

Contents

List of figures 9

List of abbreviations 11

Acknowledgments 13

Resumen ejecutivo en español 15

1. Introduction 21

 The social life of an in-between place 22

 Constitución: An urban threshold in Buenos Aires 29

 Theoretical framework 35

 Methodology 46

 Chapter overview 52

2. Transformations in Argentine society: A historic overview 55

 Nation-building and Argentine dreams 56

 Workers and the middle classes during Peronism 59

 State terror, redemocratization, and economic challenges 61

 Structural adjustment and its social impact 63

 Argentina since the early 2000s 68

 Conclusion 77

3. Paseo La Estación: Between mall and market 79

 Classifying places of consumption 81

 Places of consumption in Buenos Aires 83

 Paseo La Estación: The popular mall 95

 Conclusion 112

4. Ambivalent opportunities: Work in the popular mall 113

 Popular economic work: Informal and precarious? 114

A multifaceted place of work	118
The mall as a place of opportunities	123
Struggling with work in the mall	132
Conclusion	146
5. Struggling for reliability: Power and protest in the popular mall	149
Discontent and protest in Paseo La Estación	151
New forms of work: Potentials for conflicts and solutions	156
Social indeterminacy: Roles and relations in the popular mall	157
Claiming rights in the country of <i>piqueteros</i>	167
Pragmatic outlooks and conclusion	178
6. Encounters in a place of transit: Emerging and fading socialities	181
The popular mall as a safe place in Constitución	182
Mall encounters	187
The challenges of close involvements	199
Conclusion	213
7. Conclusion	215
Bibliography	227