Multiplying labour, multiplying resistance: class composition in Buenos Aires's clandestine textile workshops

Abstract

Buenos Aires's *talleres clandestinos* (clandestine textile workshops) are powerful sites of accumulation and resistance; a complex and communitarian migrant economy. The economy's complexity is, however, masked by its spatiality, clandestinity, and the promotion of culturalist analyses that ignore intra-collective class differentials. This paper considers the 'autonomy of migration' approach through the lens of 'class composition' to explore the *talleres'* contours. Witnessed in the *talleres* is a clear 'multiplication of labour', yet approaching this multiplication compositionally highlights the multiple examples of resistance and refusal immanent to the workshop economy. But this dialectic of control and resistance transcends the workplace, with the *talleres* one node in a wider, socially-reproductive borderscape. By developing a framework that neither condemns nor celebrates economic structures like the *talleres*, but instead unpacks their antagonistic nature, the paper highlights the benefits of a) analysing the autonomy of migration approach compositionally, and b) further geographical engagement with autonomist thinking.

Keywords: Autonomist Marxism, autonomy of migration, Buenos Aires, multiplication of labour, sweatshops, forced labour.

Introduction

Buenos Aires's textile industry is big business, employing over 300,000 Bolivian migrants in *talleres clandestinos* (clandestine workshops; Kabat et al., 2017). But with 'informal' employment as high as 80% (Burchielli et al., 2014), and most production existing behind closed doors, the industry – often literally – remains underground: the vast majority of the 25,000 workshops are situated in the owners' properties in the city's *villas miserias* (informal settlements), with others hidden in more formal neighbourhoods (Montero Bressán and Arcos, 2017). For this predominantly migrant workforce[1] the hours are long (up to sixteen hours a day, six days a week), the conditions punishing, and the pay less than half the

[1] The textile industry also features migrants from other countries, in particular South Korea (Kim, 2014), but Bolivians are by far the largest single group, and thus the focus of this paper.

minimum wage. For recent migrants in particular the conditions are even worse, with the workshops often all they see; sleeping, eating, and working in these cramped spaces, sometimes without pay (Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011). But as Luis, a migrant who spent over ten years working in the *talleres,* told me "there is power within those workshops". The *talleres* are thus also sites of resistance and refusal that allow migrants to forge new lives (Gago, 2017).

This paper explores this complex, ambivalent, and antagonistic economic system, arguing that it should be neither condemned nor celebrated. Instead, detailed analysis is required to unpack how the *talleres* are powerful sites of both accumulation and struggle. To do this, the paper develops a theoretical framework that reintegrates two related, yet often disparate, areas of thought: autonomist Marxism and the 'autonomy of migration' (AoM) approach. The former is an anti-authoritarian Marxism that foregrounds disparate working-class struggles as the engine of societal change (Tronti, 2019; Wright, 2017), while the latter takes migrants' experiences and subjectivities as a starting point from which to analyse global border regimes (Altenried et al., 2018) and the changing shape of contemporary capitalism (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). There is a mutually beneficial relationship to this synthesis, with AoM forcing autonomist thinking to take non-class structures more seriously (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015), and an autonomist imperative ensuring AoM avoids overplaying resistance (Leonardi, 2016). In particular, the paper combines the two currents' signal contributions – class composition analysis (Wright, 2017) and the multiplication of labour (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013), respectively – to develop a critical analysis of the workshop economy. This is crucial as, despite emerging from a wider autonomist imperative, AoM has tended to move away from compositional thinking (Altenried et al., 2018). Thus far from separate currents, autonomist Marxism and AoM are intimately related, yet, surprisingly, the full force of their collective theoretical might remains underexplored.

This paper combats this by developing an explicitly compositional framework with which to approach the multiplication of labour, therefore making a series of interrelated contributions. Empirically, it builds on work exploring the *talleres'* intersectionally-striated class structures (Montero Bressán and Arcos, 2017) and links to translocal networks (Bastia, 2013). While conceptually it continues to force autonomist thinking out of its comfort zone to prevent its 'ossification' (Shukaitis, 2014), which the paper does in three key ways. First, as

violent responses to migration grow the world over, it is incumbent on us to push back. While AoM can do just this, it has been criticised for fetishising resistance and for its propensity to generalise (Lan, 2015). Understanding migration compositionally avoids this, developing a more grounded and militant praxis (Altenried et al., 2018), while also forcing class composition analysis to engage more seriously with non-class structures and social reproduction (Thoburn, 2017). Second, despite their suitability for the task, explicitly autonomist analyses of the 'informal' and 'unfree' migrant labour found in garment workshops worldwide are rare (Campbell, 2016); such an approach sharpens our understanding of labour conditions and resistance in these workshops while honing compositional analyses themselves. Third, and finally, the paper illustrates the benefits of a geographical engagement with these expanded autonomist ideas (see Brown, 2019; Clare, 2019a Gray, 2018; Marks, 2012), here, in particular, through a spatialisation of the 'multiplication of labour'.

The paper begins with an overview of autonomist Marxist thinking, highlighting the benefits of a (re)turn to its core concept – class composition analysis – arguing that, despite its power, it needs to be intersectional and engage more seriously with social reproduction. I then flag AoM's relationship with autonomism and outline the benefits of an explicitly spatial *and* compositional reading of the multiplication of labour. After a brief methodology, I use this framework to explore how the *talleres* maximise accumulation and limit resistance. This complex, communitarian economy is, however, often misrepresented through a culturalist lens driven by media-friendly 'slave labour' discourses (Kabat et al., 2017). The next section therefore explores this view's conceptual and practical limitations, highlighting how such a discourse is counterproductive and weaponised by *talleristas* (workshop-owners) to increase exploitation. Finally, the paper explores examples of resistance in-and-beyond the workshops, reiterating the multiple lines of antagonism that exist within this (more than) economic system (Habermehl, 2019).

Autonomist Marxist thought

At its simplest, autonomist Marxism is an approach that emphasises the power and autonomy of the working class. Struggles may be varied, diffuse, contradictory and even at odds with traditional organs of working-class power, but are nevertheless central to the

evolution of capitalist society (Tronti, 2019). While the early autonomists in the 1960s and 1970s analysed labour processes (hence the then name 'workerists'; Wright, 2017) this was then complemented by an important focus on social reproduction (see Barbagallo, 2019; Federici, 2012) and the urbanisation of capital and class struggle (Tronti, 2019). Central to all this work, however, was class composition analysis, which is categorically non-teleological and centres the diverse struggles and subjectivities of a heterogeneous working class (Wright, 2017). Re-engaging with, spatialising, and thus expanding, this autonomist idea can provide a renewed commitment to class struggles in-and-beyond the workplace (Brown, 2019; Clare, 2019a; Gray, 2018). A compositional (re)turn can also guard against the vagaries that haunt some autonomist thinking, where a commitment to detailed and reflexive analysis is replaced by an alluring yet vague conceptual architecture (Leonardi, 2016). There is also a mutually beneficial, yet curiously underexplored, relationship between class composition analysis and arguably autonomism's most exciting descendants: AoM and the multiplication of labour (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). As the next sections show, a focus on migration and migrant labour expands and enriches class composition analysis, while the added precision, power, and pragmatism of an explicitly compositional approach to AoM is invaluable.

Class composition

Despite autonomism's heterogeneity class composition analysis remains a uniting thread; autonomism has even been referred to as 'compositional Marxism' (Wright, 2017). As struggles against capital took unexpected forms – in particular the militancy of (supposedly) unorganised Southern migrants in Italy's industrial North – workerists recognised the limitations of their conceptual arsenal. Capital-centric analyses under-theorised the proletariat, failing to explain upsurges in militancy, so workerists inverted the dialectic (Tronti, 2019): rather than capital leading and workers responding, changes in regimes of accumulation were theorised as responses to worker militancy. But while necessary, placing the proletariat on the front foot was insufficient, and detailed 'workers' inquiries' birthed the concepts of *technical* and *political* composition (Woodcock, 2017).

Briefly, class's technical composition is the division of labour in terms of wages, skills, and productivity, as well as gendered, racialised, and nationalised differences. Intimately linked to capital's composition, it describes the workforce's division, management, and

exploitation (Marks, 2012: 470). The technical composition therefore reflects how capital brings workforces together, but importantly it is not solely focused on production, but also capital's (re)production and circulation (Barbagallo, 2019; Thorburn, 2017; Tronti, 2019). On the other hand, the political composition refers to how the working class struggles (or does not) against capitalism (Shukaitis, 2013). The dialectical inversion frames the relationship between the two concepts. Particular technical compositions emerge to maximise accumulation by disciplining labour militancy, and political compositions are shaped by, and immanent to, these technical compositions (Roggero, 2010). And against totalising analyses, compositional thinking locates capital's weak points, with new struggles and subjectivities emerging from these ever-present cracks (Shukaitis, 2013).

Finally, complementing these concepts are class re- and de-composition: recomposition refers to upsurges in working-class activity, and decomposition the opposite. Returning to the autonomists' central motivations, re- and de-composing activities are diverse and can exist separately from the formal labour movement, with the concepts describing relative increases/decreases in the scale and intensity of 'circulations of struggle' (Dyer-Witherford, 2008). Class composition analysis thus provides a detailed framework for analysing capitalism's changing conjunctures, and the various, sometimes conflicting forms of resistance and acquiescence these beget.

Class composition analysis was most commonly used in 1960s and 1970s Italy (Wright, 2017) but has since reappeared (Camfield, 2004; Dyer-Witherford, 2008; Roggero, 2010; Shukaitis, 2013, 2014). The new wave of work examines political actions carried out across a range of locations and by a variety of actors. In a financialised, post-Fordist world, class politics has mutated, not disappeared: while class structures have fractured, labour and capital's antagonistic relationship remains. Nevertheless, despite sustained decomposition, cycles of struggle are recomposing, often from previously unexpected sources, such as migrants, the unemployed, and indigenous groups. Contemporary work on class composition explores these multiple processes, be they taking place in UK call centres (Hastings and Cumbers, 2019; Woodcock, 2017) or among Chinese agricultural workers (Marks, 2012). Importantly, class composition analysis does not apply a pre-determined class structure to particular contexts, instead exploring the specificities of each situation.

Class analyses must also consider relationships *within* and not just *between* classes, as these influence the political (in)activity of the working classes (Camfield, 2004); class composition analysis is particularly attuned to this internal heterogeneity (Wright, 2017). As mentioned, capital's leveraging of non-class structures like gender, race, and migratory status determines technical compositions, while these fractures or solidarities fundamentally shape political compositions' capacity for re- or de-composition. Despite this, much work on class composition fails to be properly intersectional (Clare, 2019a), a tendency that is galling given the crucial insights of autonomist feminists (Barbagallo, 2019): there is thus a need to focus in detail on the roles that race, indigeneity, and nationality play in shaping contemporary class compositions – something that an engagement with migration forces class composition to do.

In a similar vein, despite coining the idea of the 'social factory' to examine how capitalist social relations extend far beyond the workplace (Tronti, 2019: 12-35), early autonomist thinkers neglected proper analysis of social reproduction. In response, autonomist feminists demanded wages for/against housework (Toupin, 2018) and emphasised that social reproduction is a site of both struggle and control (Dalla Costa and James, 1972; Fortunati, 1995).[2] Recent work has reiterated the importance of considering social reproduction within compositional analyses (e.g. Thorburn, 2017), arguing for much greater focus on factors like "where workers live and in what kind of housing, the gendered division of labour, patterns of migration, racism, community infrastructure" (Notes from Below, 2018: n.p.). Social reproduction thus shapes, and is shaped by, technical compositions, potentially benefitting labour just as much as capital. A socially-reproductive focus therefore adds to the already powerful compositional approach, helping autonomist analyses better realise their potential of analysing intersectional class struggles beyond, and not just in-and-against, workplaces.

Intra-class compositional analysis must also attend to questions of informal and forced labour, given increasingly fractured and fragmented global class structures. Outsourcing and informality have long been intentional strategies to limit worker resistance and increase profits, while the continued persistence (if not expansion) of forced labour maximises

[2] Debates remain over whether or not social-reproductive activities are value producing, with autonomist feminists (Barbagallo, 2019) and the Argentine feminist movement (Mason-Deese, 2018) typically arguing that they are.

extraction of absolute surplus value. The centrality of informal and forced labour to many contemporary technical class compositions is reflected in detailed compositional analyses of precarity (Shukaitis, 2013; Woodcock, 2017). But autonomist analyses are underpinned by political compositions (Roggero, 2010), and in this vein Campbell (2016) explores the 'everyday recomposition' of undocumented migrant textile workers in Thailand, where new forms of struggle and combative subjectivities have emerged, counterintuitively, from increased flexibilisation and precarity. The best compositional analyses are, however, radically ambivalent (Clare, 2019b), focusing on de- just as much as re-composition; we see this in Buenos Aires, where Gago (2016; 2017; 2018) traces the 'informal', 'forced', and communitarian elements of the textile economy through an autonomist-inflected lens. This scholarship highlights the need for compositional analyses to broaden their scope beyond traditional, 'formal' employment, especially given the interlinked increase in instances of forced labour and the role that migration plays in shaping class compositions.

Autonomy of migration

Autonomism itself emerged through a focus on migration (Wright, 2017), and there is a growing body of work exploring how migrants are involved with class de- and re-composition by drastically altering technical and political compositions (e.g. Marks, 2012; Pizzolato, 2013; Altenried et al, 2018). But the most important, exciting, and well-known current to emerge from the intersections between autonomism and migration is AoM. This extends the autonomists' inversion of the capital/labour dialectic to focus on migrants and state borders: rather than migrants always responding to border controls, these controls are framed as responses to flows of migration (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015). This provides an 'autonomous gaze' which avoids methodological nationalism while emphasising that class struggles exist beyond the workplace. This gaze, however, should not be read as a romanticisation of migration that lapses into liberal ideas of pure autonomy (De Genova et al., 2018). Migrants are neither completely free agents nor passive victims, but their constrained agency can be productively understood through the autonomist lens of 'refusal' (Tronti, 2019), as lines of flight subverting the nation-state (Mezzadra, 2004).

AoM has thus forced autonomist thinking further out of its comfort zone, extending productive encounters with feminist thought, emphasising the importance of intersectional

analyses, and contributing to an important, albeit nascent, decolonial imperative (Casas-Cortes et al., 2015; Luisetti et al., 2015; Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). Especially relevant to this paper is work using AoM to problematise agency-stripping narratives of human trafficking (Gago, 2018) and asylum (De Genova et al., 2018), dovetailing with autonomist analyses that challenge simplified and hyperbolic discussion of migrant forced or 'slave' labour (Gago, 2016).

Starting with migrants' subjectivities rather than state control is analogous to the autonomists' privileging of political over technical compositions (Roggero, 2010; Shukaitis, 2013). But just as this method demands proper interrogation of changing technical compositions, AoM uses this vantage point to sharpen its analysis of how global border regimes shape contemporary capitalism:

> [AoM] has nothing to do with a "romanticisation" of migration and does not detach its investigation from an analysis of the "structural" conditions within which movements and struggles of migration take place. It rather takes the subjective dimensions of migration as an angle from which the structural conditions can be more effectively studied and criticized. (Altenried et al., 2018: 292)

In particular AoM explores how an extension and proliferation of 'border thinking' (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) is central to technical compositions, creating and maintaining precarity through conditions of 'deportability in everyday life' (De Genova, 2002). Borders have thus become 'borderscapes' (Altenried et el., 2018), penetrating well within nation-states to control labour.

The multiplication of labour

These interrelated processes have been explored in depth through arguably AoM's signal contribution, the 'multiplication of labour' (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). This concept inverts and complements the traditional 'division of labour' to examine how, in three key ways, class structures have become more complex through migration's centrality to the global economy. First, labour is *intensified* as it colonises workers' entire lives through the extraction of absolute surplus value and the move beyond 'real' to an almost 'total' subsumption (see Endnotes Collective, 2010), such as is found in the 'social factory'. Second, it is *diversified* as labour processes become more complex and variegated in the search for relative surplus

value. Finally, labour is *heterogenised* through border regimes that create distinct yet complex labour hierarchies, promoting precarity, informality, and vulnerability (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013: 88). But despite its power, this global multiplication of labour is never all-encompassing, with pushback from (migrant) workers always immanent. This fuels new forms of resistance and constituent subjectivity, which, on the one hand, has real and radical potential (Leonardi, 2016), but on the other, drives new border technologies (Collins, 2016) – returning to the 'borderscape', these function as vital support networks for migrants, and as sites of generative struggle, just as they can grow in repressive-strength and violence. The multiplication of labour approach has been used to explore migrant labour in garment workshops (e.g. Campbell, 2016; Gago, 2017; Lan, 2015) as well as lives in urban peripheries more generally (Collins, 2016), showing how, far from aberrations, these processes are reflective of wider trends in capital's regimes of accumulation (Mezzadri, 2017).

Despite the clear lineage from autonomist thinking to AoM, very little work in the latter current is explicitly compositional[3], something peculiar as class composition analysis provides an ideal framework for understanding the causes and consequences of migration and migrant struggles:

> What [AoM] allows us to add is that the production and reproduction of labour power as a commodity are processes crisscrossed by specific conflicts and lines of antagonism, which structurally pertain to capitalism and nevertheless are to be distinguished by the way the antagonism between capital and labour manifests itself in the production process...[and] a focus on migration from this point of view also implies a rethinking of…class composition. (Altenried et al. 2018: 298)

This quotation emphasises the mutually beneficial, although as-yet untapped, relationship between a compositional approach and AoM. The former's commitment to rigorous analysis, guards against AoM's tendency to overplay resistance and revolutionary potential (Lan, 2015), while the latter continues the important project of helping compositional thinking move against-and-beyond itself to include proper analyses of non-class structures (Camfield, 2004). In particular, a compositional approach to the multiplication of labour is productive as, although Mezzadra and Neilson (2013) are careful to guard against the aforementioned

[3] For instance there is only one specific discussion of class composition and the multiplication of labour in Mezzadra and Neilson's foundational text (2013: 99).

weaknesses in autonomist thinking, tensions remain (see Leonardi, 2016: 245-246). To maximise the framework's political clout and avoid romanticisation, a compositional approach is necessary, or else AoM can become:

> nothing more than an *ensemble* of *lethal utopias*…whose superficial stance is simply hiding its deeper affinity with neoliberal ideologies…[N]eglecting the task of analysing the composition of the world-working class…[can] distract…social movements from the need to update the anti-capitalist historical experience. (ibid: 254)

By going back to a compositional future, the multiplication of labour and the already powerful AoM approaches can thus reach new heights. This crucial reuniting of autonomist thinking and AoM reveals how labour's multiplication is fundamentally spatial (Brown, 2019), reliant on shaping technical compositions, and, important given its relative neglect in discussions of the multiplication of labour, tied to social reproduction. In this regard, the framework is well suited to analysing the heterogeneity of migrant labour in Buenos Aires's textile workshops which, after a brief methodology, is the focus of the next sections.

Methodology

The analysis that follow draws on nine months of in-depth fieldwork in Buenos Aires conducted between September 2012 and June 2013. This included participant observation carried out across the city's neighbourhoods and *villas*, as well as attending regular meetings, demonstrations, and events with migrant and labour organisations. Extensive field notes were made throughout. Particularly relevant to this paper were discussions with two organisations carrying out research into Bolivian workers in the *talleres*: La Alameda and Simbiosis Cultural. The former – much larger, more broad-based, and linked to international anti-sweatshop campaigns – has launched a cooperative and union for (migrant) textile workers and campaigns to locate, unmask, and ultimately shut down clandestine workshops, often through the use of a 'slave labour' discourse. The latter, who are all Bolivian migrant textile workers themselves, carry out collective research into the network of *talleres*, and have been critical of exogenous attempts to close workshops and discussions of 'slave labour'. To complement this research I also carried out 39 semi-structured interviews with migrants, activists, politicians, academics, and journalists – all participants have been given pseudonyms.

Multiplying and composing the *talleres clandestinos*

This section explores the *talleres clandestinos'* technical composition, providing necessary context to analyse the political compositions of the (majority Bolivian) migrants therein. Their technical composition most obviously 'intensifies' labour (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) to extract the maximum absolute surplus value (Montero Bressán, 2018), but the workshops' size, clandestinity, and spatialities are also vital, fracturing and disciplining the workforce while insulating owners from recrimination. Central to labour's multiplication, therefore, is the control *talleristas* have over migrants' lives, illustrating that analyses of both class composition and the multiplication of labour must engage more seriously with social reproduction (Notes from Below, 2018). Tracing the complexity of the workshop economy, and the ways labour is intensified, diversified, and heterogenised, denaturalises troubling stereotypes about migrant work, combats over-simplified slave-labour discourses, and highlights potential areas of antagonism and resistance. These are, therefore, the focus of the next sections.

For newer migrants to Buenos Aires *talleres* are regularly their homes; many live, work, and sleep in the same, cramped area, often with their children – a situation known euphemistically as *cama caliente* (hot bed). During the first few months they may not receive any wages, having to pay back debts incurred to those who fixed their travel and new job. Official working hours are typically 7am until midnight during the week, 8am until noon on Saturdays, with only Sundays off. However, these regularly bleed over, with migrants having to finish specific jobs, while the 'free time' on Sunday is usually spent selling merchandise at La Salada, Latin America's largest 'informal' market (Montero Bressán and Arcos, 2017). Given the poor pay – typically under half the minimum wage – woeful living conditions, and long working hours, this situation is an almost total subsumption[4] of life to work, or an extreme 'intensification' of labour (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). This extraction of absolute surplus value is reflected in the technical composition of the *talleres*, which Marcos, an academic and activist, said have no "labour saving technologies…You still have…one person per machine. So you have to work longer than before and sew quicker than before." The workshop economy

[4] Homeworking has also increased to employ over 500,000 people (Burchielli et al., 2014), reflecting wider trends in the garment industry and a potentially counter-intuitive move from real to formal subsumption.

is thus a form of 'baroque modernity' (Gago, 2017: 118-119), a motleyed accumulation process where colonially-inflected production structures, simultaneously derived from the fifteenth, eighteenth, and twentieth centuries, merge with complex financialised circuits of 'expanded extractivism'. Labour is multiplied by this baroque modernity and while, as the next paragraphs explore, the wider workshop economy is complex and multiform, there is a brute simplicity to the production process.

This intensification of labour is exacerbated by the panoptic, precarity-inducing affects/effects of living and working under the watch of a combined boss-landlord-'trafficker'. Even for migrants no longer *cama caliente*, the housing they can access (given their employment and lack of documents, migrants' housing is typically 'informal') is typically controlled by *talleristas*, as is access to healthcare and other key socially-reproductive functions. Laura from La Alameda described this:

> [*Talleres*] are often seen as a logical [part of] the Bolivian community…The workshops have a family-like logic but that makes it easier for the owners…If you're unemployed, you go to [them to] get a job…If you're sick or need to take your child to the hospital, they organise that, but they basically control you.

This situation extends *talleristas*' control and, in breaking down distinctions between work and home, highlights the blurry nature of social (re)production (Schling, 2018). Migrants' lives are therefore shaped by a 'borderscape' (Altenried et al, 2018) where:

> [t]he workshop economy is not confined to the workshop alone. It includes a constellation of institutions: radio stations, nightclubs, transportation and remittance companies, clinics, certain neighborhoods, and (implicit and clandestine, and explicit and legal) arrangements with authorities (police, city and provincial governments) (Gago 2017: 117).

The complexity of this borderscape shows how labour is multiplied in-and-beyond the workplace, with a 'diversification' that increases relative surplus value, complementing the labour intensification mentioned above (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). However simple textile manufacturing may seem, the *talleres'* expanded production network is diverse. Widespread labour-subcontracting means that the same products can be produced through any combination of homeworking, 'informal', and 'formal' labour, and complex logistical

networks mean that identical clothing is found in Buenos Aires's high-end boutiques and as 'fakes' in La Salada (Burchielli et al., 2014). Alongside these intricate networks of production and circulation is an 'informal', financialised circuit of consumption that allows un(der)paid migrants to purchase products they have often made themselves in order to survive (Gago, 2017). Recent migrants' work and home lives thus resemble a Gordian knot. They are often literally one and the same, but even for those with some separation, the control *talleristas* have over social reproduction is central to labour's multiplication.

Workshop-owners' relationships with the state shows how the border 'heterogenises' labour, actively facilitating and maintaining precarity through division. There have long been translocal recruitment networks linking specific *talleres* with distinct parts of Bolivia (Bastia, 2013), and these have even been promoted by the Bolivian state (Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011). *Talleristas* prey on vulnerability and a lack of knowledge to recruit labour in Bolivia, and once workers arrive in Buenos Aires disinformation is propagated and migrants' rights are masked. This can create a series of hierarchies within and between migrant communities – for instance, between Bolivian and Korean-owned workshops (Kim, 2014) – through which labour is heterogenised, managed, and exploited. Further, this borderscape can consolidate the self-reliance or self-exploitation of the Bolivian community in Buenos Aires, reiterating that compositional analyses of the 'multiplication of labour' must be conceptualised beyond the workplace, and take non-class structures seriously.

The *talleres* therefore constitute a complex, communitarian popular economy (Gago, 2017). But their fractal nature makes collective action extremely difficult, with new migrants often regularly interacting with only a handful of compatriots, as Arturo, a recent Bolivian migrant, told me:

> When I arrived, all I saw were others in the workshop…but even when I stopped working *cama caliente* I only saw a few others…I still relied on [the *talleristas*]. I had to use their shops, even going to their *boliches* [discos] to meet others.

Witnessed here is control over technical composition *and* social reproduction, the consequences of which are twofold: it makes grievance-sharing, and thus mass action, more difficult, while the reliance it breeds on *talleristas* obfuscates exploitative class relations. For migrants in the *talleres* this constrains their political compositions (a point explored in detail

below), but the workshop economy's small, kinship-based nature also leads to the external promotion of culturalist analyses (Gago, 2016). This limited, intra-collective interaction is a contingency borne of a specific technical composition, yet it is frequently portrayed by the state and media as part of an inherent 'Bolivianess' – most famously when a judge ruled that Bolivians like working in such conditions as they reflect 'traditional Andean values' (Kabat et al, 2017). As explored below, the flaws in such analyses are manifold, simultaneously essentialising Bolivian migrants and ignoring their internal class relationships. The deeply-colonial racialisation of Bolivian labour creates hierarchies between national and non-national workers (cf. Werner, 2011), further heterogenising labour. It is this baroque modernity that makes the *talleres* so disciplinary and such effective sites of accumulation. And while it is crucial to recognise the communitarian, familial nature of the expanded workshop economy, this does not mean, however, that class-exploitation is absent, but instead that compositional analyses must be intersectional and properly unpack racial and national differences that simultaneously divide and unite migrant groups.

Spatial multiplication; multiple spatialisations

The spatiality of the *talleres* also multiplies labour, showing how technical compositions, as well as socially reproductive infrastructures, are always spatial (Clare, 2019a). Following repeated high-profile tragedies – perhaps most famously the March 2006 fire that killed six Bolivians (one pregnant woman and five children) living in a clandestine workshop in the middle-class neighbourhood of *Caballito*[5] - pressure has been placed on Buenos Aires's changing governments to increase workshop inspections and enforce labour standards. The results of these inspections are mixed. Often merely symbolic, inspections increase following disasters but decrease when media-pressure subsides (Montero Bressán, 2011). Moreover, given links between the city government and *talleristas*, inspections are frequently pre-warned, and inspectors paid off (Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011), showing how labour is intentionally heterogenised (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013). *Talleres'* technical and spatial compositions also insulate owners, with workshops' clandestinity making them hard to locate, and their fragmentation meaning individual workshops can be sacrificed while

[5] Tellingly the coverage of the fire focused more on the presence of a workshop in such a neighbourhood than the horrific loss of life. Those who died were: Juana Vilca (25), Wilfredo Quispe Mendoza (15), Elias Carabajal Quispe (10), Luis Quispe (4), Rodrigo Quispe Carabajal (4), and Harry Rodriguez (3).

others continue unabated – be they situated in formal neighbourhoods or the *villas*. Workshops, and the migrants therein, thus vacillate between invisibility and hyper-visibility, yet are consistently portrayed as "a sort of black hole where another type of humanity is concentrated, one that is never fully recognized as such, other than under the idea of complete foreignness" (Gago, 2016: n.p.). This overlooks the intersectionally-striated class structures that drive the workshop economy denying the possibility of immanent agency and resistance.

The embedding of so many *talleres* in Buenos Aires's *villas* is thus a deliberate socio-spatial strategy (Clare, 2019a; Gago, 2017) that affords: access to cheap, vulnerable labour; the ability to minimise outside interference; control far beyond the workplace; and the heightened extraction of absolute surplus value. Similar consequences stem from the significant number of *talleres* that exist, clandestinely, in formal neighbourhoods: such workshops hide in plain sight, and are typically situated in, or near to, neighbourhoods with high migrant populations.[6] These workshops are often smaller enterprises with a high prevalence of *cama caliente*, again enabling *talleristas* to sacrifice individual workshops to inspection and to retain the benefits that come from a fragmented workforce. Individual *talleres* may, therefore, be clandestine, but the wider workshop economy, in its complex, expansive, and extractive ignominy, is fundamentally relational.

Labour is multiplied through its spatiality, as these spatialised technical compositions drive concomitant intensification, diversification, and heterogenisation. Simultaneously, however, the *talleres'* spatiality also contributes to an over-simplification of this heterogeneity. By portraying migrant labour as an aberrant 'other' – as existing in enclaves of supposedly Bolivian values in allegedly un-Argentine spaces – the social, economic, and political conditions causing exploitation to remain underexplored. 'Sweatshop regimes', reflecting wider capitalist trends, exist the world over (Mezzadri, 2017) and require detailed, localised analyses (Campbell, 2016). Autonomist Marxist ideas do just this, and this section has described how, through its domination of migrants' social reproduction, the *talleres*' communitarian technical composition multiplies labour. But as the next section shows,

[6] This distribution of known workshops can be seen on this map created by La Alameda https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1v8l_swQqkW9RuQ-gsXbw7x8nSYg&ll=-34.65368451053198%2C-58.468134001342776&z=15

talleristas intentionally downplay the heterogeneity of migrant life to further this multiplication.

Slave labour, or, the denial of multiplication

The *talleres's* clandestinity and spatiality leads to their invisibility, meaning that they become known to the public through events such as the 2006 fire. In conjunction with the terrible working conditions revealed through campaigns by La Alameda and others, these hyper-visible moments of excess shape knowledge of the *talleres* and those that work in them. Given this, mainstream descriptions of the *talleres* tend towards the hyperbolic, something exacerbated by a powerful, popular, and paternalistic discourse of 'slave labour' prevalent in much Argentine media (Kabat et al., 2017). This is not to downplay levels of exploitation, merely to note that the expanded workshop economy's complexity becomes flattened by this dominance of culturalist narratives and analyses.

The ubiquity of the slave labour discourse is, therefore, not matched by its utility, as it falls down on a number of accounts. It removes migrants' agency and grossly essentialises, making the complex and contingent seem simple and necessary through the idea of a fundamentally 'Bolivian' way of working. Resting on colonial tropes (Werner, 2011), these stereotypes are pernicious, (re)producing the subalternity of Bolivian migrants in Buenos Aires through a crude conflation of class, race, indigeneity, and nationality. In compositional terms, Bolivians' political compositions are ignored through their reduction to a hyper-extended technical composition. But this is more than a purely conceptual issue. As explicitly compositional work has shown elsewhere (Campbell, 2016), recompositional potential is always immanent, even in the face of extremely powerful and punitive technical compositions. And in the specific case of Buenos Aires, *talleristas* weaponise these discourses to maximise exploitation through an obfuscation of class differences within the Bolivian community (Gago, 2017). While they heterogenise labour on the one hand, they promote a false homogeneity on the other, and for these reasons the slave labour discourse's causes and consequences require unpacking.

Given the often-horrendous conditions that workers – especially those working *cama caliente* – face in the *talleres*, the prevalence of the slave labour discourse is unsurprising. Its power is in its simplicity and emotional value:

> There is a strength [in using] 'slave labour', because your struggle gains visibility…It makes people aware…that it has to be contested…It helps [with] press, and social recognition. (Marcos)

Indeed having attended high-profile actions outside Zara stores for their use of Bolivian 'slave'-made clothing, the public and media attention was marked. The 'benefits' of these actions, however, are rarely felt by textile workers themselves. Such exogenous actions and discourses portray textile workers as victims who require saving, rather than agents with whom solidarity can be built, a point made by Laura from La Alameda:[7]

> The worst thing is that [they] become victimised, they are interpellated by that word. If you say someone is a 'slave' it is harder to understand their situation and build solidarity…The worst [thing] you can do is treat them like a victim…You have to empower them, and treating them like a slave doesn't.

By denying the political composition of migrants in the *talleres* talk of 'slave labour' limits the circulation and uniting of struggles, fracturing and decomposing the working class. Talk of slave labour thus becomes self-fulfilling, (re)producing migrants' subalternity and reinforcing culturalist narratives.

Lacking here is an intersectional class analysis. Portraying Bolivian workers as slaves limits solidarity, unnecessarily and uncritically dividing the working class along national and ethnic lines. These issues were flagged by Juan, a Bolivian textile worker: "[Bolivian community leaders] are all linked to the *talleres*…that is how they make money…You need to look…at class relationships within [our] community." 'Slave labour' discourses, by contrast, homogenise the Bolivian community and obfuscate marked class-divides, and can therefore benefit *talleristas* who weaponise the discourse and channel animosity towards exogenous forces. Reflecting on his time in the *talleres*, Luis (a longstanding Bolivian migrant and ex-textile worker) described this in detail, arguing that 'slave labour'

> categorises Bolivians in that type of work. That is very useful to the Argentine state [and] society to segregate and maintain [hierarchies]. However, it is also useful for *talleristas*…[who say]: "We're all Bolivians, we're all workers, there are no class

[7] This quotation shows that La Alameda is a broad church, given many of their members are very pro the use of slave labour as a discourse.

> differences within the Bolivian community"…Attacks on the *talleres* – the Bolivian community's economic system – [thus] attack *all* Bolivians…[The discourse] empowers *talleristas*.

The consequences of describing work in the *talleres* as 'slave labour' are far-reaching. It not only hinders solidarity (decomposes), but it also creates a false sense of nationally-bound class unity. By obfuscating intra-class differences, *talleristas* further exploit their compatriots, and thus talk of 'slave labour' is central to the *talleres'* disciplinary, extractive technical composition. Such is racism and xenophobia in Argentina that *talleristas* are (falsely) able to portray themselves as occupying a position of shared-subalternity with those they employ, skilfully mobilising a misunderstood, misrepresented communitarian logic (Gago, 2017).

This has a clear impact on Bolivian workers' political compositions, many of whom, in the face of exogenous animosity, feel increasingly beholden to talleristas, and "fall back on ethnic identities that empower…bourgeois leadership of migrant associations (Kabat et al. 2017: 60)." This has been described as a 'visitor's consciousness' that *talleristas* actively cultivate (Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011), using the vulnerability that comes from labour heterogenisation to promote a docile workforce (see also Bastia and Montero Bressán, 2018). Linking to the slave labour discourse, Luis elaborated:

> We can't annoy, we can't organise ourselves, we can't bring up other problems. Why? Because we came to visit…to work. *They* have the "kindness" to give *us* hospitality…a job…[This is] useful to controllers of our community's labour [and] economic system…It's because of that that [leaders] need to maintain those stereotypes. So we are Bolivians, we are humble, we are submissive, we are workers.

This subdued political composition reflects the complex, communitarian technical composition described earlier.

Detailed analysis of class differentials *within* the Bolivian community is paramount (Montero Bressán and Arcos, 2017), as their simultaneous existence and denial makes the *talleres* such lucrative sites of accumulation. This reflects a powerful double movement: workshop-owners' multiplication of labour is central to the technical composition of the *talleres*, while the masking of this multiplication limits militant political compositions. But

compositional analyses must also be intersectional, as ethnic and national striations mask class similarities *and* differentials between and within migrant groups. Talk of 'slave labour' can promote culturalist narratives that fail to grasp this complexity, ignoring social reproduction and simplifying through their racialisation (Gago, 2016). And practically, describing workers as slaves plays into *talleristas'* hands, limiting recomposition.

Political composition and the *talleres*

The previous three sections have traced the technical composition of the *talleres* in detail, focusing on how labour is multiplied spatially and socially reproductively, contributing to a dominant-yet-limited 'slave labour' discourse. This is, however, only the first step; autonomists privilege political composition as "the basis of analysis and political strategy" (Shukaitis, 2013: 656). This section therefore analyses the political compositions of the *talleres*, showing that while pockets of resistance exist, there is a deep ambivalence to the multiplied, communitarian labour found therein. Awareness of this is important in avoiding AoM's tendency to overplay resistance (Lan, 2015), while highlighting that a multiplication of labour begets a multiplication of struggle. The section begins with discussion of the power immanent to the workshops and how, through seemingly-small acts of refusal, migrant workers push back. These acts of resistance are then framed within a wider discussion of AoM, emphasising that the act of migrating to Buenos Aires can be a form of refusal or escape. Nevertheless the technical composition of the *talleres* mean that resistance, when it exists, is often delayed – it can also be absent, with recurring intra-collective exploitation. But as the communitarian contours of the workshop economy exist beyond the workplace, with labour multiplied socially-(re)productively, we again witness increased antagonism: this extension of control over migrant labour can also create expanded opportunities for struggle.

Strategies of refusal and reticence

Central to compositional analyses' dialectical inversion is that as totalising and disciplinary a technical composition may seem, it is neither eternal nor impregnable. Cracks always exist and resistance, however nascent and fragmented, can be found – and this resistance, emerging immanently, shapes future technical compositions (Roggero, 2010). Luis made this point forcefully:

> We are nobody's servants. There is power within those workshops; there is power to be able to change. It's not [always] exercised but it's there…If you don't raise the power that there is within each of us and each of the workshops a little bit, it doesn't change anything. If you call us slaves, [we] become victims on all sides, and are seen only to serve.

This quotation conveys a sense of frustration that migrants' agency is overlooked by slave labour discourses, while also emphasising that power and capacity to change is, and must be, endogenous. As the interview continued, Luis and I were joined by two recent Bolivian migrants, both of whom worked in *talleres* but had just moved into their own accommodations after initially working *cama caliente*. The conversation moved onto experiences of workplace disobedience, with the newer arrivals asking Luis how to survive the first few months and years of work. He offered tips for cutting corners to increase output (and thus pay) when pieceworking and for 're-appropriating' items of clothing they had made. While seemingly small and isolated the cumulative effect of these refusals (cf. Tronti, 2019) can be significant (Woodcock, 2017), not only emphasising agency but also helping foster new forms of solidarity and combative subjectivities (Campbell, 2016). The challenge is to unite and aid the circulation of these recompositional struggles, but this is difficult given the spatially fragmented technical composition described above.

For many migrants, however, refusal or resistance comes before they start work in the *talleres*, with migration a form of protest or escape itself (Mezzadra, 2004), a refusal to accept things as they are and a desire to instead imagine multiple potential lines of flight (Gago, 2018). Recognising migrants' autonomy in this situation (Bastia, 2013) is not ignoring the structural conditions they face; rather, it serves to hone analysis (Altenried et al, 2018). The migrants I spoke to typically knew the conditions in the *talleres* yet still chose to move, each for their own reasons. For instance, I had multiple discussions with queer migrants for whom leaving Bolivia was literally a matter of life or death. For new migrants, workshops are thus important yet contradictory spaces: a source of employment as well as great exploitation, a place of security as well as precarity, and a means of integration as well as segregation. While each migrant's story is, of course, different, they follow similar trajectories. First they work *cama caliente* for a few months. After this, separate lodgings are found, while work in the *talleres* continues. As they move through the ranks many then become small workshop-

owners themselves, thus restarting the process. Others study or retrain, moving into a wide range of jobs. But the early time in the workshops remains a constant for almost all Bolivian migrants.

Using the work of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, the popular migrant economy centred on the *talleres* can be understood through the notion of *ch'ixi* – intentionally refusing easy translation it "obeys the Aymara idea of something that both is and is not at the same time…express[ing] the parallel coexistence of multiple cultural differences that do not extinguish but instead antagonize and complement each other" (2012: 105). Dovetailing with the baroque modernity described above, the *talleres* therefore exist within, but are never totally subsumed by, capitalist modernity. The workshop economy means multiple things, in multiple places, to multiple people – it is ambivalent and contradictory, yet clearly antagonistic.

Agency and autonomy are clearly present, and these early refusals or lines of flight carry over into the *talleres*, even if there can be a significant delay in their realisation caused by the workshops' technical compositions leading to highly multiplied labour. In this sense Rivera Cusicanqui herself has described migrants as 'patient Leninists', strategising and biding their time, tolerating exploitation as they build new lives (see Simbiosis Cultural and Colectivo Situaciones, 2011: 20-22). The temporality of this process is reflected by the types of refusals described above: recompositional potential increased as migrants settled, their lives became less reliant on the *talleristas*, and their 'visitor's consciousness' waned (Bastia and Montero Bressán, 2018). This is seen most visibly in Argentina's first migrant strike, when over two million migrants took to the streets of Buenos Aires on 30th March 2017 (TeleSur, 2017). Protesting the new government's anti-immigration policies, the strike intentionally commemorated the 11th anniversary of the 2006 fire, but it also united a range of migrant groups, highlighting the shared nature of their struggles.[8] There is thus a migrant calculation at play here, weighing short-term hyper-exploitation and containment against a plethora of longer-term issues.

[8] The role of *talleristas* should also be noted here, as they were central in organising elements of these protests, reiterating the complex class dynamics at play within the migrant communities.

In keeping with autonomist approaches, however, it is crucial not to romanticise (Altenried, 2018; cf. Lan, 2015) as the technical composition of the *talleres* means migrants' actions can decompose. As mentioned, one common trajectory for migrants is to become *talleristas* themselves, perpetuating self-exploitation. This move from exploited to exploiter shows how neoliberalism is promoted 'from below' by the migrant economy. From the act of migration to owning a workshop and everything in between, migrants embody a tension between the individualistic and the communitarian: the workshop economy is a 'motley composition', containing many possible futures and lines of flight (Gago, 2017). To fetishise this and informality is problematic, as it undoubtedly leads to the gross exploitation of hundreds of thousands of migrant workers (Montero Bressán, 2017). But to dismiss it wholesale overlooks the existence of multiple, transformative refusals. Autonomist approaches calls for detailed analyses of technical, social, and political compositions and can therefore critically engage with the complexity of this diverse economy.

Social reproduction and the multiplication of resistance

Earlier sections outlined how labour is multiplied through the blurring of divisions between the private and public spheres; for instance *talleristas* are often also landlords and dominate the 'borderscapes' (Altenried et al., 2018) so central to migrant life. A focus on this messy social (re)production (Schling, 2018) combats lacunae in work on class composition (Thorburn, 2017) and the multiplication of labour, while also countering the pernicious consequence of slave labour discourses that equate Bolivian workers with the workshops. To achieve this, compositional analyses recognise the centrality of the workshop economy to many Bolivians' lives, but also the need to "think of [us] beyond just the workshop", as one Bolivian textile worker phrased it. The complexity of migrants' political compositions and socially reproductive practices is something recognised by Simbiosis Cultural, who carried out a series of 'workers' inquiries' (cf. Notes from Below, 2018). One of their members, Mayra, explained that

> working with each other…we found...we have the same basis in the textile workshop, but diverse experiences…And we started doing story workshops, labour relations workshops…to understand the situation. We were…able to lay out the problems…from *within* the collective.

The value of compositional thinking is emphasised here given that, despite the importance of technical compositions ("we have the same basis in the textile workshops"), Bolivian workers have varied political compositions ("we have…diverse experiences"). As labour is multiplied, so are workers' experiences. But in carrying out a mix of labour relations *and* story workshops, Simbiosis Cultural highlight the importance of social reproduction as a site of refusal. These workers' inquiries exist in-against-and-beyond the communitarian logic of the *talleres*, seeking to unite disparate struggles.

Reducing workers to their technical compositions leads to capital-centric analyses, rendering social reproduction invisible. Beyond obviously gendered and racialised consequences, this overlooks an important site of resistance and 'everyday recomposition' (Campbell, 2016). Socially-reproductive activities, times, and spaces were vital for Bolivian migrants I spoke with. Talking about his new life outside the workshop, Arturo voiced his love for the Liniers neighbourhood:

> You can even see Bolivian peoples' little stalls, selling empanadas and everything…There are loads of people who walk along the roads around the plazas. After 6pm and at weekends – especially Sundays – [it's] full of Bolivian people, who go to play, to pass time, and feel comfortable and happy.

It was in Liniers, for instance, that Arturo met his hip-hop crew, writing about their experiences as migrants in Buenos Aires. They had just produced their first mixtape which they were trying to get played on Bolivian radio networks, but were meeting resistance from workshop-owners (who typically own and run these networks) who found the content too radical to play in their *talleres*. This encapsulates the challenges migrants face given the level of control over their social reproduction afforded by a borderscape that seeks to multiply and control labour in-and-beyond the workplace. But as Arturo shows, this equates not to a lack of agency, but to an expansion of potential sites of antagonism (cf. Habermehl, 2019).

A further example of these expanded struggles is the centrality of migrants and precarious workers to Argentina's powerful and inspiring women's movement. With an explicit focus on making socially-reproductive labour visible, the movement has organised a number of women's strikes through scaling-up neighbourhood assemblies (Mason-Deese, 2018). These are typically lengthy but joyous affairs, with communal cooking and childcare

facilitating a combination of discussions, debate, and celebration. Mayra said that in such meetings she and her friends "feel happy and safe to meet, to plan, to talk, to sing, to dance", and they often formed the start of Simbiosis Cultural's inquiries. With these meetings often taking place in *villas*, the urban periphery, and other neighbourhoods areas with large migrant populations, they can help counter the fragmentation of the workshop economy, bringing disparate migrant groups together and facilitating recomposition (Clare, 2019a). This has been described as a 'multiplication of feminism', building collective subjects in the face of widespread and varied forms of violence (Mason-Deese, 2018).

Migrants felt moments and activities such as those described in this section defined them, not their work in the *talleres*. But crucially, socially-reproductive conversations and practices spilled back over into the workplace with meetings, rap battles, and parties serving as sites where anti-work tactics were developed, further blurring the boundary between the two. The technical composition of the workshop economy may be designed to maximise accumulation and limit resistance through the multiplication of labour, but these are never complete processes. These broader socially-(re)productive borderscapes once more reflect the notion of *ch'ixi* (Rivera-Cusicanqui, 2012), where the consistent blurring of lines can increase potential sites of antagonism. And although important not to overplay and romanticise (cf. Lan, 2015), an AoM approach to migrants' urban lives reveals important forms of everyday resistance and refusal (Collins, 2016). Analysing these struggle and structures compositionally helps walk this fine line.

Conclusions

The *talleres* multiply labour socio-spatially: their technical composition variously intensifies, diversifies, and heterogenises, while the wider socially-reproductive borderscape consolidates these processes. These issues are exacerbated by the *talleres'* fragmented spatiality which, in conjunction with their being either hidden in formal neighbourhoods or embedded in the *villas*, contributes to culturalist narratives of 'slave labour'. Although communitarian and familial, the workshop economy is nonetheless a site of intersectional class exploitation and struggle. This complexity is frequently misunderstood, and *talleristas* cultivate this confusion to obfuscate class differentials: labour is multiplied through a false homogenisation. Against this, autonomist analyses highlight not only the power immanent to the *talleres* themselves,

but also the multiple refusals existing before-and-beyond the workshops, emphasising a diversity rendered invisible by culturalist, slave labour discourses. The multiplication of labour is thus inherently tied to social reproduction, but consequently broader horizons of resistance emerge. This dialectical ambivalence is crucial, and an expanded autonomist framework unpacks the workshop economy's multiple contradictions and antagonisms. Overall, this article has shed crucial light on the *talleres'* complex structure, heeding calls to focus more on class dynamics *within* the Bolivian community (see Montero Bressán, 2018), demonstrating the importance of intersectional class analyses. Further workers' inquiries' into migrants' political compositions and socially reproductive struggles are required to develop strategies that improve the condition of those working in the *talleres.*

These ideas resonate far beyond Buenos Aires, however, with sweatshops the world over (Mezzadri, 2017). Each iteration is unique, but the compositional framework developed here can unpack not just how this labour is multiplied, but where potentials for resistance lie. Properly spatialised, the mutually beneficial relationship between compositional analyses and AoM is clear, adding rigour to the political vitality of the multiplication of labour (Leonardi, 2016). Further compositional study of informal and forced labour in a range of global contexts (e.g. Campbell, 2016) can hopefully drive the important project of developing and decolonising autonomist ideas (Luisetti et al., 2015), something touched upon here through the notion of *ch'ixi* (Rivera Cusicanqui, 2012) and the representation of the *talleres* as a motley, baroque economy (Gago, 2017). This paper therefore builds on other recent and exciting work in this journal (Brown, 2019; Gray, 2018) which highlights the fertile, but still underdeveloped, relationship between autonomist ideas and geography.

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