Introduction

Argentina también es afro

In the first days of June 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was in full force. However, at that time global news reporting was dominated by the murder of George Floyd. Whether recounting the particulars of the incident or covering the massive waves of people that took to the streets demanding #BlackLivesMatter, the incident was reported on as much as the global pandemic in many news outlets. The protests that received much of the news coverage were not restricted to the United States. During COVID-19, racism became the social problem that brought people out of quarantine like no other. Despite state-sponsored restrictions on gatherings, in the wake of George Floyd's murder, protesters in some sixty countries on every continent but Antarctica took to the streets to protest anti-Black racism and police brutality.[1] While most reports included the keywords "police brutality," "protests," "Black lives matter" (*Las vidas negras importan* in Spanish), an article out of Buenos Aires where hundreds marched included a clarifying statement, "Acá también existe la brutalidad policial" ("Police brutality exists here, too").[2] In other locations, news reports commented on issues of racial injustice in the respective countries without the need to clarify that anti-Black racism was *also* an issue in the country where the protest occurred. In Argentina, a country where, despite the increasing visibility of the Black population, many people believe that there are no Black people, this clarification was necessary. The article dedicates very little word

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Template:George_Floyd_protests_map#/map/0(show).
[2] https://marieclaire.perfil.com/noticias/sociedad/afrodescendientes-discriminacion-argentina-comunidad-policia-racismo.phtml.

space to the topic of anti-Black police brutality, as the majority of the piece draws out the "acá también existe" sentiments of the headline, focusing on multiple forms of racism in Argentina. The three Afrodescendant women interviewed for the article do draw attention to how the police in Argentina harass and attack Senegalese residents who work as street vendors, but they spend the majority of their comments discussing all the ways that anti-Black racism, erasure, and racial injustice are also a part of the Argentine social milieu. Because I personally know and have worked with two of the interviewees, who are participants in Argentina's Movimiento Negro (Black social movement), I was not at all surprised to see that they used the moment to draw attention to the invisibility of Afrodescendant experiences and struggles for justice. Indeed, Black invisibility is one of the principal grievances of the Movimiento Negro, as illustrated by a common mantra of movement participants, "¡Argentina también es afro!" (Argentina is Black, too!).

Africans and Afrodescendants have played vital roles in Argentina, from the colonial era when they were integral to demographic and economic development in the Rio de la Plata region to the emergence of modern Argentina when they fought in the country's armies and comprised a third of the population in the early nineteenth century. Argentina's commitment to Whitening, however, a process that began at the end of the nineteenth century, ranged from physically displacing Black communities and encouraging European immigration and intermarriage to erasing Afro-Argentines from national memory and official records. This has had profound consequences on Afro-Argentines in the past and up to the current moment. For example, echoing the sentiments of many Afro-Argentines, in 2017 a sixty-three-year-old Afro-Argentine woman said to me during an interview, "We are forced to live as foreigners in our own country." The enduring myth that there are no Black Argentines and the accompanying assumptions about Black people living in Argentina have a profoundly negative impact on the psychological and social conditions of Afro-Argentines and Afrodescendants in the country. This myth was fomented historically and is maintained contemporarily through institutions (e.g., schoolbooks mostly detail Afro-Argentine disappearance) and colloquial expressions ("There are no Blacks here" or "Blacks here are immigrants" are common exclamations of White Argentines). Black people in Argentina have long contested this myth and other manifestations of anti-Black sentiment and racial discrimination. Everyday racism ranges from denying that Afro-Argentines exist to

corporeal manifestations, such as donning blackface, to racist comments and actions toward Afrodescendants.

Despite a small constituency, a vibrant social movement in Argentina referred to as the Movimiento Negro or the Movimiento Afro has galvanized both symbolic and material policy changes as well as discursive changes since the early 2000s. For example, in 2012 tour guides for the most popular Hop-On Hop-Off City Bus Tour for Buenos Aires city gave a history of the tango, with no mention of the African elements and components of the state's national music and dance form. However, since at least 2017, the "African roots" of the tango are included in the tour.[3] This change is a result of the concerted efforts of Black activists and a small number of academics to visibilize the history and contributions of Afro-Argentines. To date, one of the most pivotal successes of Black activists is the ratification of Law 26.872, the National Day of Afro-Argentines and Black Culture. The law not only mandates a day of celebration and commemoration on November 8th but also mandates the teaching of Afro-Argentine history in public schools. In addition to this federally mandated holiday, there are also several provincial laws of recognition and antidiscrimination and public policies to fund Afrocentric cultural projects and academic workshops. Thus, despite the traditional invisibility of Afro-Argentines in the country's political and social milieu, the political climate, and in small ways the social, has shifted in the last two decades regarding race. The state has recognized African heritage in national narratives of Argentina's genealogy. This has led to a growing number of state-funded centers dedicated to the study of Afro-Argentines at public universities. Finally, Afrodescendants are achieving a number of firsts, where for the first time they have been appointed to roles in the Ministry of Women, Gender, and Diversity, the Ministry of Culture, the Subsecretariat of Human Rights, and as ambassador to the Vatican. Why did political elites pay heed to issues that most of society does not consider legitimate? Additionally, given the continued ignorance of society at large, how do Afrodescendants cope with invisibility? Finally, how do activists in the Movimiento Negro go about procuring social change given the small size of the movement and its intended constituency? In this study, I draw upon archival research and political ethnography to explain the conditions that led to the Movimiento Negro's advances despite the

[3] In 2012, I attended this tour as a study abroad student. From 2014 to 2019, I attended this tour multiple times every summer as a study abroad coordinator receiving US students in Argentina.

continued negation of the Black population by society at large. As a broader goal, I examine how emotions matter in understanding twenty-first-century, transnational Black social movements. In this book, I address two central research questions: How do activists grapple with a history of erasure and a diverse transnational Black community to increase participation in the movement? When and how are activists able to mobilize state resources in a country rife with economic instability and amid a generalized denial of anti-Black racism? This book provides answers to these questions with an empirically grounded study of the emergence, tensions, setbacks, and dynamics of this movement.

In the context of this study, the Movimiento Negro refers to the organizations, currently twenty-four, that comprise the umbrella organization of the movement, the Comisión Organizadora del 8 de Noviembre (Organizing Commission of November 8th), henceforth Comisión 8N (see Appendix B). Until the mid-2000s, these organizations formed coalitions intermittently and informally. Such coalitions might include two or more organizations working together to achieve the aims of a specific campaign. However, it was not until the creation of the Comisión 8N that the organizations acted as a unified social movement working together under one umbrella organization. Several important events occurred that led to the process of coming to a consensus about the principal grievances of the nascent movement. To be clear, the events that led to the consolidation of a Black movement in Argentina were driven by human action, whether purposeful or not. This human action was fueled by emotions. It is my argument in this book that emotions not only matter for understanding the internal dynamics of why people join, remain in, or leave movements, but that they can also tell us about the interactions between movement actors and external actors and shed light on when and how small movements can achieve efficacy.

Pain into Purpose theorizes both macro- and microlevel roles of emotions in Black social movements that emerge in spaces of Black invisibility. Moreover, the book contributes to our understanding of how Blackness is politicized across the African diaspora and used as a tool to demand racial justice in spaces of Black invisibility. Taking Argentina as a case study, I employ a multiyear ethnography of Black political organizing to explore how activists grapple with a history of erasure and denial of an Argentinian Black past and present to raise consciousness, increase social movement participation, and mobilize resources. I argue that activists mobilize collective emotions at the societal and interpersonal level to

increase support for the movement. At the macrolevel, or state-level, I illustrate the role of a society's collective emotional response to historical events in galvanizing support for movements with a small constituency. At the microlevel, or interpersonal level, my research demonstrates that Black women, who comprise the majority of participants, succeed at growing movement participation and solidarity by leveraging transnational Black feminist politics to convert experiences of pain into purpose and to equip participants with a toolkit that facilitates activism and solidarity.

BLACK ARGENTINA

The first time I traveled to Argentina, I was told on many different occasions, once even by a history professor, that there were no Black Argentines, that many had died in the Wars of Independence (1810–1818) and the War of the Triple Alliance (Paraguayan War) (1864–1870). The rest, I was told, had died in the yellow fever epidemics that occurred in Buenos Aires city in the mid nineteenth century. This information did not arrive by spontaneous utterance. Rather, it was often a response to my responding to the question of "¿De dónde sos?" ("Where are you from?"). When I explained that I was a US graduate student in Argentina to complete an internship with the Center for Afro-Argentine Studies, the rhetorical erasure and denial of Black existence in contemporary Argentina often followed. I was less surprised about the utterance of the definitive phrase "En Argentina no hay negros" (I had studied the literature of the myth of Black disappearance before beginning my internship) than I was by how scripted and impulsive the responses sounded. I cannot remember anyone ever asking me, "There are Afro-Argentines?" or "What is the Center for Afro-Argentine Studies?" Why were Argentines that I encountered so sure of, and some even invested in, the "fact" that there were no Black Argentines. While existing literature explained the reasons and processes for the emergence of the myth, I was more interested in how it is maintained in contemporary Argentina. Because doing away with the myth of Black disappearance is one of the principal goals of the Black social movement, a discussion of what we know about Black populations in Argentina and how the myth of Blacklessness is maintained is warranted.

Argentina's Black population is small by all existing accounts; in 2010, census data showed that 149,493, about 0.4 percent of the population self-identified as Afrodescendant. This number starkly contrasts with the

2005 World Bank-funded pilot study organized by Black activists and the University of Tres de Febrero in Buenos Aires Province. The report argued that close to two million Argentines, 5 percent, self-identify as Afrodescendant. Researchers also noted that many people who did not identify as Afrodescendant presented with "rasgos afro," or Black features (Stubbs and Reyes 2006). Although both existing figures are small, considering that Argentina is a nation of forty-five million people, the drastic difference in self-identification on the census, a more formal survey, sheds light on a double-edged challenge for Black activists: how to mobilize participants amid a history of physical and symbolic erasure and stigmatization of Blackness as well as the small number of potential recruits. Although there is a paucity of literature that analyzes the current dynamics of the Black population, several important texts allow us to situate the contemporary experience of Blacks in Argentina and to contextualize the movement's grievances.

Growing academic interest in Afro-Argentines is largely due to George Reid Andrews's (1980) groundbreaking text, *The Afro-Argentines of Buenos Aires*. Scholars now agree on the systematic and deliberate attempt by the state to erase its Black population, which represented 33 percent of the country's composition at the beginning of nineteenth century (Andrews 1980; Chasteen 2007; Cottrol 2007; Schávelzon 2003). This systematic and deliberate attempt, a project called *blanqueamiento* (racial Whitening), was carried out over a range of practices. Elites sought physical erasure by placing Black people on the front lines of independence and regional wars.[4] Symbolic erasure was achieved by repressing Black culture and through statistical transference (Andrews 1980; Conniff and Davis 2002; Edwards 2020). Transference included removing the Black, *moreno*, and *pardo* categories from the census, omitting Blacks from history books, and courting immigration from Europe with special tax and citizenship privileges (Andrews 1980). Thus, a myth of White exceptionalism became embedded in the national imagination of Argentina (Alberto and Elena 2016).

Blanqueamiento, coupled with the practice of ascribing negative values to all things Black, resulted in statistical and ideological invisibility and led to the popular assumption that "there are no Blacks in Argentina"

[4] The Whitening process or *blanqueamiento* was a national sociopolitical policy, enacted by many Latin American countries, to visibly Whiten nations by courting European immigration, proscribing Black cultural practices, and changing census classifications with the purpose of "bettering the race" of the nation (Wade 1993).

(Gabino 2007).[5] Thus, Argentina entered the twentieth century, at least according to the official statistics and hegemonic discourse, as a White Nation. While this narrative was maintained throughout the twentieth century and even continues to the present day, there are various moments and iterations that tell a different story of race and Argentina. This was particularly true in the production of literary, academic, and artistic works. A review of much of this production at the time reveals that the interest in Afro-Argentines in the twentieth century belies their supposed irrelevance to the national culture. Literature such as *Memorias de un negro del congreso* (1924) and *Cosas de negros* (1926) reminded Argentina of traditions such as the African roots of the tango, while the paintings of the famed artist Antonio Berni – *Desocupados* (1934), *La comida* (1953), *Team de football o campeones del barrio* (1954) – painted a different picture of the racial makeup of Argentina (Cottrol 2007). Most twentieth-century historiographical texts, however, would focus on Argentina as a White nation and a racial outlier within the Latin American region (Alberto and Elena 2016). Thus, while much of the twentieth century is characterized by the simultaneous denial and incorporation of race in Argentine thought, historiographical texts functioned as the official narrative of race and nation. Thus, the mutually inclusive myths of White homogeneity and Black disappearance were maintained through hegemonic discourse dispersed in educational curricula and media outlets.

A presumed impossibility of anti-Black racism complements the perceived absence of Black people. According to leaders in the Movimiento Negro, this is the crux of why dispelling the myth is so important. Claims that anti-Black racism and discrimination do not exist in Argentina are simply false. The National Institute against Discrimination, Racism and Xenophobia (INADI) in Argentina, for example, has documented multiple cases of exclusion, discrimination, and police violence against Black people (Bujan 2016). Yet Black invisibility and the notion that Argentina is a racial outlier in Latin America is so widespread that until recently, many scholars of race and ethnicity in contemporary Latin America neglected to consider this population. This book fills this unnecessary gap in the literature and expands the conversation to reveal the important

[5] The denial of the existence of Blacks in the nation is evident in the notion of Argentina as the "White" nation in Latin America and was vividly exemplified in 1996, when then Argentine president Carlos Menem stated, "Blacks do not exist in Argentina, that is a *problem* that Brazil has" (Gabino 2007: my emphasis).

lessons that we can learn from the experiences of Afrodescendants in Argentina and the work of the Movimiento Negro.

The Movimiento Negro represents a constituency and is comprised of a transnational group of actors. While the diversity of nationalities in the Black movement is important to recognize, as it shapes many of the tensions and dynamics of the movement, it is also important to acknowledge that Black Argentina also comprises those who are the descendants of enslaved Africans who have been present since the colonial era and the nation's emergence as a republic. In doing so, I seek to not reproduce the misguided assumption that Black people in Argentina are foreigners and that Black activists are importing ideals about the existence of racism that did not exist previously. Although the Black population is diverse in ways that eschew categorization, for the purposes of analysis, I consider four main groups. First, Afro-Argentines *del tronco colonial* (from the colonial stem) trace their ancestry to Africans and their descendants who were enslaved in Argentina. The late María "Pocha" Lamadrid, a member of this line, pointed out that many Afro-Argentines of this demographic do not self-identify as Black due to a long history of Whitening practices in Argentina and the benefits that accompany negating Blackness (Ceballos and Fortes 2005). Thus, mobilization tactics aimed at this group include negritude campaigns and promoting Afro-Argentine cultural forms. Another group, Afro-Argentines of Cape Verdean descent, are the children and grandchildren of Cape Verdean immigrants. Most immigrated to Argentina using Portuguese passports during massive waves of state-courted European immigration in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which, ironically, were part of the Whitening campaign. Although there is a presumption that Afro-Argentines of Cape Verdean descent are foreigners, of the 12,000–15,000 Cape Verdeans in Buenos Aires province in 2006 only about 300 were born in Cape Verde (Caboverdianos 2006).

Third, there is also a significant newer wave of immigration from Africa, which has been occurring since the mid-1990s, with the majority coming from Senegal, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cameroon (Maffia and Mateo 2012). Argentina has been an important destination for African refugees and immigrants in the last twenty years. One reason is due to the stricter requirements for migration to the United States and the United Kingdom following the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Another reason for increased migration is due to Argentina's inclusive policies for foreigners seeking asylum and citizenship. For example, the *Ley de Migraciones*, Law 25.871

instituted in 2004, recognizes human mobility (migration) as an essential human right (Hines 2010).

Finally, there are many Afrodescendants who represent the Black diaspora from outside of Argentina. Although some are from Western countries in North America and Europe, most of this group are immigrants from other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, including sizable populations from Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Immigrants from these countries came to Argentina for work, school, and familial reasons (Álvarez Nazareno 2012). Although there are no clear and concentrated patterns of immigration as is true for Cape Verdeans or the more recent African immigrants, the high levels of participation of Afro-Latin Americans from outside of Argentina in the Black movement warrant their inclusion in this study.

THE EMERGENCE AND DYNAMICS OF ARGENTINA'S MOVIMIENTO NEGRO

Processes of Racialization in Latin America

Pain into Purpose expands two bodies of literature, racialization and race-based activism in Latin America and emotions and social movements, on multiple levels. Regarding the former, I build on the work of scholars of the African diaspora in Latin America. The field of Afro-Latin American Studies has exploded in the last three decades as Black activists in Latin America and scholars both within and outside of Latin America dispelled myths of racial democracy, homogeneous *mestizaje*, and the promises of multiculturalism (de la Fuente 1999; Hale 2005; Hanchard 1998; Hooker 2005; Nascimento 1989; Wade 2010). As a result, a multidisciplinary body of literature has emerged showing that Afrodescendants remain at the bottom of social hierarchies throughout Latin American countries despite official narratives and popular beliefs (de la Fuente and Andrews 2018; Dixon and Burdick 2012; Rahier 2012; Reiter and Simmons 2012; Rivera-Rideau, Jones, and Paschel 2016). Scholars have shown that Afrodescendants are marginal in representative spaces in society yet over-represented in spaces of disenfranchisement (Andrews 2004; Reiter and Simmons 2012; Wade 2010), and that many Latin American countries operate on pigmentocracies whereby skin color, irrespective of self-identification, plays a significant factor in whether people are afforded or denied opportunities by the larger society (Telles and PERLA 2014). This occurs despite the fluid nature of racial categories in many countries

in the region. How do processes of racialization, specifically those that affect Afrodescendants, play out in a region with fluid racial categories?

The paradigms of race and racism in Latin America have been rewritten in recent years. According to social anthropologist Peter Wade (2010), approaches to examining race and ethnicity were frankly racist up until the early twentieth century. Although this continued in the 1930s and 1940s, the intensification of ethnographic research showed the importance of native points of view. The popularity of Marxist analyses in the 1970s added the importance of studying power inequalities and historical analysis of societies to studies of race and ethnicity. Today, scholars study race in Latin America as a socially constructed phenomenon. Its study must be approached with an examination of historical processes and dominant versus subaltern discourses and must take social and political indicators of wealth, well-being, representation, and education into account.

Scholars of race and ethnicity agree that "the *idea* of race has commonly been used to make social distinctions, especially regarding persons of African origin" in both institutional spaces and quotidian interactions (Telles and Paschel 2014, 864, emphasis added). These social distinctions lie within a hierarchical structure where Afrodescendants are at the bottom of the social order. The emphasis on the "idea" of race is important because many times racialized encounters happen without the actors explicitly and sometimes even consciously referring to race. Early on in the development of Afro-Latin American Studies, scholars contested the notion that racism does not exist in Latin America by illuminating the inherently racist ideology behind ideologies of *mestizaje* and racial democracy (Burdick 1992; de la Fuente 1999; Hanchard 1998; Nascimento 1989). Narratives of racial democracy deny the possibility of racial bias due to high rates of race mixture and the fact that the majority of people in these regions have African, Indigenous, and European ancestry. However, scholars and activists have pointed out that *mestizaje* (race mixture) accompanied desires and goals to *mejorar la raza* (improve the race) through Whitening, both phenotypically and culturally (Curiel 2007) while harboring strong prejudices against people with darker skin (Burdick 1992). National narratives of *mestizaje* or *mestiçajem* (Portuguese) were used throughout the twentieth century to veil and ignore both institutional and quotidian forms of racism and, despite being challenged by Black activists and scholars, still maintain social currency today.

The fluid nature of racial classifications in Latin America occurs in myriad ways across the region, so the dynamics of processes of

racialization may differ from one country to another. Dixon and Johnson (2018) define racialization as "the way through which the codification of racial categories and hierarchies assigns values based on skin color and phenotype resulting in negative differential treatment in the political economy, labor markets, education, healthcare and the administration of justice" (1). Processes of racialization occur both institutionally and in quotidian interactions by attaching racial meanings to individual attributes and social practices or groups (Omi and Winant 2015). Hernández (2013) points out that in many cases throughout Latin America racial "values" were assigned through legal mechanisms that erected and reinforced the racial subordination of Afrodescendant and Indigenous communities. Hernández argues that the denial of racism along with the misconception that real racism exists only in the United States veils and ignores the actual manifestations of racism in Latin America. Denial, then, becomes one of the primary ways that social actors contribute to the reproduction of racism in Latin American societies.

There is now an abundance of literature on the forms of racism and processes of racialization in countries that subscribed to nation-building narratives of *mestizaje* and racial democracy in the twentieth century. While this literature is rich both empirically and theoretically, the majority has focused heavily on countries with a high percentage of people who are racialized as Black, Indigenous, or mixed race. However, not all countries in Latin America created narratives of *mestizaje* that resulted in a "cosmic race" or a racial democracy. Some, for example Argentina, Chile, and Costa Rica, created narratives where *mestizaje* or the *crisol de razas* (melting pot) resulted in homogeneous Whiteness (Gayles and Muñoz 2023). If racial myths in Latin America are embedded within multilayered and complex societal and state-sanctioned Whitening processes, we must place so-called White nations not outside but within this paradigm.

Race-Based Activism in Latin America

The scholarship on social movements in the African diaspora draws attention to how neoliberal policies propelled existing resistance struggles, leading to a transnational public sphere with the potential to uproot the global social order (Dixon 2008; Guidry, Kennedy, and Zald 2000; Mullings 2009). In Latin America, Black and Indigenous rights became an embedded part of politics in the region beginning in the 1990s (de la Fuente and Andrews 2018; Dixon and Burdick 2012; Rahier 2012). In addition to studying the politicization of Blackness in the region, scholars also study

how Afrodescendants contend with the failed promises of inclusion and the semblance of protection proffered by neoliberal multiculturalism (Dest 2020; Gayles and Muñoz 2023; Hale 2005; Hooker 2005; Paschel 2016; Rahier 2012). Argentina has traditionally been understudied in these discussions because, until recently, the pervasiveness of the myth of homogeneous Whiteness extended to academic scholarship (Alberto and Elena 2016). Recent scholarly articles, however, have begun to document the various actors and collective actions of Afrodescendants in Argentina (Anderson and Gomes 2021; Maffia and Zubrzycki 2014). By including this case, my study empirically documents how Afrodescendants cope with invisibility, and the role that collective action plays in contesting invisibilization and vilification at the individual, community, and societal levels. Such research is necessary to understand the particularities of Black identity and the politicization of Blackness in spaces of Black invisibility. As the first book-length monograph to explore the dynamics of contemporary Black activism in Argentina, *Pain into Purpose* contributes to this necessity.

The existing scholarship on Afro-Latin American movements examines how these movements challenge national myths of *mestizaje* (race mixture) and racial democracy (de la Cadena 2001; Hoffmann 2010; Safa 2005), how they contest anti-Black racism through cultural, spiritual, erotic, and performative aspects (Allen 2011; Smith 2016), and their efforts to achieve political rights and representation (Caldwell 2007; Paschel 2016; Perry 2013). Like many of these scholars, I employ critical race theory to upset the closure that ignoring national discourses of Whiteness produces and extend the analytical frames by which we examine race relations in Latin America. Engaging with racial formation and systemic racism theories, I examine the construction and centrality of Whiteness as well as the pervasiveness of racialization in institutions, images, ideas, and practices (Feagin 2006; Feagin and Elias 2013; Omi and Winant 2015). Rather than blindly apply these US-derived concepts to the Argentine case, I also draw from the work of Argentine historians and cultural anthropologists who provide a rich body of literature about national processes of racial formation in Argentina (Geler 2010; Schávelzon 2003; Solodkow 2005; Solomianski 2003). I also pay attention to local contexts that resulted in a similar yet different system of racial inequality. Therefore, I take the presumed White exceptionalism of Argentina as part of, rather than a stark deviation from, regional ideologies of race and race relations in the region (Alberto and Elena 2016).

Critical race theory provides a useful starting point for examining the challenges and predicaments of the Black social movement. Within this

paradigm, Black feminist theory provides a more robust analytical framework to understand the multiplicity of oppressions that Black activists in Argentina must confront. My fieldwork revealed that movement protagonists, who are primarily women and/or queer, must constantly navigate the racialized and gendered oppression they face to rearticulate notions of Blackness in the nation. Thus, I draw from decolonial and Black feminist theory to understand this intersectional nature of oppression and how it is challenged in everyday practices (Alexander 2005; Collins 2009; Espinosa Miñoso, Gómez Correal, and Ochoa Muñoz 2014). This is also an imperative theoretical and methodological instrument for activist research methods (Madison 2012). It illuminates how theory is connected to practice and how Black movement organizations are key sites for producing counterhegemonic racial and gender discourses and for assuming new politicized Black subjectivities (Perry 2013). Throughout each chapter in the book, I draw on decolonial and Black feminist theory to examine relationships between race and the body, race and activism, and race and emotions.

Emotions and Social Movements

One of the major theoretical goals of this research is to contribute to our understanding of the role of emotions in institutional interactions with social movements and the internal dynamics of social movements. While scholars of the "political process" paradigm argue that structural constraints and opportunities explain the emergence, success, or failure of a movement (McAdam 1999), scholars of the "emotional turn" show how emotions experienced during a movement explain why people join, leave, or remain in movements (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001). They offer the concept of emotional cultures to explain how, within a social movement, participants manage how they should feel about themselves and those in dominant groups (Jasper 1997; Taylor 1995). Less attention has been given to the interaction of macro- and microlevel processes, specifically, the relationship between the emotional cultures of state institutions and those within a social movement. Bridging seemingly oppositional paradigms in social movements literature, I contribute to this discussion by arguing that emotional cultures that evolve from historical processes of creating public memory may result in new discursive and emotional opportunity structures.

This book engages with theories of emotions and social movements in two ways. First, I examine the role of emotions in macrolevel changes that

happen through the impetus of social movements. Specifically, I analyze the extent to which institutions operate within emotional cultures. This discussion engages scholars who have used political process theory to argue that structural constraints and opportunities can explain the emergence, success, or failure of a movement (McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1978). Scholars of what has been called the "emotional turn" in social movements critiqued political process models for failing to acknowledge how emotional dynamics within a movement are often informed by structural contexts (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001; Jasper 1998). For example, Nancy Whittier's (2001) analysis of oppositional emotions in the Movement against Child Sexual Abuse addresses this critique with the contribution of the concept of emotional opportunity structures. Whittier points out that the institutions within which social movements operate also have emotional expectations that positively or negatively sanction the emotional displays of social movements. Emotional opportunity structures thus prove particularly useful to discuss how Argentina's Black movement operates within institutions that, at least rhetorically, are deeply tied to human rights frames.

The life cycle of a social movement is not only dictated by the actions of social movement actors but also by their interactions with those whose power they contest and the structural factors of the society in which they mobilize. The latter, the external factors that limit or empower collective actors, are known as opportunity structures (Cloward and Ohlin 1961). One of the most common ways that social movement scholars study the interaction between movement actors, political elites, and opportunity structures is through the framework of political process theory. Scholars of this paradigm point out that although there are always grievances, reasons for self-interested profit maximizers to engage in contentious politics, social movements do not always emerge. How then to explain social movement emergence? They also challenged the resource mobilization model (Mccarthy and Zald 1977), which failed to acknowledge the political capabilities of the mass base. Were social movements doomed without the resources of the elite? The foundational argument of political process theory is that movement emergence, as well as success or failure, is a function of structural opportunities in the political system and the organizational capacity of aggrieved populations to act upon those opportunities (McAdam 1999; Tarrow 1998; Tilly 1978). This framework is useful to study Black social movements in Latin America for many pertinent reasons.

Black politics in Latin America represent a wide range of ideas, experiences, and strategies. As different as country-specific examples of Black politics are, we also find variability even at the subnational level; this is particularly the case in countries whose Black populations straddle urban and rural locations. Nevertheless, changes that occurred in the international system during the last decades of the twentieth century provided a significant political opportunity for Afrodescendant communities in Latin America as a whole (Becerra et al. 2012; Marable and Mullings 2009). The consolidation of a global civil society organization is the international framework where the transnationalization of the demands of Afrodescendant groups at the regional and global levels has moved forward in the twenty-first century. The result was the reorganization of the local movements and their collective actions of visibilization that resulted in state recognition of the rights of the Afrodescendant populations in numerous countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (Becerra et al. 2012; Paschel and Sawyer 2008). Many of the exclusionary experiences of Afrodescendants were catalyzed by the globalization of neoliberal policies, while at the same time, globalization created the transnational sphere of networks that have contested the social order (Jiménez Román and Flores 2010; Marable and Mullings 2009; Vega, Alba, and Modestin 2012). The World Conferences against Racism in both Santiago, Chile and Durban, South Africa are important in this regard. In Latin America, these conferences provided an opportunity to design strategies at the regional level and politicized the notion of an Afro-Latin American diaspora (Rahier 2012; Safa 2005). The term *afrodescendiente* (Afrodescendant) emerged out of the Santiago conference as a political term to be inclusive of all people of African descent in the region, no matter their nationality or skin tone.

The rapid growth of localized Afro-Latin American social movements in the region after the transnationalization of Afrodescendant demands also provides examples of another tenet of the political process model. Namely, it shows that grievances may already exist, but movements are less likely to emerge without the favorable conditions of a political opportunity. This process also shows that what appeared to those who are perhaps unfamiliar with histories of transnational Black diaspora activism to be an explosion of Black consciousness in the region was not the US imposition of an idea of race and racial inequality that "flows in one direction only" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1999, 46). Instead, the shift is evidence of what Tarrow (1993) deems "cycles of protest" in his development of the political process model. In the case of twenty-first-century

Afro-Latin American social movements, they emerged not because of the importation of ideas but because of the convergence of the international political context and the broader context of transnational Black diaspora struggles, which have both historical and contemporary relevance (Hanchard 2003).

Finally, in *Becoming Black Political Subjects* (2016), Tianna Paschel further develops the political process model by showing how Black politics in Latin America have unfolded through strategic navigation of global political field alignments. Paschel begins by outlining two distinct moments in domestic and global politics: regional multicultural constitutionalism in the late 1980s, and ethnoracial reforms in the late 1990s. Paschel argues that in both cases, states made changes due to the pressure of Black social movement organizations acting "strategically in the context of this global ethno-racial field oriented around multiculturalism, Indigenous rights, and anti-racism" (2016, 3). The concept of political field alignments is based on the argument that there is a dialectical nature to the emergence of political opportunity. Thus, the state is not the only creator of opportunities but one of many actors, albeit a powerful one. Political fields, which are not contained within national borders, may intersect with a consolidated global field composed of "international institutions, transnational networks, global norms, and transnational repertoires of action and political fields . . . when the conditions of possibility in global political fields and domestic political fields converge" (Paschel 2016, 16–17). If we take the successes of Argentina's Black social movement as a case to test this theory, it requires showing not only how the transnationalization of Afrodescendant demands in the twenty-first century benefited the movement but also how the transnational political field converged with the domestic political field.

If human rights activism represents the dominant domestic political field in Argentina, how do Black activists draw on a political opportunity that has a history that is specific to state terror during the last military dictatorship? Moreover, why almost forty years later, amid a consistent democracy, does the human rights framework still have such stable currency for social movements in Argentina? Finally, given the many human rights problems Argentina faces in the twenty-first century (Human Rights Watch 2017), can human rights still be framed as a political opportunity? Here, I extend Paschel's work by proffering that emotional opportunity structures provide a framework to analyze these paradoxical opportunities in the domestic field.

The concept of emotional opportunity structures appears in social movement theory much later than political opportunity structures but grows out of the political process model. Nancy Whittier introduces the concept of emotional opportunities in her chapter in the edited volume *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. She argues that "the institutions within which the social movement operates carry their own emotional expectations, permitting and rewarding some feeling displays and rendering others futile or unintelligible" (Whittier 2001, 250). Through continued engagement with the concept, scholars have shown that emotional opportunity structures influence the discursive strategies of a movement (Ruiz-Junco 2013; Woehrle, Coy, and Maney 2008), foster the reproduction of existing emotional cultures, and may lead to emergent emotional cultures (Guenther 2009). However, the emotional expectations of institutions do not exist without being constituted by existing emotional histories and cultures. I refer to the conglomerate of these two factors (emotional histories and cultures) as the emotional archive of an emotional opportunity structure. Close engagement with the emotional archive of an emotional opportunity structure is necessary to understand how and why said structures do what they do.

As much as emotions have a history, history and historiography are also tied to emotions. "History has been felt; the lives men and women have lived have had an emotional dimension. That dimension has not only given shape to history but also created history" (Stearns and Lewis 1998, 1). This does not mean that history is felt in the same way by all the actors involved or that writing the emotions tied to a particular historiography is an uncontested practice. Rather, the emotional history that emerges becomes linked to culturally accepted feeling rules (Hochschild 1979). I use the term emotional history to refer to large-scale historical events that are tied to collective emotional outcomes that have currency in the present. Such events are often tied to collective shame, disgust, indignation, or, as Avery Gordon (2008) illustrates, societal haunting. Take, for example, the emotional history of lynching in the United States. Had history gone another way, the violent murders of African Americans by White Americans between 1877 and 1950 might have gone down in history as "celebratory acts of racial justice" and displays of "public justice" (Equal Justice Initiative 2017). However, due to the efforts of Black resistance movements, both in the past and contemporarily, the emotional history of lynching is tied to pain, racial terror, and societal shame. In a similar vein, I discuss the emotional history and resultant emotional culture tied to the concept of disappearing in

Argentina, both of which are part of the emotional archive of the human rights emotional opportunity structure. I undertake this analysis of emotional history and emotional culture at the level of society at large in Chapter 3.

What then differentiates emotional culture from emotional history? Social movements scholars have used the concept of emotional cultures to examine how members in a group, usually a specific social movement organization (SMO) or a social movement at large, manage how they should feel about themselves and those in dominant groups (Groves 1997; Jasper 1997; Reger 2004; Taylor 1995). Movement actors may also utilize moral shocks to change public sentiments. Less attention, however, has been given to the emotional cultures of society at large and, specifically, the relationship between the emotional cultures of institutions and those of social movements. I take up this discussion by examining how emotional cultures evolve from emotional histories through processes of creating public memory. These are specific emotional responses maintained and reproduced through the repetition of words, signs, and practices (Ahmed 2004; Gregg and Seigworth 2010). Some examples are murals and other forms of street art, public spaces of memory, and museums dedicated to maintaining a public and collective memory of the last dictatorship and human rights activism. Thus, while emotional history refers to the emotions tied to historical acts (pain, haunting, distrust, and terror in the case of disappearance), emotional culture refers to the expected emotional response in the contemporary moment (indignation or shame). When emotional histories and cultures become tied to institutions, as happened in the case of Argentina when the country sought to situate itself as a beacon of human rights, those institutions now have emotional expectations as well. These make up the emotional archive of an emotional opportunity structure. My engagement with the concept of emotional opportunity structures includes a bridging of discussions of emotional histories with discussions of discursive opportunities and emotional cultures. In Chapter 3, I show that social movements do not only share repertoires of action with future movements but also emotional archives that can be drawn upon to pressure state actors to make changes.

The second way I engage with theories of emotions and social movements in this book is with a microlevel analysis of the role of emotions in social movement mobilization and cohesion. I include a microlevel analysis of the role of emotions in mobilizing new activists and providing resources for their continued participation. The examination at this level has a recent but robust trajectory among social movement theorists. They

have shown how the causal impact of social networks on movements "depends critically on the emotional valence of the social ties that comprise them" (Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2001, 76); that people sometimes participate in social movements for emotional and moral motives as much as for the societal changes (Wood 2003); that shifting constellations of affects and emotions can decisively shape the trajectory of a movement (Gould 2009); and that emotional energy conversion is an important factor in mobilizing participants in identity-based movements (Summers-Effler 2002, 2010). Engaging with social theorists who have articulated the social production of racialized emotions in racialized societies (Bonilla-Silva 2019; Green 2013), I bring an analysis of the role of racialized emotions in social movement processes to this conversation. Specifically, I situate my analysis within Black feminist theorizations on collective emotions triggered through gendered racism and their utility for activism (Lorde 1984; Piedade 2017). In Chapter 4, I proffer the concept of a *Black feminist toolkit* to bridge the aforementioned theoretical concepts and explain Black women's increasing participation in the Movimiento Negro.

RESEARCH PROCESS AND POSITIONALITY: *SOLIDARIDAD, COMPROMISOS Y COMPAÑERISMO*

Pain into Purpose examines the mobilization, momentum, and achievements of Argentina's Black social movement with an ethnography of movement participants' practices and processes of seeking social change. I began preliminary fieldwork in July of 2012 while interning with the Center for Afro-Argentine Studies at the National University of La Plata in Argentina. While interning, I was invited to several university events as well as events planned and hosted by various Black activist organizations. It was in this capacity that I not only began to meet various Black activists but also that I came to know about Black activism in Argentina. Having maintained contact with several activists, I was invited back to Argentina in 2014 by the then-president of Agrupación Xangô, Carlos Álvarez, to volunteer with the Black youth empowerment program.[6]

During this initial phase of research, I had a meeting, a sort of researcher interview, with Carlos, where he explicitly questioned me

[6] Here, I have used Carlos's real name in this manuscript. I do so because not only is this information publicly available, but more importantly, he expressed that he wanted his actual name to appear in the manuscript. Unless specified, all other names are pseudonyms.

about my research intentions, possible research questions, and my personal interest in Black activism in Argentina. I shared with him how my experience with many racialized encounters in Argentina led me to want to understand more about race in the country. Moreover, I was curious as to how Black activists had successfully carried out several of their campaigns. My interactions with some Argentine intellectuals and most non-academic Argentines I knew revealed they had the misconception that race was not an issue in the country and that racism most certainly did not exist.[7] Finally, the shock and in many cases disbelief in response to my sharing that my research focuses on racism and Black activism in Argentina (both from Argentines and non-Argentines alike) guided me toward a commitment to promulgate the efforts and experiences of Black activists. I believe it was this *compromiso con los militantes afro para difundir sus luchas* (commitment to Black activists in sharing their struggles) that I expressed in which Carlos was most interested. He mentioned how important it was to increase the visibility of the struggles of Black activists, and Black communities in Argentina more generally. He also stated that what they (Black activists) want is for more Afrodescendants to do this kind of research as, thus far, most of the scholarly interest has been from White scholars. After this meeting, Carlos invited me to more events planned by Black activists. This meeting was crucial to the feasibility of my ethnography because Carlos holds leadership roles in more than one Black activist organization as well as in the Comisión 8N. He also held an institutional role as a member of the Section on Afrodescendants at the offices of the Under Secretary of Human Rights and introduced me to state officials who work in some capacity with the goals and objectives of Black organizations. More importantly, this conversation was the beginning of a friendship with Carlos and, by extension, with many of the participants in the Black movement. It was in this capacity that I became acquainted with many of the activists with whom I continue to work today.

I begin this section on my methodology with a story of *solidaridad, compañerismo y compromisos* (solidarity, camaraderie, and commitments) because these three concepts were fundamental to my research approach. I employed a feminist activist research methodology, whereby I take seriously what is at stake for the actors involved in my research. This

[7] This was my experience in 2012 and 2014. Now, and at least since 2018, this dynamic has greatly shifted. Many more people are talking about race and specifically anti-Black racism in Argentina and not just among people I meet in "afro-themed" circles. I credit this change to the efforts of the Movimiento Negro, whose strategies I illustrate throughout this book.

is an engaged and collaborative work accompanied by political alignment with Black diasporic communities to work together to articulate scholarship and activism (Gordon 2007). While all three concepts frame my research approach with regard to the community I worked with, the latter commitment also applies to a social scientific approach to the study of social movements. This means that I committed to conducting a rigorous and replicable research study, even while being cognizant that the particulars of my positionality render replicability an impossibility for some scholars. Thus, throughout the process, I was reflexive about how my positionality as a Black woman from the United States, earning a doctoral degree, had bearing on my interactions, degrees of access, and what assumptions I brought to the field. Additionally, my personal and political commitments are bound up with a theoretical commitment to fully understanding the social conditions of diverse communities of the African diaspora but also to theorizing and imagining ways to reconfigure the socially constructed conditions in which we currently exist. A more robust examination of this research approach is included in Appendix A.

Research conducted for this study includes a total of twenty-four months of fieldwork conducted in Argentina over nine years. Most of my ethnographic observations occurred in Buenos Aires city, where the Black movement and interactions with the state are centralized. However, I also conducted interviews and engaged in participant observation in other provinces where Black movement organizations are located, including Misiones, Chaco, Santa Fe, Córdoba, and Buenos Aires Province. I conducted in-depth interviews with seventy-three people including grassroots activists, key leaders and organizers, self-identifying Afrodescendants who do not participate in the movement, and state officials who played a role in the creation of existing policies and initiatives that support Black communities. Participant observation with the umbrella organization of the movement and affiliated organizations included attending over 400 hours of in-person and 30 hours of virtual planning meetings, events, and protests organized by the Comisión 8N, the Gender section of the Comisión 8N, and the #NiUnaMenos feminist movement in Argentina. Finally, I collected and analyzed data from organizational, media, and state documents related to the histories, successes, and failures of the movement. Through this process, I reconstructed the history of how the Black movement evolved from organizations founded in the mid-1980s forward, how they have struggled to maintain fervor and participation in the last thirty-five years, and how they are currently increasing participation despite facing similar problems that saw the movement wane in the past.

The principal questions that guided my research were: (1) How do activists mobilize tangible and intangible resources in a country with a history of political and economic instability? and (2) How do activists navigate a history of erasure and the current diversity of its transnational Black community to raise consciousness and increase participation? The first question addresses how activists were able to mobilize resources to fund campaigns and initiatives. It also asks how activists earned support from state legislators to write and defend laws and policies to support the Black community and antiracist efforts in the country. This success is especially important to understanding social movement dynamics given the fact that a large part of society does not believe that anti-Black racism is an issue. Additionally, it allows me to analyze two different types of extracommunal resources that activists have mobilized to ensure successful campaigns. The first, tangible resources, refers to the funding different activist organizations have received from local and international foundations and state agencies. This funding has been crucial to the planning and implementation of projects, campaigns, and events that give activists a platform on which to present their grievances not only to potential movement participants, but to powerful political stakeholders as well. The question of how activists gain tangible resources is an important one and cannot be explained by the twenty-first-century turn to promoting ethnic and racial cultural rights alone (Ko 2014). Because Argentina has been considered a racial outlier in Latin America for so long, it is rarely included in projects that address the social indicators for Afrodescendants (Alberto and Elena 2016). Even studies that have included Argentina have at best brushed over the specificities of the Argentine context with a few sentences. At worst, projects with the principal aim of addressing the invisibilization of Afrodescendants in Latin America have dismissed Argentina as having "identifiable Afro-Latin populations at one time, but there is little evidence of their contemporary survival" (Minority Rights Group 1995, ix). Because the external research and country reports have thus far provided little reason for large international funding agencies to support the Movimiento Negro, activists needed to approach funding requests in savvy ways. As I could not examine past transactions with participant observation, my approach to answering this question involved a content analysis of reports produced as a result of funded projects and in-depth interviews with some of the primary actors involved in funding transactions.

Intangible resources refer to the support activists receive from extracommunal actors with political clout. This usually consists of but is not limited to representatives of various state agencies. These representatives may provide rhetorical support, making the grievances of the Black community

more visible. They may also provide support in the form of drafting and/or supporting legislation that advances Black activists' efforts. Because state representatives are present at some activist-planned events, I was able to observe their interactions with activists, what promises they made to move things forward, and how they responded and reacted to the issues that Black activists addressed. For example, as I illustrate in Chapter 3, a representative from the Defensor del Pueblo (Ombudsman Office) did not respond verbally when an activist I will call Maria stated that Afro-Argentines were "the first disappeared," but the state representative's discomfort was palpable. This interaction raised the question: How do potentially polemic topics affect the relationship between those with political clout and the movement and how do representatives and activists navigate these tensions? In addition to interviewing activists and observing the relational dynamics of state support, I also interviewed seven state representatives who work in human rights, antidiscrimination, ombudsman, and cultural offices. Through these interviews, I asked questions to tease out the conditions for initial support despite the notion of the majority of the population that racism and Black culture are not issues worthy of addressing conversationally or with state funds, for that matter. To answer the question of how activists mobilized tangible and intangible resources, I complemented interviews with principal actors in the transactions with content analysis of media, state, and Black movement organizational documents. During participant observation, I observed the ways in which these relationships are further maintained, improved, or, alternatively, disbanded.

Given the paucity of data on the demographics of Afrodescendants in the country, the second research question requires some background information on the dynamic nature of Argentina's Black populations. Distinct from a characteristic of other Black social movements throughout the Western hemisphere, the descendants of enslaved Africans in Argentina do not represent the majority of the Movimiento Negro's participants, although they do represent a considerable portion.[8] Activists seek to mobilize participation

[8] Argentina's Black social movement, organized under the umbrella group called the Organizing Commission of November 8th, is centralized in Buenos Aires city. The population of Afrodescendant citizens in the city represents a diverse group of first-, second-, and third-generation African and Afrodescendant immigrants as well as Afro-Argentines who trace their ancestry to early twentieth- and pre-twentieth-century populations. However, outside of Buenos Aires city, many of the Black activist organizations, for example Misibamba Afroargentina and Afrochaqueños Unidos, are composed entirely of Afro-Argentines who are the descendants of enslaved people brought to Argentina during the colonial era.

from the four main groups outlined previously ("Black Argentina"). This by no means signifies the limits of heterogeneity in Argentina's Black population. It does, however, paint a picture of the significant groups that represent the majority of the Black population in Argentina (INDEC 2012).

The diversity of the Black population regarding language, culture, and experience requires activists to be strategic in mobilizing new participants. However, Afrodescendants and Africans in Argentina recognize and oppose shared injustices as well, including but not limited to discrimination, harassment in public spaces, and institutional and quotidian forms of racism. While these experiences are a part of the lived experience of many Afrodescendants and Africans in the country, they are not enough to ensure the "oppositional consciousness" required for participation in the social movement. In *Oppositional Consciousness: The Subjective Roots of Social Protest* (2001), Jane Mansbridge and Aldon Morris differentiate between oppositional cultures, which are formed from a group's history of subordination and resistance, and oppositional consciousness. Activists may draw upon existing oppositional cultures to mobilize an oppositional consciousness, "an empowering mental state that prepares members of an oppressed group to act to undermine, reform, or overthrow a system of human domination" despite the potential risks and inconveniences (Mansbridge and Morris 2001, 5). Oppositional consciousness requires that activists "claim their previously subordinate identity as a positive identification" (Mansbridge and Morris 2001, 1). While activists from liberation movements do not necessarily need to construct an identity from scratch, they must facilitate a positive reclaiming of a subordinate identity and craft a shared sense of group identification (Mansbridge and Morris 2001). In this study, particularly in Chapters 2 and 4, I examine the work Black activists do to create a shared sense of group identification among distinct Black populations to mobilize participants and promote long-term engagement in Black activism.

Throughout the research process, I collected empirical data on mobilization tactics not only from in-depth interviews with movement participants but also from the observation of crucial moments where activists activated national emotional cultures as well as transnational emotional cultures of injustice. My ethnographic process included listening, looking at body language, and documenting what words were used, in what scenarios, and what kind of emotions those words evoked. Finally, the interviews also allowed me to map out the social networks that were important for participants' initial engagement with the Movimiento Negro.

This book draws on critical race theory, decolonial and Black feminist theory, the sociology of emotions, and theories of social movements. I sustain two arguments about social movement mobilization, solidarity, and outcomes. First, at the macrolevel, or state-level, I illustrate the role of a society's collective emotional response to historical events in galvanizing support. To catalyze change, Black activists strategically utilize human rights frames within the national context and ethnoracial rights and multicultural rights frames (Paschel 2016) within the transnational global context. For example, Black activists drew on the emotional currency of themes tied to past human rights abuses to achieve state-level recognition of the Black community in a 2013 national law. Second, at the microlevel, my research demonstrates that Black women succeed at growing movement participation and solidarity by using transnational Black feminist politics to convert experiences of *pain into purpose*. I illustrate the process of the Movimiento Negro's emergence, dynamics, and successes by showing how Black activists engage in a tenacious on-the-ground activism that triggers collective and individual emotional histories and channels those histories into action. I elucidate the process of channeling emotions at the macrolevel of state policy and at the microlevel of participant mobilization.

A secondary argument is that activism in Argentina is not a spontaneous engagement with current trends in regional ethnoracial politics, as some scholars have suggested (Frigerio and Lamborghini 2010; Rodriguez, Surasky, and Maffia 2015). Rather, it is a strategic and calculated political move that Black Argentines have consciously employed, in order to situate themselves within a broader struggle. This argument is based on research that establishes a history of resistance among Afro-Argentines beginning in the 1980s, many years before the movement coalesced. It is also in conversation with other scholarship on the politics of multiculturalism, transnational solidarity in the region, and transnational Black feminist politics (Caldwell 2007; Gonzalez 1988; Hale 2006; Hooker 2009; Paschel 2016; Perry 2013). Finally, I challenge structuralist theoretical assumptions that diminish the role of emotions in social movement emergence, mobilization, and efficacy by explicating the power of emotional histories and cultures and racialized emotions throughout the life course of social movements. By providing an empirically grounded analysis of how Black activists are subverting challenges in the struggle for social transformation in Argentina, I aim to reveal the processes by which invisible and marginal communities achieve recognition and rights. As the International Decade for People of African

Descent (2015–2024), designated by the United Nations, draws to a close, we must ask: Who must work more to be seen, and how do invisibilized Black communities go about procuring social justice? I also examine the potential that international trends of promoting ethnoracial diversity have to make societies more equitable, by explaining the conditions, contradictions, and implications of the Movimiento Negro's successful campaigns. This study contributes to our understandings of race in Latin America, Black feminist theory, and how emotions permeate the macro- and micropolitics of social movements.

Language and Terminology

While ethnographers have paid significant attention to accurately and thoroughly "translating" the social worlds of various groups of people into a language that is legible to their readers, it is also important to be mindful of linguistic power relations. This is a given for English-language ethnographies about people in non-English-speaking countries but is also true when translating various dialects. As a native English speaker who was formally trained to speak Spanish in a university setting and then achieved near-native fluency while living in Cuba, I was mindful of the importance of taking translating Argentinian Spanish seriously. At this point, I have spent much more time in Argentina than in Cuba and have been told on many occasions that I speak Spanish with an Argentine accent. Nevertheless, no matter how fluent I or anyone else becomes in speaking another language, there are some things that simply do not translate well to a second language. Moreover, taking a Black feminist approach to research means that I am also cognizant of the power dynamics inherent to research that crosses linguistic boundaries. Thus, in addition to taking additional care and time to achieve near-fluency in the *porteño* (Buenos Aires city) dialect, I also engaged in a practice of language reflexivity (Casanova and Mose 2017) in my interviews, translations, and write-up of my research findings. Taking this into account, along with a profound reverence and gratitude for the *actual* words of wisdom that protagonists of the Movimiento Negro shared with me, I attempt to use their original words as much as possible.

This commitment to using my interlocutors' words means that I often use the word "*Afro*" where English-language readers might expect to see the word "Black." This and other ways in which I use the word Black warrant further discussion. Writing in English about Black populations in Latin America is a complex and nuanced task. Throughout this text, I use

various terms to refer to Africans and African-descended peoples living in Argentina. The terms I use the most often to describe people and adjectives related to Argentina's Black social movement are "Black," "*Afro*," "*negro*," and "Afrodescendant." However, at times, I am very specific about using the words African, Afrodescendant, or Afro-Argentine. There are a number of reasons for this. Argentina's Black social movement is comprised of a transnational group of actors who, while organizing behind the same grievances in most cases, do not always see themselves as the same community. Often at meetings and in informal conversations, tensions would arise over how people wanted to be represented. African migrant activists, understandably, do not see themselves as Afrodescendant but African. Some pointed out during the demographic portion of the interviews that they were not Black but African. However, within the context of their social lives as activists in Argentina, they did refer to themselves as *negro* or *Afro* and would also refer to the movement as either the *movimiento negro* or the *movimiento afro*. As I uncovered in the field, Afro-Argentine activists are very adamant about using the word "Afro-Argentine" for three primary reasons. One, so as not to reproduce the notion that Black people in Argentina are all immigrants or the descendants of recent immigrants. Two, to affirm their active and long-standing role in the Black movement as protagonists. As an older Afro-Guaraní woman recounted during a planning meeting for the National Women's Meeting in Chaco:

> I have more than thirty years of militancy in feminist struggles and the struggles of the Black community. I love to see so many young women, my young Black sisters participating at this moment, but you have to know that the struggle did not arrive with Brazilian, with Haitian, with North American, with Uruguayan women. And you have a lot, so much to learn from your Afro-Argentine mothers in the struggle.

Finally, Afro-Argentine activists are committed to recovering the history and culture that is distinctly Afro-Argentine as they have endured so many years of invisibility. In this respect, it is important to name it not just as Black or *Afro* culture but Afro-Argentine culture.

Because this work seeks to map out and analyze the contours of the politicization of Blackness, I only interviewed self-identifying African or African-descended people, except for state representatives I interviewed who were White. Thus, I was not beholden to grappling with what terms to use for people who have phenotypical features of "Blackness" but self-identify as White or mestizo or at the very least negate African descent. As scholars of race in Latin America know well, researchers must take

seriously the elaborate racial nomenclatures in the region if they are to understand race relations at local, national, and regional levels. Argentina is no exception to this reality. I say this to make clear that the people I refer to as Black or *Afro* in this text self-identify as such. In the case that they identify as *Afro* but not Black, as was the case sometimes, I maintain the term used by the research participant.

Otherwise, throughout this book, I use the terms Black and *Afro* interchangeably. On the one hand, this is continuing in the same vein as the practices of many of my interlocutors in the field. However, I do not believe that any scholar of race in Argentina can approach the subject without contextualizing the myriad ways in which the word *negro* is used in Argentina. Although it has functions that are similar to other countries in the region, in many ways it has taken on a cultural specificity in Argentina that is unique. The term *negro* in Argentina functions as a class-based slur and has a negative connotation. Specifically, it denotes that which is illegitimate, unlawful, and or/informal. It also functions as a disqualifier or to identify negative aspects of the economy and the labor market. I have even heard it used several times to describe a person who is socially White but cons or swindles others. It serves to mark that which is outside legality. Examples include *el mercado negro* (black market), *salario negro* (under the table pay), and *trabajar en negro* (working off the books). Many Argentines will argue that the use of the word has nothing to do with race or color and has no bearing on attitudes about race in the country, a position I problematize in Chapter 1. Black activists categorically refute this claim and argue that when used this way, it is racist. A few scholars have also begun to challenge the notion that the word *negro* is absent of racialized and colorized undertones. Álvaro Ruiz, former Under Secretary of Labor Relations, posits that the negative uses of the word *negro* are colorized systemic discursive frames that hide a more complex and encompassing phenomenon that negatively affects the recognition of the Black community (Ruiz 2011). Anthropologist Lea Geler points out that the term *cabecita negras* and the subsequent use of *negro* today as a class-based slur draws on the term's delegitimizing power. She draws a connection to a large Black working class in Buenos Aires in the first half of the nineteenth century (Alberto and Elena 2016). Elsewhere, Geler argues that the term was originally based on race *and* culture and that the capacity for citizenship and belonging is called into question with the term *negro* (Geler 2010). Historian Paulina Alberto provides a profound analysis of the term to show how its contemporary class-based uses are connected to racialized Blackness (Alberto 2022).

The negative uses of the word *negro* in Argentina have directly impacted the Black movement, especially with regard to the use of the word *Afro*. Some activists and other self-identifying Afrodescendants, drawing on the term *afrodescendiente*, believe that *Afro* is a more appropriate term because it is not imbued with negative meanings. Furthermore, it is a shortened form of the term, *afrodescendiente*, decided upon by activists to represent Black communities in the Americas at the 2000 preparatory meeting for the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Santiago, Chile. For example, at a meeting of the Comisión 8N, a member pointed out that the Ministry of Culture is much more likely to grant a funding request for an event that promotes *cultura afro* than one that promotes *cultura negra*. He jokingly, yet chillingly, pointed out that even though we would not be doing anything different, the latter sounded more dangerous. In contrast, other activists feel that using the word *negro* is preferable and necessary to do the recovery work that redeems the connotative value of the word *negro* not only for Black people in Argentina but throughout the diaspora. To this end, they organized a number of publicity campaigns, such as one titled "Initiatives to Combat Racism in Language and the Media," language and the media being areas they deemed as "clear reproducers of racism and discrimination." Nevertheless, many activists in the movement use the words interchangeably, and I respect and maintain that practice. The Black social movement in Argentina is also interchangeably referred to as the Movimiento Afro and the Movimiento Negro. I mostly use the term Movimiento Negro throughout this book to situate it in dialogue with Black social movements throughout the diaspora. Throughout the text however, and especially in the cases where I translate the words used by my interlocutors who use the word *afro* as an adjective to describe Black people, culture, and politics, I use the words Movimiento Afro.

Finally, a note on the stylistic choice to capitalize the words "Black," "*Afro*," "Indigenous," and "White." Black Studies scholars have long practiced and made a case for capitalizing "Black" and the names of other oppressed groups. This practice is used as a political tool to confer the humanity and dignity of oppressed peoples, a practice with which I agree. Less attention has been given to whether or not to capitalize "White." I choose to do so in line with Kwame Anthony Appiah's argument that "both [are] historically created racial identities – and whatever rule applies to one should apply to the other." The choice to capitalize White is not meant to elevate but to situate the category as historically

constructed rather than natural (Appiah 2020). This practice comes out of an engagement with critical Whiteness studies.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Pain into Purpose offers an examination of the mechanisms and lived experiences of anti-Black racism in Argentina, a history of Black activism in Argentina, and an analysis of the role of emotions in race-based activism. It examines how social movements mobilize members and powerful actors despite having limited resources, minimal recruitment prospects, and lacking the support of public opinion. I conducted a twenty-four-month-long critical ethnography to analyze the processes by which activists rearticulate notions of national identity in a climate where Black people are extremely invisible. My findings indicate that Black activists strategically deploy emotionally charged human rights frames within the national context in tandem with the opportunities available through transnational ethnoracial politics to catalyze change. Second, Black women utilize transnational Black feminist politics at the interpersonal level to mobilize participants, maintain participation, and increase the movement's visibility. With the foundational chapters, I advance two secondary arguments. First, anti-Black racism is a constant experience of Black people in Argentina and *extanjerización* (foreignization) functions as a mechanism of racialization to maintain a White supremacist racial hierarchy. Second, Black consciousness in Argentina is not a spontaneous engagement with current trends in regional politics. It has existed for as long as enslaved Africans were forcibly brought to the lands currently known as Argentina, and the current iteration is a strategic move that Black activists employ to situate themselves within the broader political struggle of the African diaspora. This study contributes to our understandings of race in Latin America, Black feminist politics, and how emotions permeate the macro- and micropolitics of social movements.

Chapter 1 provides an empirical analysis of one of the principal grievances of Argentina's Black social movement – anti-Black racism – with an analysis of the mechanisms of racialization in the country. While erasure and denial, racial formation processes from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are still present, amid growing activism and an increasingly visible transnational Black community, the primary contemporary method of racialization is through foreignization (Gomes 2009). While Gomes (2009) provides the concept, I document with empirical examples

how "foreignization," the assumption that Black people and culture are never from Argentina, hence never Argentine, functions as a racialized mechanism that reproduces the pervasive myth of Argentina's homogeneous Whiteness. I illustrate this mechanism by analyzing four racialized practices that were salient throughout my fieldwork: afrophilia, afrophobia, curiosity, and insecure Whiteness. By showing how both Blackness and Whiteness are constructed in racialized encounters, I demonstrate how racial hierarchies are reproduced by illuminating the symbolic capital invoked through such exchanges.

I follow the analysis of anti-Black racism in Argentina with a history of Afro-Argentine and Black resistance from the 1980s until the emergence of the social movement's umbrella organization, the Comisión Organizadora del 8 de Noviembre, in 2013. Scholars have documented that late nineteenth-century Afro-Argentine resistance occurred through a strong and vocal Black press and some of Argentina's first mutual aid societies. The existing literature lacks an empirical analysis of contemporary issues. Thus, Chapter 2 relates an account of contemporary Black resistance struggles beginning in the late twentieth century. I trace the current social movement to civil society organizations founded primarily by Black women in the mid-1980s after the country's return to democracy. The unpacking of an oft-repeated phrase of my interlocutors to *poner el cuerpo* – to put one's whole being into an effort, but also a radical act of taking up space (Sutton 2007) – contextualizes the social movement's emergence. Moreover, I argue that the radical act of taking up space in visible locations marked as "White spaces" is central to the politics of visibility that led to some of the movement's successes. I also show that while the human rights movement and the Kirchner administrations provided a political opportunity for cultural and ethnoracial activism, Black activists' continued resistance, despite setbacks, led to the traction and birth of the movement.

The next chapters address the relationship of emotional histories and collective emotional energy to social movement mobilization, solidarity, and outcomes. In Chapter 3, I illustrate the macrolevel role of a society's emotional history, defined as the collective emotional response to historical events, in galvanizing state support. I argue that by leveraging the opportunities offered by the Kirchner moment and the bicentennial, with its opening toward new histories of women, people of color, and other marginalized communities, Black activists successfully employed discursive and emotional repertoires of the human rights movements in interactions with the state. For example, societal shame and haunting tied

to the concept of "the disappeared" provided the political currency to achieve state-level recognition by calling on the government to address the historically attempted genocide of Afro-Argentines as a human rights issue. This strategic activism resulted in Law 26.852, the National Day of Afro-Argentines and Black Culture, as well as other Movimiento Negro successes at the state level.

Chapter 4 introduces the concept of a *Black feminist toolkit* to show that at the microlevel, Black women succeed at growing movement participation and solidarity by utilizing transnational Black feminist politics to convert experiences of pain into purpose. Here, I examine the processes through which affective and emotional bonds serve as political devices for mobilization in race-based social movements, utilizing and expanding the concept of collective emotional energy levels (Summers-Effler 2002). Furthermore, I engage with Vilma Piedade's (2017) concept of *dororidade*, a combination of the Portuguese words for pain, solidarity, and sisterhood, to illuminate why and how affective processes of mobilization are critical to Black women's participation in Argentina's feminist and Black social movements. I argue that Black women activists and artist-activists equip their constituency with what I name a Black feminist toolkit, which gives them a collectivized knowledge, language, and confidence to process the otherwise crippling forms of quotidian and institutional racism that they experience. This process also facilitates the increasing use of the word *negro/a/e* as a term of pride within the movement. Thus, the Black feminist toolkit functions as an everyday success of the movement. It mobilizes new participants, promotes movement cohesion, increases visibility, and empowers Black women with communal spaces, knowledge bases, and collective pride.

Chapter 5 addresses new challenges that emerged for the Movimiento Negro during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the crisis, many Afrodescendants in Argentina saw their precarious and sometimes informal housing and employment situations worsen. Additionally, the international media attention on the Black Lives Matter movement in the wake of George Floyd's murder invigorated the Movimiento Negro's efforts to address police brutality and criminal (in)justice, as witnessed in numerous newspaper articles and virtual discussions on the theme, "Police Brutality Exists Here [Argentina] Too!" Here, I engage with Christina Sharpe's (2016) concept of "wake work" as a disruptor of the immanence and imminence of Black death to analyze two pandemic-era campaigns that were about sustaining Black life. Returning to central concepts of previous chapters, *poner el cuerpo* and the Black feminist

toolkit, the chapter uses virtual ethnographic methods to analyze two campaigns that Black activists launched during the pandemic: a mutual aid campaign to secure food, medicine, and housing for vulnerable African and Afrodescendant populations and a series of web events and projects to continue discussions about racism in Argentina at the community, national, and international level. The data suggests that despite fractures in the movement that emerged because of the pandemic, the movement is still gaining traction in institutional spaces.

In the Conclusion, I return to two central arguments: the importance of studying Black organizing in spaces of Black invisibility and that we cannot understand social movement mobilization, solidarity, and outcomes from a solely macro- or solely microlevel analysis. *Pain into Purpose* shows that by putting international, national, local, and interpersonal histories in conversation, we can come to understand how even in a country where the disenfranchised group includes a small minority that is largely invisible, a social movement can indeed emerge, gain traction, and achieve some of its goals. Finally, the conclusion explores new directions that the Movimiento Negro and research on the movement may take given its increasing visibility and representation amid the simultaneous persistence and widespread denial of racism.