in racist discourses.

Another commentator **ferarg** writes (2010-12-08 15:08)

“...these guys coming from the other side, are making the difference in low costs, and they rip us off, of everything, they don’t pay taxes, they consume state assets and to top it all they are protected, I’m not against the immigration but stop doing things wrong from the state, control and regulate well the entry to the country...”

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12 “Yo pregunto, hasta cuando tenemos que bancarnos a los desocupados de Bolivia y Paraguay?”
13 “ARGENTINOS DONDE ESTAN?? En este caso no los veo. Son ciudadanos peruanos, paraguayos, bolivianos que invaden n/ país sin tener el mínimo respeto por n/ leyes. Toman nuestras tierras, luego nos piden alimentos, atención sanitaria, salarios p/ sus hijos, y si no se los dan hacen un piquete y nos privan de cuncurrir a n/ trabajo.”
14 “…estos tipos que vienen de otro lado hacen la diferencia barata de costos y nos joden a todos no pagan impuestos, consumen bienes del estado y para colmo los protegen no estoy en contra de los inmigrantes pero dejen de hacer las cosas mal desde el estado...”
In this argumentation we find evidence of the previously mentioned generalization, the writer attributes the abuse of state resources to the immigrants, and that they are not paying taxes. Another interesting feature found in the argumentation is that of “better self presentation” or “apparent denial”, Van Dijk finds this common in racist discourses as a strategy to make the argument seemingly more objective, but also in situations or environments where racism is not acceptable. It is used as a diminishment of the speaker or writer’s ethnical prejudices (Ibid: 86, 91).

I Rather Die Here Than Rent in the Villa

This article was published in La Nación, the web edition, by an unknown author, 2010-12-09. It is a small portrayal of the people occupying the park, one Argentinean man with his family, a young couple from Bolivia and Paraguay, a Bolivian woman and two Argentinean women.

When the Bolivian woman is interviewed she explains why she came to Argentina.

“Bolivian, of 29 years, she decided to come for 15 years ago and installed herself in Villa 20, because there live a lot of her own “countrymen”. In Bolivia you pay for everything, but here I have received social assistance for two years. And for a few days ago I could operate the gallbladder in the hospital Piñero, for free, she said.”

This quote, true as it might be, could acts as a source of generalizations and stereotypes about Bolivians, as explained in the previous article. The previous article featured two commentaries that expressed the opinions that immigrants were abusing the welfare system, and this portrayal of the Bolivian woman clearly shows that she has moved to Argentina due to the beneficial welfare system. This could in turn lead to that the Argentineans get the picture that all Bolivians move to Argentina because of the welfare system, consequently feeding the myth that immigrants are abusing the welfare system (ibid 54).

In connection to this article there are 40 commentaries and 25 responses to the commentaries. Most of these commentaries express negative opinions about Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants. There are quite a lot of commentaries expressing generalizations and stereotypes about these kind of immigrants, many of them about how the immigrants are abusing the Argentinean welfare system. This is a commentary written by the alias adrian42miami (2010-12-10 02:48).

15 “Prefiero morir acá que alquilar en la villa”
16 “Boliviana, de 29 años, decidió hace 15 venir a instalarse en la Villa 20, porque ahí viven muchos “paisanos” suyos. En Bolivia todo se paga, pero acá desde hace dos años recibo ayuda social. Y hace unos días me pude operar de la vesícula en el hospital Piñero, con todo gratis, señaló”
 Yet again we find evidence of generalization, this time connected to what is written in the article about the Bolivian woman, the notion that the immigrants are abusing the welfare system, such as healthcare services and education. A new element to the argumentation, not previously seen in the commentaries, is the one about Argentine identity. The commentator suggests, in derogatory manners, that Argentina might become just like the other Latin American countries. If we assume that the commentator thinks of Argentina as an European country, we could come to the conclusion that the identity of Argentina is *latinidad*, as in the words of Mignolo (2005), *latinidad* applies to a white, European and Christian person. This is not, at first glance, as adaptable to an immigrant from Bolivia or Paraguay, as to an Argentinean, who, statistically and historically, derives from Europe (Devoto 2003). Then due to the Europeaness of the country, adrian42miami would think that Argentina is superior to other countries in the region, which much higher percentages of indigenous and *mestizo* populations and that Argentina would lose its status as an European-, and therefore superior country. Another commentary connected to the previous, which even more clearly shows on the fear of losing the European identity of the country, to the Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants is written by the alias antipatica (2010-12-09 14:24).

"We who took pride in appearing like Europeans, this ended misters. Now all of us look like Bolivians or Peruvians, with no offence but..." 18

4.4 *La Razón*

**Tension in Evacuation of Parque Indoamericano**

The article is written the 7th of December 2010, and published on the web edition of *La Razón*, by unknown author. Since it is from the first day of the occupation, it does not offer that much information. It explains the initial occupation and the evacuation of the park. The article is rather short and lacks important information; however there are 17 commentaries in relation to the article. A majority of them expresses negative opinions on immigrants from neighboring countries. The alias roberto writes (2010-12-08 21:58).

17 "JAJA POR DIOS. VIENEN DE AFUERA A USAR SUS SERVICIOS GRATIS. HOSPITALES, ESCUELAS, PLANES TRABAJAR, USURPAN TERRENO Y VIVIENDAS..." "...EN UN PAR DE AÑOS ARGENTINA SERÁ OTRO PAISUCHO LATINO LLENO DE POBREZA Y MARGINALIDAD IMPORTADA..."

18 "Nosotros que nos orgulleciamos de parecer europeos, eso se terminó señores. Ahora parecemos todos bolivianos y peruanos, sin ofender pero..."

19 "Tensión en desalojo del Parque Indoamericano"
“...they are dung who usurp your own public spaces and houses, they rob you, they violate you!!! they are scourge foreigners!!!”

This is a topic common in racist discourses, Van Dijk has recognized this as the prejudice that the foreigners are the ones who causes social problems, and they are the decay of the security in the society (Van Dijk 1987: 53). Roberto claims, that the foreigners are criminals, and that they rob and violate Argentineans, he criminalizes and stigmatizes the whole group of foreigners.

Another strategy of prejudice talk found in the commentaries is the contrast between social groups, mostly the contrast between “us” and “them”. When the white majority speaks about the ethnic minority or the immigrants, it is not unusual to emphasize the contrast between these groups, in this case the benefits the immigrants gets over the Argentineans. Peteco writes (2010-12-08 14:29).

“...we the Argentineans have fewer rights than them!!! I work and I do not either achieve anything...”

Pedro publishes a comment (2010-12-08 14:58).

“...we all work and no one gives us anything, the government did not give me neither my work nor my housing and because of that I won’t usurp the land or the houses of anyone!!!”

Both these commentaries show upon the prejudice that immigrants do not want to work, and that they are given resources to survive by the government, whilst the Argentineans has to work for a living, and are given nothing by the government. These are, yet again, reflections about the perception that immigrants are abusing the welfare system.

**Villa Soldati: Another Fatality in the Taking of Parque Indoamericano**

The article was published on the web edition of *La Razón* the 10th of December 2010, by an unknown author. The article treats the events followed up by the confrontation between the occupants of the park and the neighbors of *Villa Soldati*, which ended with yet another fatality. The number of fatalities was at this point three, one woman and two men. This article is as the previous, rather short, it offers however 36 commentaries, in which, most of them are
of negative opinions about immigrants from neighboring countries. Guido1985 offers an interesting argumentation (2010-12-14).

“...the asking for border controls and to critic our immigration politics is not xenophobia, it is only asking for more control at the border, like any civilized country has.”

This commentary contains two different prejudice and racist argumentation. The first one is about the immigration policies; Guido1985 asks for stricter immigration controls, this is according to Van Dijk a common topic in racist discourses. The writer attributes the core of the problem in the society to the immigrants, and that therefore the occurring problems would be solved through implementing stricter immigration policies, making it more difficult for Bolivians and Paraguayans to cross the border into Argentina (ibid: 52-53). At the same time the commentator uses “the apparent denial” as a form of “better self presentation” (is not xenophobia), this is used to deny any racist prejudice or in order to diminish already racist opinions, making the writer appear more reasonable and non-prejudiced (ibid: 86,91). Lastly the commentator uses the concept of a “civilized country” to support his argument. One can assume that this is used in connection to the identity of Argentineans as more alike Europeans than other ethnicities within Latin American and therefore more “civilized” than for instance Bolivia and Paraguay (Mignolo 2005).

Many of the commentaries include what Van Dijk calls “attitudinal depersonalization”, this is used in order to distance the speaker, or in this case the writer (us), from the subject (them) in prejudice argumentation (Van Dijk 1987: 104-105). The signature Djbetos (2010-12-14 22:17) uses the word negros (blacks), to describe the immigrants, JONATHAN (2010-12-13 22:24) refer to the Bolivians as negros bolitas (derogatory word for black Bolivians) Argentinazo (2010-12-13 10:08) uses the derogatory word for Bolivians and Paraguayans, Bolitas and Paraguas. All these are example of words used to describe neighboring immigrants in a derogatory way, but also in a way to distance the speaker from the group spoken about.

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24 “...el pedir controles en las fronteras y criticar nuestras políticas de inmigración, no es xenofobia, es solo pedir más control en la frontera, como cualquier país civilizado lo tiene.”
4.5 Página 12

Day of Fire and Blood in the South of the City

This article is written by Carlos Rodriguez and published on the web page of Página 12, the 8th of December 2010. It covers the evacuation of the park, which in itself was peaceful, what happened later on was that a group of occupant came back, and this led to the violent confrontations with the police, which caused two fatalities, two seriously injured and more than 50 detained. Página 12 recognizes the occupation of the park as a protest to the inaction and passiveness of the Porteño government in solving the housing deficit. Important to mention before the analysis is that Página 12 stands in direct opposition to the government of Mauricio Macri, the chief of the Porteño government, at the time of the occupation.

Even though the content of this article is similar to the previously analyzed, there is a slight difference in how the author is describing the course of events. Instead of writing about the occupants as the active subjects of violence (as the other newspapers have), the police is the main source of violence in this article.

"The guard infantry violently repressed the neighbors..."
"...the police fired live ammunition..."\(^{26}\)

In these sentences the violence exercised from the police is emphasized, rather than the one from the occupants.

Yet another difference between this article and the previous articles is the focus on the reason for the occupation. Unlike the other articles, this one focuses on why the occupants occupied the park, it emphasizes the inaction of the governments housing politics, and especially the chief of the Porteño governments, Mauricio Macri’s, passiveness.

"After arriving to the place, people who, without resorting to violence occupied the terrains. With their actions, with the inindifference of the government of (Mauricio) Macri, what is generated is a battle among the poor who need a place to live"
"...it was the result of the inaction of the government of (Mauricio) Macri, who keeps on producing evictions, but does not construct housing for the poor people."\(^{27}\)

\(^{25}\) “Día de fuego y sangre en el sur de la ciudad”
\(^{26}\) “La Guardia de Infantería reprimió con violencia a los vecinos...”
\(^{27}\) “Luego fueron llegando al lugar personas que, sin ejercer violencia, fueron ocupando los terrenos. Con su accionar, con la indiferencia del gobierno de (Mauricio) Macri, lo que se genera es una batalla entre pobres que necesitan un lugar donde vivir.”
They Asked For Descent Housing

This article is written by Emilio Ruchansky, and published on the internet edition of Página 12, the 8th of December 2010. The article contains an interview with two activists from one of the popular fronts participating in the occupation of Parque Indoamericano. They explain the events that led up to the occupation of the park, and the situation of the people living in Villa 20. They also discuss the promise from the Porteño government to build houses, which fell through, and the car cemetery in proximity to the Villa which causes lead contamination.

What is interesting about this article, just like the previous article from Página 12, is the different approach the author has to the occupants in comparison with the other newspapers. What is evident in this article is that it is taking the side of the weak (the occupants) and elucidates their everyday problems, such as housing and environmental issues. Van Dijk argues that everyday problems for ethnic minorities is seldom reported on in the mass media, therefore these two articles from Página 12 seem to be a rare exception. However, Van Dijk adds that there are some cases in which everyday problems for ethnic minorities actually do get reported on, this is mostly when it could proceed to becoming a problem for the society as a whole, or if the news is spectacular (ibid: 44-45). In this case the housing deficit has led to the occupation of the park, which in turn has affected the society as a whole due to the insecurity and violence in this part of the city.

If assuming that these two articles are in favor of ethnic minorities, in this case Bolivians and Paraguayans, and not against, this type of report would be what Van Dijk calls “Positive Reports”. This type of report can have both negative and positive outcome, it solely depends upon the reader, and the reaction from the readers cannot be foreseeable. A reader with little ethnic prejudice would receive the article positively. However, a reader with ethnic prejudice would interpret the article as false, he or she would think that the newspaper or the author is not allowed or do not dare to write derogatory about ethnic minorities for fear of being called racist or discriminatory (ibid: 159). Nevertheless, due to the lack of the public commentary function, it is impossible to deduce how these articles were received by the public.

“...era el resultado de la inacción del gobierno de (Mauricio) Macri, que sigue produciendo desalojos, pero no construye viviendas para la gente pobre.”

28 “Pedían Vivienda Digna”
Yet another factor important to elucidate, is the political standpoint of *Página 12*, which stand in opposition to the *Porteño* Government, at the time of the occupation. Therefore, there is a possibility that the approach taken in the articles only act as a criticism towards the city’s government, and consequently not as a way of protecting the motives of the occupants.

### 4.6 Summary

In this chapter eight different articles have been analyzed from four different online newspapers, *Clarín*, *La Nación*, *La Razón* and *Página 12*. On two of these, *La Nación* and *La Razón*, commentaries written by readers in connection to the articles have been analyzes. What can be distinguished is that the three first newspapers, *Clarín*, *La Nación* and *La Razón*, have, what could be interpreted as, slightly prejudice and racist tendencies in their articles. They are not clearly outspoken, but can be recognized in the way the authors of each article uses the language, both grammatically but also the words chosen. Mainly these articles could be used as a source of racist prejudice for the society, such as the generalization and creation of stereotypes of ethnic groups. The first three newspapers are rather alike, however the articles features in *Página 12* take on another approach, instead of criminalizing the occupants of *Parque Indoamericano*, and it victimizes them. Thus, describing the occupants as the victims of poverty and the inaction of the *Porteño* government. What stand out the most, are the commentaries made by the readers, many of them express openly racist prejudice in their argumentation and discourses.
5. Conclusion

This study has focused on the racist discourses found in four different newspapers in Argentina. The articles selected have been focused on the occupation of Parque Indoamericano, in the city of Buenos Aires, in the beginning of December 2010. The following discussion is an attempt to answer the questions asked in chapter one.

How do the racist discourses look like in relation to the Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants living in the city of Buenos Aires?

There are several examples of racist discourses today, both in the media and in the society (based upon the commentaries on the articles). The most evident part of the racist discourses is the prejudices directed toward ethnic minorities, in the case of this study, Bolivians and Paraguayans. The prejudices often contain “generalizations and stereotypes” about ethnic minorities, which are attributed to the whole groups. This could for instance be about the cultural differences, such as the immigrants conceiving a lot of children that they cannot pay for.

Many of the topics recognized by Van Dijk (1987) as common in racist discourses can be found in both the articles and in the commentaries in chapter four, however the most openly racist discourses are to be found in the commentaries. A few examples are immigrants as “violent and criminal”, they are the one who caused the violent confrontations with the police, are to be read in some of the articles. In the commentaries some people expresses the opinions on immigrants as criminal or violent, they rob and/or abuses the Argentineans. “Work and (un)employment” are another topic widely discussed, not so much in the articles as in the commentaries, in some cases the discussion is about immigrants stealing the Argentineans employments, in other it is about immigrants not working for a living, and therefore are using the society. There is also an extensive debate on “immigration policies” in the commentary sections, many people feel the need for the government to make the immigration policies stricter, or in some cases even close the borders. Another discussion widely found in the commentaries is the one of the “Rights and Duties” of the Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants, many argues that the immigrants only have rights (healthcare service, education, subsides) but no duties (they do not follow the law, they do not pay taxes, they are abusing the welfare system). Similar prejudices are seen in the INADI report (2012), which shows on
existing misconceptions in the Argentine society about, for instance, that the immigrants are stealing employment away from the Argentineans, that they do not pay taxes and that they are abusing the welfare system.

The division between “us and them” is a common strategy for white elites when speaking about ethnic minorities, this is found both in the articles and the commentary sections. In the articles this is found when emphasizing the nationality of a person mentioned (“the Bolivian woman, or the Paraguayan man”). But it is more widely adopted in the commentaries where there is a clear distinction between “us” (the Argentineans) and “them” (the foreigners), who often gets called derogatory names such as bolitas, paraguas or negros, the INADI report (2012) expresses the same problem regarding the multiple names used when speaking about Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants in a offensive manner to separate them from the Argentineans. We have seen similar results in the previous research of Mulinari & Neergaard (2010), where immigrants are clearly divided from the Argentineans. Their research on racism in Buenos Aires shows that Bolivians and Paraguayans are heavily stigmatized and criminalized, as also visible in the commentaries on the articles in La Razón (2010-12-07) where Bolivians and Paraguayans are connected with robberies and abuse. Also related to the separation between “us and them” is the notion of the Argentinean identity, many are expressing the Argentinean identity as European, and more superior to the rest of Latin America. Therefore there is a fear that the immigration of Bolivians and Paraguayans will lead to the diminishment of the Argentinean identity as an European country, and that it will merge with the identity of Bolivia and Paraguay.

**Are there any differences in how the four investigated newspapers write about the immigrants?**

What is evident is that the first three newspapers analyzed, Clarín, La Nación and La Razón, carries to some extent racist discourses. The most recognizable is the grammatical tendency of making the occupants (mostly of Bolivian and Paraguayan origin) the subjects of violent actions, this could be a way of criminalizing the two ethnic groups, at the same time, when speaking actively about the police, the police are the subject of positive actions, making the occupants the perpetrators. There is a difference in how Página 12 speaks about the occupants and the police, in their articles the police are the subjects of violent actions, whilst the occupants are the victims of these actions.
Another important difference between the first three newspapers and Página 12, is that the latter focuses on the background to the occupation. This gives the reader the notion of the occupation as a protest to the inaction and the indifference of the government, and as a protest to the housing deficit the inhabitants of Villa 20 suffers. The readers of the first three newspapers will receive the picture of the occupants as criminal or violent, since the motive of the occupation is fully- or to some extent left out.

A rough conclusion is that Página 12 does not carry the same racist or prejudice discourse as is, to some extent, visible in the other three newspapers. It is seemingly taking the side of the occupants, rather than the one of the police. Therefore, Página 12 puts itself in stark contrast to Van Dijks theories; specifically that the mass media is prone to only report on subjects of interest to the dominant societal group, rather than of an ethnic or racial minority group. Consequently, leading to reports biased to the elite, whilst completely leaving minorities out of the newspapers reports, or only reported on in negative circumstances. Página 12, turns away from this notion by reporting on the housing deficit which affects the daily lives of the occupants, and not the dominant group (“white elite”) in Buenos Aires.

However, there is another, yet important, side to this debate which involves politics. It is important to elucidate the opposing political ideologies of Página 12, center-leftist, and the Porteño government, at the time being, with Mauricio Macri as leader, center-right. Due to this, the approach reflected in the articles in the newspaper can have acted solely as a critique towards the city’s government. The problems facing the occupants could have been reported on only to show upon the general inaction and passiveness of Mauricio Macri to solve problems which affect the city and its inhabitants, making him and his government unfit to run the city. Therefore, the articles in Página 12 might go beyond merely sympathizing with vulnerable and poor parts of the population, making it impossible to distinguish if their reports are acts against the racist discourses that penetrates the society, or simply just against the politics ran by Mauricio Macri and his government. In either way, it is difficult to consider Página 12 as completely objective in this matter.

**Could the society be influenced by the discourses in the newspapers?**

Van Dijk (1987) argues that one of the main sources of prejudice discourse in the society is the mass media. Therefore the conclusion would be that the society is influenced by the racist discourses carried in the newspapers. However, at a glance it appears as if the society
(through the commentary functions) expresses far stronger racist opinions and prejudices than the newspaper (through the articles). Nevertheless, the articles contain slightly racist and prejudice messages, such as the images of Bolivian and Paraguayan immigrants as criminal or violent, that they have large families, or that they come to Argentina to use welfare services. All these prejudices are reflected in the commentary sections, all though more intensely expressed. Therefore, a reasonable conclusion would be that many of the racist or prejudice opinions in society to some point originate from the newspapers discourses. Previous research indicates that mass media, among other the newspapers, have been an important distributor of racist and prejudice discourses, especially during the 1990s. Nevertheless they are not the only ones responsible for this, politicians and labor unions have also been recognized to be influencing the society with their racist discourses (Grimson 2006).

The notion of Argentine identity is seemingly left out in the articles analyzed, thus it is vividly expressed in the commentaries by the readers. Therefore the conclusion suggests that the newspapers selected do not distribute and reproduce the identity of Argentina as European and “white” country to the public. This identity is more likely deeply rooted in the society through historical processes, and not spread through the mass media which Van Dijk recognizes as a main source of racist discourses.

A final remark to this discussion, important to bear in mind, is the scale of this research. Due to the lack of time and space only a few newspapers and commentaries from the readers have been studied. Therefore can this study only act as a rough generalization, and not as an overview of the content and opinion of the entire mass media and the whole Porteño society.
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Books

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**Newspapers**


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**Internet Resources**

-Instituto Nacional contra la Discriminación, la Xenofobia y el Racismo (INADI), Migrantes y Discriminación http://inadi.gob.ar/promocion-y-desarrollo/publicaciones/documentos-tematicos/migrantes/ 2012-12-01


-CIA World Fact Book
