The Unemployed Movement and its Multiple Collective Identity: Argentina, 1996-2005

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the

University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Sang-Sub, Ha

November 2006

ORIGINAL COPY TIGHTLY

BOUND

Abstract
The unemployed movement and its multiple collective identity: Argentina, 1996-2005
by
Sang-Sub, Ha

This thesis examines the grassroots unemployed movement and its organisations in contemporary Buenos Aires – the so-called *piquetero* movements that emerged during the mid-1990s and developed into a large-scale social movement after the economic crisis of 2001. The study analyses their multiple collective identity, as well as the movement's socio-political impact on the wider Argentine society. To a backdrop of rapidly accelerating joblessness, the thesis focuses on: (i) exclusion, not only vis-à-vis socio-economic issues (unemployment, poverty, lack of an adequate social security safety system), but also political exclusion from bureaucratic trade unions and political parties, who became disengaged from the central concerns of the mass of the population; and (ii) how the unemployed organised themselves into UMOs (Unemployed Movement Organisations) to demand welfare provision, work, an end of to the criminalisation of social protest in the shape of state repression and advanced calls for a more democratic society. The level of unity and diversity is also discussed – the various ideological currents within the movement – and the impact this had on enabling the organisations to achieve their aims. Central issues here are the relationship between the grassroots organisations and (i) Peronist clientelistic structures; and (ii) the state bureaucracy. Given the co-optive power of these structures, the movement did not establish a credible and lasting radical grassroots politics. The unemployed movement, nevertheless, demonstrates the potential for creating a more vibrant grassroots democracy. Grassroots participatory activities of this kind must surely be part of any attempt at democratic 'deepening'.

Acknowledgements

Writing a thesis is indeed a fascinating experience. It involves dramatic swings between enthusiasm and despair, between panic and poise, often several times in one day. Fortunately, I have received help, support and encouragement from a number of people and academies throughout the process. I have had the privilege of writing my thesis at the Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Liverpool, which provided a stimulating and encouraging research environment and a very congenial atmosphere. In pursuing this research, I have been fortunate in being able to draw on the support and assistance of many colleagues, and I wish to express my gratitude to all of them. However, some colleagues and friends deserve special thanks.

First, in England, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Lewis Taylor for his support and encouragement. In times of doubt, Lewis has always assured me that I would manage to complete the research through following his golden rules: short sentences, conciseness and good time management. Over the years he has also shown great interest in my work and generously offered constructive criticism and friendship. Prof. Ronaldo Munck, my second supervisor, has also been very accommodating and helpful. During the early months of the research, he offered insightful comments on the basic arguments regarding social movements in Latin America, as well as information about current Argentine society. I am also deeply indebted to Dr. Ana Dinestein, who encouraged me to start my fieldwork in Buenos Aires. Thanks to her help, I met numerous leaders and members of the unemployed movement in Buenos Aires and La Plata. Mr. Paul Higgins, read the whole of the final manuscript and generously offered observations, corrections and suggestions.

Contents

List of Maps, Tables, Figures and Photos

Maps

Tables

Figures

Photos

Acronyms and Abbreviations

Social Movement Theories
CB: Collective Behaviour;

FTs: Frame Theories;

NSMs: New Social Movements;

POs: Political Opportunities;

PP: Political Process;

RD: Relative Deprivation;

RM: Resource Mobilisation;

RSMOs: Radical Social Movement Organisations;

SC: Social Constructivism;

SM: Social Movement;

SMOs: Social Movement Organisations.

Main Political Parties in Argentina
Frepaso - a centre-left coalition which put Fernando de la Rúa in office in 1999;
PJ - Partido Justicialista (or Peronists);
UCR - Unión Cívica Radical (or Radicals).

Trade Unions
CGT: Confederación General del Trabajo (since 1930);

CTA: Central de Trabajadores Argentinos (since 1991).

The Unemployed Movement Organisations (UMOs) in Buenos Aires (2004)
Barrios de Pie;

BPN: Bloque Piquetero Nacional;

CCC: Corriente Clasista y Combativa;

FTV: Federación de Tierra y Vivienda;

MIJD: Movimiento Independiente de Jubilados y Desocupados;

MST Teresa Vive: Movimiento Sin Trabajo Teresa Vive;

MTD Evita: Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados Evita

MTD Aníbal Verón: Movimiento Trabajadores Desocupados Aníbal Verón;

MTL: Movimiento Territorial de Liberación;

MTR: Movimiento Teresa Rodríguez;

MUP 20: Movimiento de Unidad Popular 20;

PO: Polo Obrero.

Institutions

ECLAC: Economic Commission on Latin America and Caribbean;

IADB: Inter-American Development Bank;

IMF: International Monetary Fund;

INDEC: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos;

OSAL - CLACSO: Observatorio Social de América Latina – Consejo Latinamericano de Ciencias Sociales;

UBA: Universidad de Buenos Aires;

WB: World Bank.

Others

ISI: Import Substitution Industrialisation;

PJJH: Plan de Jefes y Jefas de Hogar;

PT: Plan Trabajar;

YPF: Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales.

Preface

This thesis analyses the multiple collective identity that developed within the unemployed movement in Buenos Aires during the period 1996-2005. The study examines the various socio-economic and socio-political transformations that led to the formation of the unemployed movement. During the post-Menem years, hundreds of thousands of unemployed people have mobilised and protested daily against the worst socio-economic conditions in living memory. Initially, small numbers of unemployed people started their protest in a local area, however, the movement has mushroomed to gain a presence across the whole country and has even spread to neighbouring countries in the Southern Cone. The unemployed movement's collective actions have come to play a crucial role in articulating possible alternative socio-political blueprints for Argentina's working population, given the devastating impact of neo-liberalism and a rapid 'informalisation' of economic life.

When exploring 'who they are' and the unemployed's 'collective identity', it has been necessary to study the historical background to the recent crisis. How 'resistance' organisations were established and to what extent this process helped mould new political identities is also examined. The unemployed movement's mobilising ideologies and changing attitudes to power, politics, development, democracy and social change are analysed.

The thesis maintains that both theoretical lines of argument and fieldwork data are essential for the development of an understanding of the new collective identity that has been forged within the unemployed movement. This thesis employs existing social movement theory, but in a critical manner, to analyse the unemployed movement, its actions, attitudes, and relationships to other political/social actors who (in)directly

interacted with it.

The study incorporates theoretical concepts that lay emphasis on the important factors shaping mobilisation and the formation of collective identity: internally generated resources (both human and financial), the political opportunities available to leaders and rank-and-file participants in social movement organisations, as well as the influence of cultural meanings and the manipulation of symbols as a crucial factor explaining mobilisation, in addition to accounting for movement success or decline. Attention is drawn to the 'excluded identity' of unemployed people in order to understand their relationship to, and interpretation of, the broader socio-economic and political context. The complex practices and meanings surrounding the struggles and demands put forward by the unemployed in contemporary Argentina are examined.

This analysis and search for the collective identity of the unemployed movement and its practices in contemporary Argentina is organised in three parts. The first section of the thesis provides theoretical perspectives on collective identity within social movement theory literature, discussing arguments originating from US and Western European social movement theory, as well as Latin American theorists. Chapter II establishes the theoretical framework for the analysis of collective identity debates, with a review of the literature on CB, RM, PO, PP, SC, and NSMs. Chapter III summarises existing literature on Latin American social movements, emphasising their contribution to an understanding of the current Argentine experience. This chapter is also concerned with illustrating the similarities and differences between Latin American social movements and those found in contemporary Argentina.

In the second part, Chapter IV provides a macro-level structural picture of contemporary social problems, highlighting unemployment as a major and growing

issue. Following an historical survey of Argentine political economy, attention is focused on the Menem administrations (1990-1998) and the run-up to the crisis that rocked Argentine society at the turn of the twentieth century (1998-2005).

The third section of the thesis comprises three chapters that analyse the 'collective identity' of the unemployed movement, based on fieldwork research. Chapter V is concerned with plotting the socio-economic preconditions that led to the formation of the unemployed movement, utilising the concept of 'social exclusion' resultant on a collapse of formal employment and the rapid spread of informality. This led to long-term poverty, inequality and produced a plethora of related sources of deprivation. Chapter VI examines the 'political identity' that emerged within the movement through engaging in collective actions on the streets, relating this to the widening of 'political opportunities' confronting the poor due to the legitimation crisis affecting the political class. However, despite initially developing homogeneously around one shared identity of 'social exclusion', the unemployed soon split into heterogeneous organisations that adopted different positions vis-à-vis the usefulness of entering into negotiations and alliances with political parties, trade unions and the state. Given their increasingly different mobilising and ideological characteristics, Chapter VII looks at the cultural identity of the unemployed movement, reviewing the movement's ruptured ideology and symbols of collective action.

Chapter VIII, the conclusion, evaluates the accomplishments and limitations of the unemployed movement. It also provides comment on the implications for the development of Argentine democracy of the consciousness, or 'identity', acquired by its grassroots activists.

I
INTRODUCTION

A social problem must acquire social endorsement if it is taken seriously and move forward in its career. It must acquire a necessary degree of respectability which entitles it to consideration in the recognized arenas of public discussion (Blumer, 1971: 298).

Of Argentina's population of 37 million, 52 per cent - some 19 million people - now fell below the official poverty line, while 20 per cent, 7.5 million, could no longer afford sufficient food. There were reports of children starving in the impoverished rural province of Tucumán. Unemployment soared to 23 per cent of the workforce, with a further 22 per cent 'under-employed' - in part-time jobs and seeking further work. Public services disintegrated: hospitals could no longer treat the sick; schools closed, or gave up any attempt to teach. State pensions and public-sector workers' salaries went unpaid (Rock, 2002: 56).

The particularity of the 'kill people by hunger' version of society

Over the past ten years, Argentina experienced a profound economic crisis that has impoverished a large section of the populace. The economy contracted dramatically following the traumatic events of December 2001. The meltdown has been so profound that it has not just affected economic life. Political institutions, as well as social and cultural activities have also been shaken to their roots, which has in turn engendered considerable levels of political turmoil: political and business elites lost credibility and legitimacy, while public confidence in the state and its institutions became severely undermined. To this backdrop, social revolts exploded onto the streets in December 2001, with uprising occurring across the country, especially in Buenos Aires.[1] For their

---

1 Here it is necessary to note that the crisis was not new or unexpected. Several historical analysts have argued that the debacle of 2001 comprised the result of longstanding structural problems afflicting the Argentine economy and marked the culmination of long-term political malaise. On this, see Peralta-Ramos and Waisman (1987); Tulchin and Garland (1998); Pastor (1999); Teichman (2001); Halevi (2002); Rock (2002); Romero (2002) and Sidicaro (2002).

part, the middle- and working-classes have been forced to devise new and inventive survival strategies to cope with the chaos impacting on their everyday lives. Middle-class Argentines, together with unemployed people, reacted spontaneously to the alarming decline in their living standards by participating in mass pot-banging demonstrations (*cacerolazos*) and roadblock protests (*piqueteros*). The police responded to these events with their usual brutality: during one particularly large and angry mobilisation in Buenos Aires on 19-20 December 2001, some 33 people were shot (Klein, 2003). A state of siege was subsequently declared, a measure that brought back bitter memories of the severe repression imposed on the civilian population by military governments between 1976 and 1983. Unsurprisingly, given this recent harrowing experience, the decree sparked mass mobilisations throughout the country, with the capital comprising the epicentre of popular protest. These events, which were accompanied by violence and considerable quantities of tear gas wafting through the city centre, were far removed from the sophisticated, cosmopolitan 'civilised' image that the citizens of Buenos Aires like to project. Indeed, the street clashes conjured up images of neighbouring poorer Latin American countries possessing large indigenous populations crowded into insalubrious shanty-towns, forgotten and abandoned by their own governments. The protests also marked the onset of a new phase in Argentina's contemporary political history: rather than 'disappearing' dissidents, as occurred during the military dictatorship's 'dirty war', at the turn of the century a popular refrain commonly heard on the streets was: 'They kill people through hunger, not guns'.

Given these momentous events, it is hardly surprising that despite a more than twenty-year democratic interlude after the discredited military were forced back to the barracks, the political system faces serious problems. Although the traditional response

to mass unrest – a bloody coup – appears in the present climate to be an unlikely option, recent events have highlighted the state's lack of legitimacy and led to a questioning of the relevance and effectiveness of democratic politics.[2] It has also stimulated a debate around the reform mechanisms required to 'deepen' democratic life in Argentine society. One sector of civil society that has emerged to strongly contest the established status quo is the unemployed movement, along with an array of affiliated grassroots organisations, who have been campaigning vigorously around a wide array of issues, including jobs, poverty, inequality, anti-corruption, labour rights and human rights. To this end, they have engaged in multiple forms of protest. Involvement in these mobilisations has had certain important socio-political repercussions, as participation has stimulated the forging of new identities, along with raised political consciousness.

The unemployed movement emerged at a distinct moment in Argentine history (1996-2005), when the dominant neo-liberal paradigm began to be questioned, with new social actors struggling to understand and redefine the new rules of 'political democracy'.[3] The plethora of grassroots movements that emerged throughout Latin America post-1980, have become the subject of detailed analysis by political sociologists. Many researchers have pointed out the complex nature of these 'new' movements, whose agenda goes beyond the earlier political and economic demands typically voiced during the 1960s and 1970s.[4] In a widening field of study on so-called

---

2 During the military governments of Jorge Rafael Videla and Roberto Eduardo Viola, an estimated 30,000 persons disappeared. 'State terror was employed to crush the urban guerilla movements that had surged in opposition to the military' (Brysk, 1994: 32).
3 Commenting on this development, Jordan and Weedon argue: 'for marginalized and oppressed groups, the construction of new and resistant identities is a key dimension of a wider political struggle to transform society' (1995: 5-6).
4 On this trend, Hale opines that: 'it is one thing to approach a rough consensus on the emergence of a shift, its explanation, and characterization, and quite another to do so on assessments of the consequences: what people engaged in various forms of identity politics have achieved, and can hope to achieve, with what impact on their daily lives. Here, major divergences on key concepts of power, resistance, hegemony, and structural transformation tend

'grassroots politics' or 'grassroots democracy', social movement theorists have also recognised that these groups play a crucial role in drawing possible alternative blueprints for societal organisation in Latin America under circumstances where the 'disappearing' neo-liberal state is retreating from many of its former social responsibilities. According to Alvarez et al., the resultant questioning of the social order encompasses not only the political system, but also established economic, social and cultural practices that might engender a democratising reordering of society as a whole (1998: 2). In this regard, studies of new social movements (NSMs) emphasise the cultural dimensions of grassroots activism, especially vis-à-vis the production of novel forms of 'doing' politics and the creation of 'new identity' in the political sphere (Kenny, 2004: 111). On this point, Alvarez et al. stress that cultural politics is 'a dimension of all institutions – economic, social and political [and] a set of material practices which constitutes meaning, values and subjectivities' (1998: 3). It is in this sense that the cultural dimension of social movements can shed light on the meanings that 'shape social experience and configure social relations' (1998: 3). In particular, these analysts assert that this redefinition of the meaning of common concepts, like 'democracy' or 'development', calls for the enactment of what has been variously called 'cultural politics' or 'identity politics'. Although each social movement is different, these theorists have asserted that all social movements, regardless of their orientation, enact cultural politics.

---

to surface, producing a chasm that would seem difficult to bridge. The strongest argument for the creative renewal potential of identity politics resides in the intrinsic value of decentralized and multifaceted political activity, a rejuvenation of the political engendered by transformations in the very meaning of doing politics' (1997: 580).

Objectives and significance of the study

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the experience of the unemployed movements in contemporary Argentina. Emphasis is given to the collective identity that emerged among its participants as mobilisations developed. The thesis also examines: Who exactly were these new protagonists in Argentine society? Why and how did they emerge? These issues are discussed in relation to the impact of the neo-liberal policies pursued during and after Menem's period in office, as well as the political opportunities they created for subaltern activism as a consequence of an erosion of political class hegemony. Additionally, the cultural expressions that emerged to help mobilise the unemployed movement are considered

The subject of 'collective identity' is central in this thesis. Movement analysts have begun to recognise the importance of 'activist identities' to activism itself; that is, the importance of people's definition of themselves as activists. It is because people come to view themselves as activists and to see involvement as an integral part of 'who they are' and 'why their life is worthwhile' that they persist in activism. Such sentiments can become significantly reinforced at particular conjunctures when 'activism' is stimulated by a variety of concerns simultaneously, be they economic, political and cultural. In addition to 'individual identity', however, the theme of 'collective identity' has become very important too. Interestingly, 'collective identity' was a theme pinpointed in some of the earliest work on social movement theory. Blumer (1969), for example, wrote about the importance of an *esprit de corps*, of collective narratives and ideologies – all of which bind the individual into the group and 'identify' her/him with it (some of the newer research on 'emotion' adopts a similar stance). He discusses the importance of activities which draw the individual into the collectivity and make them

feel a part of its actions. This has been rejoined more recently by a body of work which focused on the ways in which individual social agents 'do' collective identity, on how they develop a sense of collective 'self' and distance themselves from others. Thus, the task of social movements 'is to solve the practical puzzle of how microlevel agents can initiate and promote transformation in macrolevel structures that both constrain and facilitate their efforts' (Buechler, 2000: 17-18). The work of Alberto Melucci (1989, 1996) has also been a key inspiration for many who pursue this theme, but there is now quite an industry of writers working on this dimension of social movement practice.

This thesis aims to analyse the emergence of the unemployed movement adopting a 'collective identity' approach. In doing so, it will engage with bodies of literature that address the subject from a CB, RM and PO perspective. To date, few scholars have discussed 'collective identity' when studying Argentina's unemployed movement. Accordingly, the thesis examines how unemployed people developed a common *Weltanschauung* through engagement in collective action stimulated by a sharp worsening of the labour market, heightened job insecurity and the rapid spread of uncertainty. To a backdrop of economic meltdown, individuals had to not only devise novel strategies as they strove to earn a living, they also had to create new forms of collective organising and protest in order to gain concessions from a discredited political elite and an unsympathetic state.

Turn of the century Argentina experienced the most severe crisis in its history. The new century opened with the collapse of its economic development model and the generalised failure of its socio-political structures and institutions, which had historically appeared to place the country in a privileged position compared to most other Latin American societies. Previous social security provision, based on relatively

stable formal employment and responsive socio-political structures when confronted with a powerful labour movement, became replaced by widespread socio-political insecurity - as epitomised by a desperate unemployment rate and heighened labour precariousness, with a concomitant increase in informal sector activity and the impoverishment of vast segments of the population. Given the intensity and depth of the crisis, social conflicts understandably mushroomed both numerically and in intensity, to an extent that they threatened to explode beyond the control of the (discredited) state. Social protests not only invoked memories of a (usually Peronist) 'golden past', new 'memories' emerged that envisaged a brighter future involving substantial social reordering in favour of the poor. These processes, encouraged by the dismantling of social protection provided by an inadequate welfare state, not only resulted in a marked erosion of the nation's socio-political structures. Unemployment came to be recognised increasingly as a major social problem as the 1990s progressed, while upon the debacle of 2000-2001, the unemployed movement emerged as a major collective actor in Argentine society. It embraces activists who are economically and politically marginal, but are regarded as socially legitimate among a wide swathe of political and opinion forming circles. Involvement in collective action helped forge a shared unemployed identity. The thesis analyses how the movement developed: who became enrolled in its ranks; how the movement defines itself; and what kinds of external factors affected its formation. On the theoretical level, an examination is made as to how the movement can be interpreted and which corpus of literature best accounts for its emergence and practice. Talking on board Melucci's critique of narrowly 'structuralist' analyses of social movements, a 'collective identity' approach has been adopted.[5] In addition to the

---

5 Melucci criticises the former in the following terms: 'it is furthermore, customary to refer to

usual historical and socio-economic factors, the cultural dimensions of the movement are considered when examining the:

(i) Socio-economic pre-conditions for the emergence and formation of the unemployed movement - what 'historical memory' did ordinary people draw upon when attempting to make sense of current developments, devising strategies of protest and creating local groups? Which kinds of traditional behaviour were discarded and what modes of action were adopted during the process of legitimising the movement's activities?;

(ii) How were 'resistance' organisations established and to what extent did this process help mould new political identities?; and

(iii) What, if any, alternative visions of society did the unemployed movement construct with regard to their mobilising ideologies involved with power, politics, development, democracy and social change?

When considering these issues, it is important to record that the movement did not 'spontaneously' arise from the acute conjunctural crisis of 2000-2001. Its roots lie in the steadily deteriorating socio-economic conditions that followed the 1980s debt crisis. As such, the movement has evolved hand-in-hand with a growing questioning vis-à-vis the nature and failings of the Argentine political system by actors across the social spectrum. Demands for social change and 'social justice', have therefore become inseparable from the elaboration of a critique of the political order and calls for

movements as the effects of a particular historical situation, or as an outcome of a particular conjuncture (such as economic crisis or contradictions with the system). In doing so, however, one ignores the motives for, and the meaning and components of, collective action, by assuming that the ways in which such actions come into being and persistent over time are irrelevant when compared to the interplay of 'structural' variables. These manners of considering social movements as either historical characters or results of structural determinants are not just commonplace notions of everyday discourses' (1996: 13). 'Movements are the social domain that most readily escape the confines of the inherited, and most perceptively reveals the manner and locus of the society's self-constructive process' (2000: 17).

8

substantial political reform aimed at creating a more 'open' and citizen friendly democratic society.[6]

The unemployed movement: toward multiple collective identity

Several researchers have already sought to answer the question about 'who they are' and have attempted to uncover the 'real' unemployed movement, as can be discerned from the following quotes:

> Poverty and unemployment, together with state inaction, created an insurmountable pressure that built up during 2001 until everything exploded (Auyero, 2001: 6-7).

> This is where the 'marginal groups' become strategic actors whose direct actions interfere with the elite circuits and disrupt the accumulation process. Road blockades of the unemployed are the functional equivalent of the industrial workers stopping the machines and production line: one blocks the realization of profit, the other, the creation of value. Mass organization outside the factory system demonstrates the viability of this strategy when it takes place outside the structures of electoral parties and bureaucratic trade unions. Autonomous organization is the key in Argentina. Experience demonstrates that the new mass movements can sustain struggles, resist violent repression, and secure temporary and immediate concessions (Petras, 2002).

> During the period 1999-2001 the movement of the unemployed strengthened. The 'nationalisation' of the roadblock hitherto provincial or local, in July and August 2001 marked a qualitative shift in the politics of resistance. Since then, the Movement of the Unemployed reorganised. At the moment, there are three main groupings: the FTV within the union *Central de Trabajadores Argentinos* (CTA), the *Bloque Nacional Piquetero* (close to left-wing political

---

6 This has been a continent-wide phenomena: 'considering the last fifty years of the 20th century, 'social justice' demands have been the common bond among an array of processes from Guatemala's democratic interregnum (1944-54) through the revolutionary movements that followed the success of the Cuban revolution (1960 on, including Perú 1968), from the emergence of a Latin American and Caribbean interpretation of social justice through the social movements (mid-1970s on) which began to lay claim to rights for the poor, for women, for the disappeared, for the indigenous, and even for the environment and which appear to have hastened the resurgent (perhaps nominal) democracies of the late 20th century. While these democracies, whose legitimacy derives at least in part from the gross human rights abuses and economic excesses at the expense of the immiserated and impoverished - the immense majority of people in Latin America and the Caribbean - have made social justice claims central, so have those same poor and marginalized people whose lives reflect little of the supposed commitment - new found or old - to social justice' (Selbin, 1998: 1-2).

parties) and the *Coordinadora de Piqueteros Aníbal Verón.* The latter gathers eleven independent organisations of the Movement of the Unemployed (MTD) in the south of Great Buenos Aires ... These sectors of the *Piquetero* Movement deserve special attention in terms of the development of new forms of politics (Dinerstein, 2002: 11-12).

The emergence and mobilization of protest are from among people with scarce economic and political assets (Cramér, 2003: 2).

As inequality, poverty, and unemployment grow so does social and political exclusion. The unemployed, underemployed, self-employed, women, old people are among the sectors of society that bear most of the social costs of neoliberalism. However, those excluded sectors of the population can contribute, if united and represented, to the creation of a more inclusive way of doing politics (Chrabolowsky, 2003: 3).

The new politics, as opposed to the old one, is one based in horizontalism and participation, one where citizens regain the center of the stage and become protagonists. If in the turbulent days of December, 2001 it first emerged as an unarticulated outcry against verticalism, corruption, nepotism, inefficiency, and isolation of the 'ruling class', it later began to be defined and denominated, among other things, as deliberative, bottom-up and/or participative democracy. In its most radical form, the new politics calls for the installment of a system of non representation through direct democracy. The Neighborhood Assemblies embrace within them all these possibilities (Anderson, 2004: 3).

First, the number of beneficiaries of workfare programs was a small proportion relative to the eligible population, making eligible individuals aware that filling an application form was not sufficient to assure access to benefits. Second, clientelism in the allocation of funds eroded the legitimacy of the government, further inducing individuals to search for alternative means of obtaining state sponsored benefits. Third, workfare programs fostered networking among program participants. Fourth, workfare programs provided a material incentive to overcome free riding. Since workfare benefits are excludable goods, the *Piqueteros*' organizations had an effective tool to induce people to join them and participate in demonstrations (Franceschelli and Ronconi, 2005: 2).

The *piqueteros* are essentially out of work or poorly paid working class citizens, displeased with

mass unemployment, deficient salaries and federal economic policies. Over the years, the *piqueteros* have become increasingly effective in publicly demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the government, as has their ability to organize collectively and en masse. In most cases, the leaders that have succeeded in acquiring spaces in state assistance programs as 'a new version of political clientelism'. While some groups could be designated as clientelist, owing to the mutual obligatory relationship required of members, the *piquetero* arrangement appears characteristically distinct from previous structures on account of its stronger emphasis on active community cooperation and internal approaches to egalitarian decision-making (Aguilar, 2005: 6).

The consensus among an overwhelming majority of observers regarding the origins and the nature of the newly emerging unemployed movement hold that the following factors unfolding in the late 1990s and 2000-2001 were decisive:

(i) a shift occurred in the locus of labor conflict from the traditional labour union movement to the unemployed informal sectors and the unemployed movement;

(ii) a diminution in the prevalence of demands for wage increases and mushrooming of struggles around issues such as the payment of unpaid wages, job security, and basic needs provision, like food;

(iii) a decline in the number of factory-based strikes, accompanied by an expansion of unemployed organisations undertaking roadblocks and other demonstration on the public highway;

(iv) an intensification of protest against clientelist practices surrounding the operation of workfare programmes; and

(v) the growing centrality of active community cooperation, hand-in-hand with the spread of egalitarian decision-making practices outside of state interference.[7]

Most observers note that the 2001 crisis increased social exclusion through

---

7 See, for example, Auyero (2001); Dinerstein (2001, 2002, 2003a, 2003b); Petras (2002); Villalón (2002); Cramér (2003); Chrabolowsky (2003); Anderson (2004); Aguilar (2005); Franceschelli and Ronconi (2005).

deproletarianisation, a trend that was exacerbated by the contraction and decentralisation of state services. The ensuing hardship, it is posited, gave birth to the unemployed movement. Authors also highlight the multiple shortcomings of political representation and the 'legitimation crisis' that developed during the 1990s (Dinerstein, 2003a; Levitsky et al., 2003; Ollier, 2003; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2003). Despite these more analytical studies, an overwhelming proportion of the literature published on the unemployed movement lacks a scholarly analysis and can be best described as journalistic. As such, it (understandably) documents events without attempting to examine them theoretically. Nevertheless, many observers, including local newspapers, weekly magazines and television, when attempting to describe the movement, have regularly noted that it comprises a 'new' form of 'doing politics' by the poor. In this regard, aspects of the movement that are pinpointed include a propensity to ignore official institutions and hierarchical power structures, in addition to the use of roadblocks as a tactic of protest. An indication of this body of literature can be gleaned from the following extracts:

> The hitherto hidden face of the *piquetero* movement made a public appearance six years ago when it began to engage in roadblocks. They manage communal kitchens and support schools. This 'phenomenon' was discovered to be a widespread movement in GBA (Greater Buenos Aires), especially in the west and south, where it is creating a new and very organised social networks among displaced people. This represents new form of doing politics, one that does not exclude the use of violence. A *piquete* is organised for all neighbours, who are the poorest people in the nation's *barrios* (*Clarín,* 16 September 2002. My translation).

> A *Piquetero* is a member of a social movement originally initiated by unemployed workers in Argentina in the mid-1990s, during Carlos Menem's rule, a few years before the peak of the economic crisis that started in 1998 with a recession and erupted in 2001 causing the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa and three of his successors in a matter of weeks. The word *piquetero* is a neologism in the Spanish of Argentina. It comes from *piquete* (in English, 'picketing'), that is, a standing demonstration of protest in a significant spot, in this case usually

appearing as a road blockade as 'a national phenomenon'.[8]

> There used to be a time when a picket was a man or woman who stood outside his place of work to prevent people from going in during a strike. But the Spanish word *piquetero* acquired a different meaning here during the economic depression which climaxed in the infamous political and financial meltdown of December 2001. A picket here is somebody, generally an unemployed person, who 'blocks roads to demand subsidies for the jobless'. The pickets are groups of well-organized unemployed people. They block roads and bridges, usually in key places in the city of Buenos Aires. They take their right to demonstrate to the limit, often wielding batons alleging they are for self-defence. They snarl traffic and thus get on the nerves of commuters. Polls show the pickets are not liked by the middle class, especially now that the economy has been growing for 31 months in a row and that people feel they are going places ('Picking a fight', *Buenos Aires Herald*, 21 August 2005).

Such journalistic sources, however, usually regard the unemployed movement as possessing no lasting significance and assume that it will disappear once economic prosperity returns; the movement, it is assumed, does not reflect a serious long-term social problem in Argentine society. Instead, the focus tends to be on the more obvious manifestations of unemployed agitation, such as tactical roadblocks and violent street demonstrations. The long-term structural problems that gave birth to the movement tend to get ignored, which fails to capture the complexity of the movement or its historical significance.

One consequence of the dominance of such a 'conjunctural' perspective, is that few studies have been published that consider the unemployed movement to have had any lasting impact on the participants' consciousness, or as helping to mould new identities. Once these developments are appreciated, however, social movement theory becomes an important tool for explaining the emergence of the unemployed movement and its significance. Furthermore, given the diversity of contemporary social movement

---

8 See, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piquetero

theory, no one theoretical approach appears adequate to explain the many facets of popular mobilisation in present-day Argentina. Accordingly, in this study various strands within the theoretical literature have been employed, including identity formation, resource mobilisation, political opportunity and culture of social movements. It is to a consideration of these concepts that we now turn.

II
SEARCHING FOR COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN
SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

The most basic questions about identity call for a more general re-examination of the relation between personal experience and public meanings - subjective choices and evaluations, on the one hand, and objective social location, on the other (Mohanty, 2003: 392).

Social identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is social object ... being at once cognitive schemas that enable an actor to determine 'who I am/ we are' in a situation and positions in a social role structure of shared understandings and expectations (Wendt, 1994: 384-396).

The relevance of collective identity

Considerable interest currently exists among social scientists on questions of 'collective identity'.[9] While it is generally accepted that social identities built around ethnic, racial, gender, sexual, religious and other factors have become key determinants in contemporary socio-political mobilisation, important differences are to be found regarding explanations as to why identity continues to exert such power in the modern world. Additionally, a heated debate rages over the degree to which 'identity' should be acknowledged and legally recognised, or simply ignored (Alcoff, 2003: 1). For example, at the time of writing (January 2006), the issue of Catalan 'identity' was sparking controversy in Spain. Despite its ability to provoke significant schism there is, nevertheless, surprisingly little consensus in the academic literature as to how we might define 'collective identity', either with regard to overtly political activity or, less obviously, in 'political' social movement participation. Differences abound with respect to how 'collective identity' impacts in the political sphere and social movements – does

---

9 For the purpose of this thesis, 'collective identity' is viewed as a social movement concept positioned ideally between the formation of collective identity and collective action, or located theoretically between self-identity and collective action. It also has some common characteristics: a minimal level of organisation, which distinguishes it from spontaneous gatherings of people with similar ideas and values; a common outlook on society; a common set of values; and a common aim for social change.

a strong sense of 'identity' enhance popular participation and the capacity for mobilisation? In spite of the disagreements, however, analysts at least concur that the concept of 'collective identity' is critical for understanding many important contemporary socio-political phenomena. The question of 'identity' is particularly relevant for the study of social movements, for it provides a key for understanding why individuals acquire consciousness and engage in collective action.[10] That is, how does a sense of one's self-identity link to participation and mobilisation capacity? The development of a collective identity, it has been argued, brings empowerment and enhances 'agency' (Meyer, 2002: 13).

'Identity' can revolve around different 'markers', including class conflict, through engagement in more immediately violent actions (from spontaneous riots to bitter ethnic conflict), as well as territorial politics (involving issues of separatism and nationalism). In addition to its more obviously 'political' dimensions, 'collective identity' may also arise from more 'personal' lifestyle choices.[11] In relation to both these dimensions, Laraña et al. argue that collective identity:

> ... is built through shared definitions of the situation by its members, and it is a result of a process of negotiation and 'laborious adjustment' of different elements relating to the ends of the means of collective action and its relation to the environment. By this process of interaction, negotiation and conflict over the definition of the situation, and the movement's reference frame,

---

10 For example, about 'working class consciousness', Reich argues that: 'every worker will feel himself the real master of the factory and no longer think of the employer as paying his wages, but as exploiting his labour power. If the revolutionary leader must know precisely what surplus value is, the worker must know exactly how much profit he is at present creating for his employer in the course of his work. That is 'class consciousness'. He will then strike not merely from feeings of class solidarity and loyalty to the leaders of the trade union, but in his own interest, and no union leader will be able to deceive him' (1973: 68).

11 Alcoff identifies four powerful forms of identity today: (i) race, a question that has its origins in the slave trade and the creation of European empires; (ii) class, associated with the development of capitalism; (iii) nationalism, produced along with the development of the nation-state; and (iv) sexuality, which comes to the fore in the context of the creation of alternative communities in which individuals could develop non-conventional lifestyles (2003: 5).

members construct the collective 'we' (1994: 15).[12]

For his part, Hobsbawm follows the classic Marxist position to argue that class and collective class-identity emerges parallel with the development of capitalism and is dependent upon an individual's position within the prevailing socio-economic structure:

> Social classes, class conflict and class consciousness exist and play a role in history. It could stand for those broad aggregates of people which can be classified together by an objective criterion – because they stand in a similar relationship to the means of production – and more especially the groupings of exploiters and exploited which, for purely economic reasons, are found in all human societies beyond the primitive communal and, as Marx would argue, until the triumph of proletarian revolution (2003: 126).

From a less materialistic viewpoint, it has been argued that the development of a 'collective identity' might be understandable through: (i) continual and mutual influence between the individual identity of the participant and the collective identity of the group; (ii) as moving targets with different definitions predominating at different points in a social movement's history; and (iii) a distinct process in identity creation and maintenance are operative in different phases of the movement (Laraña et al., 1994: 16).[13] Starting from the premise that 'individuals could develop whole ways of life in new and different forms', it has been posited that identity-based social movements are comprehensible as social struggles 'against oppressions based on race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, culture, nationality, disability, age and other forms of socially

---

12 In this regard, Tilly also defined it by using his 'relational realism' concept: 'identity is in fact not private and individual but public and relational; it spans the wholes range of relational structures from category to group; and any actor deploys multiple identities, at least one per tie, role, network, and group to which the actor is attracted' (2003: 75).
13 Giddens also adopted a less economistic position, noting: 'the need for fresh analysis of the variety of advanced societies in the contemporary world. This task he undertook in his next work, a level-headed and lucid theory of social class that reaffirmed its central importance to the overall structure of capitalist society, with nuanced accounts of upper, new middle and working classes alike; while at the same time maintaining the relatively lesser significance of class—but not thereby of domination—for the character of Communist societies' (quoted in Anderson, 1990: 53).

recognised identity' (Alcoff, 2003: 2).[14] The construction of collective identity is not only a matter of individual self-conscience, it also needs to be historically grounded, or as Marx famously observed in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte [1852]:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weights like a nightmare on the brain of the living (1968: 96).

Furthermore, it is worth stressing that 'identity' is not static, it undergoes regular revision because lived experience and beliefs change through the life cycle – which may produce truly new forms of identity (Alcoff, 2003: 3). From this perspective, collective identity becomes an interpretation of a group's collective experience: 'who members of the group are, what their attributes are, what they have in common, how they are different from other groups and what the political significance of all this is' (Whittier, 2002: 302).

Most analysts of social movements, when focusing on the background and origin of particular mobilisations, have noted how involvement is frequently stimulated by large-scale socio-economic transformations. In this respect, Buechler draws attention to macro-level structural force. He views the new social movements as response to the 'colonizing institutions' of late modernity and as expressing 'a more complex social base than in older class-based action' (2000: 83).[15] Buechler notes:

---

14 Cohen (1985) was the first to introduce a distinction between 'identity-based' and 'strategy-based' approaches to social movements. For many years, the study of social movements remained neglected in the social sciences. However, 'the new age of post-isms' since 1980 has witnessed a striking shift of emphasis from structure to social actor. The motif is, 'without an understanding of identity, of the passion of the actors, there is no way of explaining why social movements move' (Cohen and Arato, 1992, quoted in Foweraker, 1995: 11).

15 The macro-level of analysis of new social movement theories presumes: 'societal totality, a 'historically specific social formation as the structural backdrop for contemporary forms of collective action' (Buechler, 2000: 46). Thus, theorists posit a fundamental relationship between this societal totality, 'characterised as capitalist, bureaucratic and scientised, most often described as post-industrial, post-modern, post-fordist, or programmed', and new social

The most distinctive feature of new social movements is their attempt to identify the links between [new] social structures or societal totalities and [new] forms of collective action. Hence the newness that is the focus of the theories is not so much a quality of movements in isolation as it is a quality of the social structures to which movements respond, and which they inevitably reflect (2000: 50).

In searching for a *sui generis* collective identity, therefore, different elements need to be considered, including not only those relating to the means of collective action, but also, importantly, its relation to social circumstances resulting from structural positions within more complex society. Furthermore, it is unreasonable to speak of a 'collective identity' as if we were dealing with a unified and homogenous entity – 'collective identity' is more profitably viewed as a plurality, dependent on the various subject positions by which s/he is constituted within various discursive formations determined with various objective or structural positions.[16] This plurality may help to 'avoid false dichotomies of culture and structure to see the interaction of factors exogenous to a social movement and the choices made within it' in a process of interaction, negotiation and conflict over the definitions of particular situations (Meyer, 2002: 12).[17]

---

movements' (della Porta and Diani, 1999: 12). Generally, this relationship is expressed in terms of responses to large, anonymous institutions, such as the state or the market, becoming increasingly intrusive into people's lives and social structures, what Habermas termed 'colonising efforts' (1987). Other actor-based theorists observe that new social movements originate from a 'diffuse social base', in which identities originate, not from class, but from 'new', categorically more complex sources like race, ethnicity, gender, or a 'new middle class', employed in the nonproductive sectors (Eder, 1993; Kriesi, 1989; Offe, 1985).

16 Regarding this argument, Laclau affirms that: 'this provides a theoretical key to understand the peculiarity of the new social movements: their central characteristic is that an ensemble of subject positions (at the level of, the place of residence, institutional apparatuses, various forms of cultural, racial and sexual subordination) have become points of conflict and political mobilization' (1985: 31-32).

17 When addressing the concept of 'collective identity', Melucci argues that: 'it is a concept, an analytical tool, not a datum or an essence, not a 'thing' with a 'real' existence. In dealing with concepts, we are talking of instruments or lenses through which we read reality. The concept of collective identity can function as a tool only if it helps to analyze phenomena, or dimensions of them, that cannot be explained through other concepts or models and if it contributes to new knowledge and understanding of these phenomena' (Melucci, 1996: 51). Even though this thesis follows Melucci's concept of collective identity as an analytical tool, the thesis then develops it

Interpreting collective identity through social movement theories

The proliferation of identity-based collective action in recent decades has generated significant academic interest, in addition to different theoretical approaches to the study of social movements. As this thesis aims to explore the collective identity that emerged within a new type of unemployment movement in contemporary Argentina, it begins with a brief review of social movement theories which purport to explain the many components of sub-identities that combine to form a 'core' collective identity. In contemporary social theory, social movements occupy an important role (Nash, 2000: 100). Andrew Jamieson, for example, argues that:

> Social movements have been the source of many important social innovations in the development of science and technology, new ways to organize both the production, as well as the dissemination of knowledge. Even more important perhaps, social movements have altered the boundaries of the officially sanctioned institutions for knowledge production. By bringing new concerns into the arena of public debate, social movements have provided much of the basis for re-organization of the social institutions of knowledge production ... Could they perhaps even be a crucial ingredient in the eruption of Thomas Kuhn's famous - or infamous – 'scientific revolutions'? ... Social movements can be said to have a cosmological function, acting as 'social carriers' for new world-views or conceptions of man and nature (1988: 72 -74; quoted in Amin et al. 1991: 217).

Since the 1970s, those who identified with social movements have sought to explore sources of inequality and exclusion in Western societies that do not derive solely from class.[18] More recently, studies of social movements have questioned older models of political and sociological explanation – that were class-based, and focused

---

by examining how the multiple identities of the unemployed movement interweaved with various situations and structures to mould their collective actions.

18 Mann critically argues that: 'this is a far cry from classical Marxism and from the optimism of the most radical views of revolution. Perhaps revolutions in the Marxist sense never occur. Those situations in which the social structure has been transformed from top to bottom by the replacement of one hegemonic class by another only look revolutionary with hindsight ... in the modern West, it seems rather unlikely that the proletariat carries in itself the power to be a class for itself' (1973: 73).

overtly on narrow economic or political goals connected to traditional political structures (typically involving leftist parties and labour unions). Rather than pursuing narrow economic ends, social movements are usually perceived to be involved in struggles over the definition of meanings and the construction of new identities and lifestyles, as well as engaging in more conventional politics (Nash, 2000:101).[19] Movements normally work from the outside of formal, institutional channels. They emphasise lifestyle, ethical, or 'identity' concerns through using new tactics and frequently incorporate new constituencies, pursue limited goals that are specific to each group and tend to be more democratic and spontaneous than 'old' movements. Movements therefore bring the consideration of 'cultures of politics, or politics of cultures' to the centre of contemporary political sociology concerned with social change.[20] Such a position is advanced by Melucci, who argues that:

> In the last thirty years, analyses of social movements and collective action have developed into an autonomous sector of theory formation and research within the social sciences, and the amount and quality of work in the area has grown and improved. Not incidentally, the autonomy of the conceptual field relating to the analysis of social movements has developed parallel to the increasing autonomy of non-institutional forms of collective action in complex systems. This social space of movements has become a distinct area of the system and no longer coincides

---

19 In this regard, a postmodern Marxist argues that: 'society and classes are fragmented - that workers, peasants, indigenous societies and other social groups have very specific identities, depending on their locations, culture, history and other factors. What postmodern Marxism does is accept this fragmentation as a reality. It remains Marxist in a classical sense – it recognizes that capitalism has become a universal system – while at the same time it is postmodernist in that it believes a multiplicity of social groups and fragmented classes exist in the era of globalization that have little or no relationship to the universalized proletariat enunciated by Marx and Engels' (Burbach, 2001: 88).
20 The general accepted viewpoint holds that 'culture' is about 'relationality' – the relationships among individuals within groups, among groups, and between ideas and perspectives. Culture is concerned with identity, aspiration, symbolic exchange, coordination, and structures and practices that serve relational ends, such as ethnicity, ritual, heritage, norms, meanings and beliefs. It is not a set of primordial phenomena permanently embedded within national or religious or other groups, but rather a set of contested attributes, constantly in flux, both shaping and being shaped by social and economic aspects of human interaction. Using Amartya Sen's language, culture is part of the set of capabilities that people have – the constraints, technologies and framing devices that condition how decisions are made and coordinated across different actors. See Amartya Sen, *'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny'* (2000).

either with traditional forms of organization of solidarity or with the conventional channels of political representation. The area of movements is now a 'sector' or a 'subsystem' of the social (1996:3).

To what extent do these notions of the 'social space of movements' occupying 'a distinct area of the system' apply to Argentine mobilisations post-1990? Does the unemployed movement 'no longer coincide with traditional forms of organisation'? If so, in what respects and what kinds of collective identity have the participants evolved through social mobilisation? These are the key questions of this thesis, which inevitably leads to a consideration of social movement theory.

Theoretical frameworks

The impact of social movements on modern society has been profound. Appearing in increasing numbers over the globe during the past four decades, they signaled a reflex to grievances, relative deprivations, anomie, structural strain or other such forms of hardship, as well as a shift in the way people interacted with power.[21] Searching for resources and political opportunity, movements can be either defensive or offensive in orientation. In the modern era, symbols, expressive forms and 'repertoires' of collective action also developed in resistance to oppression and became modular.[22] That is, they

---

21 Many scholars have struggled to define a social movement. However, all of them have agreed on two key factors: collectivity and engaging politics. Turner and Killian, for example, focus on: 'those forms of social behaviour in which usual conventions cease to guide social action and people collectively transcend, bypass, or subvert established institutional patterns and structures' (1993: 8). Tilly also argues that: 'occupation of public spaces; engagements with authorities or their representations; projection of collective identities; expressions of support for shared demands; and performances validating worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment' (1999: 260) are central characteristics of social movements. Tarrow defines them as 'collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interactions with elites, opponents and authorities' (1998: 4).
22 Tilly defines the repertoire of contention: 'as the ways that people act together in pursuit of shared interests' (1978: 41). On the same lines, Tarrow argues that: 'where old repertoires had been parochial, direct, and corporate-based, the new one was national, flexible, and based on autonomous forms of association created specifically for struggle. Thus, new repertoires increased the leverage of ordinary people to challenge rulers and forced rulers to create means

were easily transferable from one setting or circumstance to another. In turn, this engaged people in the political processes that shaped their lives in meaningful and effective ways, allowing participants opportunity to identify themselves in the central conflicts of the era (Tarrow, 1998: 29-42). A rich literature has subsequently emerged that theorises from the structural causes (the 'why' question) of collective action, to 'how' people protest (became motivated) and to the effects of engagement (the 'who'). Engagement with these issues has engendered both empirical and theoretical debates. Given that a comprehensive review of social movement theories is difficult due to constraints on space, the thesis attempts to focus on approaches to the study of Collective Behaviour (CB; dating from the 1970's) theory through to more recent approaches, including Resource Mobilisation (RM), Political Processes (PP, including Political Opportunities; POs), Social Constructionism (SC) and New Social Movement (NSM) theories from the 1970s onwards.

Collective Behaviour (CB): a herald of structural formation

Drawing from the field of political sociology, the emergence of modern social movement theory in North America began with a critique of the CB model. This model postulated that social movements differed little from other group manifestations, such as panics, crowds and crazes. CB is also considered non-institutional, in that it stands in contradistinction to the routines of everyday life. It is rooted in individuals experiencing anomie and is understood as a response to societal stress or breakdown. In this regard, CB fundamentally adopts a psychological approach rather than focusing on political

---

of social control more subtle than the cavalry charge or the cannonade. Strikes became an institution of collective bargaining; the demonstration was covered by a body of law that both regulated and distinguished it from criminal activities; and sit-ins and building occupations were treated with greater leniency than ordinary delinquency' (1988: 42).

concerns; furthermore, it is often regarded as a dangerous or irrational form of behaviour (Buechler, 2000: 20). Generally, this theoretical approach advanced the notion that social movements were 'little more than the most well-organized and self-conscious part of an archipelago of emergent phenomena, ranging from fads (Aguirre et al., 1988: 569) and rumours, to collective enthusiasm, riots, movements and revolutions' (Tarrow, 1998: 14). From its initial efforts, however, social movement theory took issue with the unitary concept of collective action that lumped social movements in with the extreme and threatening behaviour of panics, crowds and crazes, 'without any due consideration for their distinctness and properly political nature' (Crossley, 2002: 11).[23]

Here we encounter the notion of contentious collective action as a planned, political response. In consequence, a different set of theoretical tools were required, and various offshoots of CB theory developed, including 'symbolic interactionism', 'structural-functionalism' and 'relative deprivation'. Turner and Killian, for example, brought the 'symbolic interactionism' concept of social organisation to the study of 'collective behavior' (1987). They defined CB as:

> those forms of social behaviour in which usual conventions cease to guide social action and people collectively transcend, bypass, or subvert established institutional patterns and structures'; faced with an urgent shared problem that cannot be solved by the established institutions, as a group, a collectivity is more than simply a number of individuals (1993: 8).

Curtis and Aguirre hold that 'a group always consists of people who are in interaction and whose interaction is affected by some sense that they constitute a unit' (1993: 8). People interact and consider 'alternative solutions out of this meaning-

---

23 Crossley also criticises the CB model on the grounds that: 'empirically objective increases in hardship do not lead to increases in protest or movement activity. Indeed, protests very often seem to increase during periods of reform and economic upturn. In a more theoretical vein, this model has been bolstered by the claim that strains and conflicts are a constant factor in social life and, as such, cannot explain protests and movements, which are variable in rates of both occurrence and intensity. Also, the CB model is more normative in orientation' (2002: 12).

creating social process and a new norm emerge to guide the actions of the collectivity' (ibid, 1993: 1).

Symbolic interactionism therefore emerged as a variant of classic CB theory, wherein creative agency triumphs over structural determination, and the creation and interpretation of meanings are keys. This model views CB as the spontaneous development of norms, values and organisations that contest the *status quo* and provoke individual reactions to social disintegration, which then form into a general, collective response. Another version of CB theory parallels the overarching theoretical paradigm of structural-functionalism in an attempt to link broad, structural factors to specific occasions of CB unfolding in several necessary stages.[24] The first stage comprises a set of structural conditions that encourage CB; the second involves structural strain, such as deprivations, conflicts and discrepancies; while the third element encompasses generalised beliefs that provide meaning and motivation. The final three stages are: (i) events or actions that catalyse CB; (ii) the physical mobilisation of actors; and (iii) ending with the absence or suspension of social control (Buechler, 2000: 26). In the structural-functionalist model, CB occurs only when all of these elements are present and, as with symbolic interactionism, it accounts for panics, 'crazes' and social movements, which are all considered irrational, abnormal outbursts.

Finally, an approach that identifies Relative Deprivation (RD) as the motivating force behind collective action represents another variant of classic CB theory. The

---

24 Smelser's theory of CB occurs under situations of structural strain among values (sources of legitimacy), norms (standards for interaction), motivation (mobilisation for organised action), situational facilities (information, skills, tools and obstacles) and goals - what are terms of the components of collective action. CB is characterised by the short-circuiting of the appropriate relationships among these components under the influence of 'a generalised belief'. According to Smelser, 'the nature of collective behavior is the process of reorganizing the components of collective action - through legitimization process of societal values such as generalized beliefs' (1962: 17; 1993: 21-28).

common line of argument encountered in RD academic literature highlights the perception that individual achievements have failed to keep pace with individual expectations; it focuses on the perception that one's membership group is in a disadvantageous position relative to some other groups. Thus, RD is a 'perceived' discrepancy between 'expectation' and 'reality' (Gumey and Tierney, 1982: 33). In sum, this perspective emphasises that a group decides to act collectively when people judge themselves as lacking certain resources in relation to another group. Again, this version of the theory regards CB as presenting dangerous and illegitimate threats to the status quo. While this variant of CB theory indicates a more thoughtful and closer analysis of contentious collective action, the notion persists that this kind of behaviour is aberrant and to be feared.

However, in spite of these characteristics - which Melucci labels 'noninstitutional, spontaneous, short-lived expressions of behavior that rests on shared beliefs and ranges from panic to revolution' (1996: 14) - this theory can help explain the cause of social protests within a set of given structural circumstances and help identify the identities of a movement.[25] On this point, McCarthy and Zald hold that:

> CB theory has in common strong assumptions that shared grievances and generalized beliefs (loose ideologies) about the causes and possible means of reducing grievances are important preconditions for the emergence of a social movement in a collective. An increase in the extent or intensity of grievances or deprivation and the development of ideology occur prior to the emergence of social movement phenomena. Each of these perspectives holds that discontent produced by some combination of structural conditions is a necessary, if not sufficient condition, to an account of the rise of any specific social movement phenomenon. Each, as well, holds that

---

25 In this regard, Foweraker and Landman confirm that: 'in behavioural terms it is clear that identity is a dependent variable, which depends, at least in part, on prior organization, leadership, and strategic decision-making, even if it is finally achieved, if ever, in relation to multiple others' (1997: 38-39). Thus, it functions to sustain social movements and 'maintains a degree of organization cohesion and loyalty in specific circumstances and at specific moments, conditioned by the kind of polity in which the social movement emerges' (Oxhorn, 1999: 136).

before collective action is possible within a collectivity, a generalized belief (or ideological justification) is necessary concerning at least the causes of the discontent and, under certain conditions, the modes of redress (1990:16-17).

Later theories sought to understand activism in its broader political context, as normal social responses with various social stimuli towards political space and struggles with Social Movement Organisations (SMOs), as will be discussed below.

Resource Mobilisation (RM): economic incentives with SMOs

Critiques of the CB paradigm started to be formulated during the tumultuous 1960s. One alternative approach was RM, which developed two key elements: 'a rational actor of the social agent was appropriated, along with an economistic focus upon exchange relations in social life and the effects of the movement resources between agents', and 'a structural network model of social relations and social life was adopted' (Crossley, 2002: 12). According to McAdam (1982), one of the leading researchers on social movements in the RM tradition, viewing social movements as a response to social strain comprised a problematic stance, in that it did not take the larger political context into consideration. In assigning causation of social movements to individual discontent, CB was considered abnormal and apolitical. RM thus arose post-1970 as a response to the shortcomings of CB.[26] Within this body of literature, the influence of economics is particularly evident: rational choice theory held that in contentious collective action, passion gave way to rational calculation and the collective good was subordinated to consideration of individual gain as a mobilising factor. Thus, activism relied on the

---

26 In North America, interest in social movements developed out of desire to understand collective action in general. The aim was to identify the characteristics of social movements, as a subset of collective action, in terms that transcended particular historical or cultural conditions. In the analysis of movement identity, for these authors, individual identities are especially relevant for understanding why some individuals and not others join and become committed to movements, and why they persist in activism even in the face of movement decline (Friedman and McAdam, 1992; Polletta and Jasper, 2001).

ability of social movements to muster resources and engage in planned, rational action. In this analysis, activists were not considered 'under the sway of sentiments, emotions, and ideologies that guided his or her action'; rather, RM, 'should be understood in terms of the logic of costs and benefits as well as opportunities for action' (Laraña et al., 1994: 5).[27]

RM consequently sought to contest grievance-based formulations of social movement theory, which it considered insufficient to explain collective action. From this perspective, analysis centres on the way people mobilise for collective action and the formal organisations that result (McAdam et al., 1996). Among the assumptions adopted by this approach, is the notion that increased personal resources, the professionalisation of activism and the availability of external financial support, can adequately explain contentious collective action. The focus, therefore, is largely on resource aggregation and facilitation by SMOs, defined as formal or professional organisations that identify their goals with those of a social movement. According to this theory, people engage in contentious collective action after weighing the relative advantages or disadvantages of their involvement.

On occasions, it is argued that social movement organisations offer incentives to encourage participation. RM also analyses social movements in terms of conflicts of interest, as with other forms of political struggle, considering them to be 'normal,

---

27 In this regard, Popkin argues that even peasants/peasant movements are rational agents/RM movements, making calculating decisions about their interests and choices. He argues against the moral economy approach: 'I expect to find ... that norms are malleable, renegotiated, and shifting in accord with considerations of power and strategic interaction among individuals. There are always tradeoffs between conflicting and inconsistent norm' (1979: 22). He argues that private self-serving quickly overwhelms the motivational efficacy of a system of subsistence norms. He attempts to explain behaviour on the basis of the narrow assumption of peasant rationality and to explain involvement in rebellion and revolution within the context of rational decision-making. On moral economy and collective action, see Thompson's influential 'Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century' (1971).

rational and institutionally rooted, political challenges by aggrieved groups' (Buechler, 2000: 35). In contrast to CB, which focused on 'why' collective action occurred, RM attempts to answer the persistent question of 'how' social movements organise and mobilise (Tarrow, 1998: 16). Following this development, it becomes clear how social movement theory broadened to include a consideration of the more political and practical aspects of collective contentious action. Incorporating the perspectives and positions of social movement actors themselves into the analysis was an important step in the evolution of the literature. This said, although RM is widely used as the main exemplar of the political and structural approach to the study of social movements, it does not ignore the pre-formal-organisation stage of social movement development (McAdam et al., 1988). Its particular strength lies in analysing the internal dynamic of SMOs and the problems they encounter. However, it is necessary to be aware that studies who adopt this approach typically focus on 'the particularities of the American case'. In this regard, Mayer issues the following warning:

> It showed that the themes, action repertories, and organizational structures of these movements have been remarkably different from those in European history, which were over determined by class movements. To account for the American case, the material basis of politics and a uniquely American political culture were examined, nothing the open and decentralized structure of the American political system. The latter has prevented antagonistic polarization between movements and the political establishment (1991: 480).

Aware of its deep US roots, Fitzgerald and Rodgers argue strongly that RM theory's utilitarian liberal orientation, which underscores reform of and acceptance by the existing system, makes it an inadequate model to theorise Radical Social Movement Organisations (RSMOs). This is, in part, due to 'its emphasis on a presumed inevitability of bureaucratisation, which runs counter to the ideology and internal structure of RSMOs' (2000: 575). One consequence of this empirical style of theorising,

is that analysis tends to be restricted 'to those aspects of social movements that can most easily be observed and measured: large, professional social movement organisations rather than more diffuse activities, networks or sub-cultures' (Buechler, 2000: 55). RM theory's strong focus on the importance of funding, bureaucracy and formal organisation, cannot explain the success of informal mass movements with few resources, such as 'under-class' groups, including the unemployed and the underemployed poor who comprise the majority social group in contemporary Latin America. In this regard, Piven and Cloward opine that 'protest is not a matter of free choice; it is not freely available to all groups at all times, and much of the time it is not available to lower-class groups at all' (1979: 3).[28] In an early formation of RM, McAdam et al. claimed that SMOs were the result of deliberate and rational attempts by movement 'entrepreneurs' to bring people together and mobilise resources around certain issues. This process, moreover, was thought to take place on the basis of previous organisational experiences or mobilising structures (McCarthy et al., 1996: 13; Kriesi, 1996: 152). This can make social movements hard to distinguish from their representing organisations, and 'in extreme versions produces an instrumentalising and decontextualising approach to analysis which treats even the ideologies of the movement as little more than rhetorical strategies for mobilising masses' (Alexander, 1996: 209).[29]

---

28 According to Piven and Cloward, RM is predicated upon an external infusion of resources to enable groups to mobilise, but since collective action is both risky and expensive, sufficient resources are usually unavailable to poor and disadvantaged groups who lack time and money: 'the success rate for the mobilization of poor and disadvantaged groups depends on the amount, not the type, of resources available to those groups. Additionally, resources come in many forms, including: information; social organizations; repeat protesters; the recruitment of friends; established lines of communication; help placing an issue on the public agenda; and whether the public is ready to accept the issue as legitimate' (1979: 24).
29 Consequently, from the 1980s, RM theory came increasingly under pressure from approaches directing specific attention to the questions of 'identity formation' and 'grievance interpretation'.

Given these concerns, RM has been criticised on a number of fronts: (i) for its narrow rational choice perspective; (ii) its refusal to acknowledge social psychological factors; (iii) its overly quantitative approach; (iv) its preoccupation with funding; (v) its failure to contextualise social movements in terms of class; and finally, (vi) the emphasis on professional movement organisations seemed to ignore the many 'grass-root movements' emerging in the 1960s and 1970s, both in Europe and the Americas (Tarrow, 1998: 16). Ultimately, RM placed the emphasis on actors in the process of social movement formation, rather than the wider socio-economic structures whose inequalities and shortcomings spawned the emergence of social movements. More importantly, instead of emphasising instrumental action oriented to the political and economic domain, RM ignored the cultural and symbolic life world that necessarily underpins such strategic action; it has been inattentive to the role of collective identity in movements (Buechler, 2000: 38).

Political Process (PP): formation with Political Opportunities (POs)

The PP model developed as an alternative to RM. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the PP approach started drawing attention to 'connecting collective action to national politics - the state was back in the picture' (Tilly, 1985; Tarrow, 1988: 428; Costain, 1992: xv). From this perspective, great weight was given to external conditions regarded as the necessary structural factors for stimulating collective action. McAdam's PP model identified three components that he believed to be crucial in generating social movement formation. These include: (i) 'insurgency consciousness' or 'cognitive liberation'; (ii) the structure of political opportunities (POs); and (iii) indigenous organisational strength. For McAdam 'cognitive liberation' or 'insurgent consciousness',

31

is defined as the stage during which the participants in movements add subjective meaning to their grievances. Members experience shifting political conditions as a group with a common goal. Therefore, McAdam argued that 'cognitions on behalf of insurgents or challengers include the collective action of comprehending and articulating the source of the dilemma' (1982: 50). McAdam also posited that 'cognitive liberation addressed how members of the movement subjectively experience shifting political conditions as a group under social integration' (1982: 50). With the rise of problems such as prolonged unemployment, economic depression and health issues, an *'insurgent consciousness' develops as a consequence of fresh aspirations for change. Some of the issues which make people 'cognitively liberated' include: new knowledge, higher education levels, a particular historical and socio-cultural background, family influences, social connections, as well as experiences that will provide insight into how individuals think, what they want, and how they will fulfill their goals.

Secondly, with regard to the structure of political opportunities, he maintained that 'among the events and processes likely to prove disruptive of the political status quo are wars, industrialisation, international political realignments, prolonged unemployment, and widely spread demographic changes' (McAdam,1982: 41). It was suggested that 'political opportunity' offered a more realistic approach for the development of social movements, because it identifies a shift or deep structural change in the political environment, opening the door to change. Among the shifts likely to disrupt the established order figured the following: wars; environmental threats; demographic changes; floods; hurricanes; droughts; prolonged unemployment; power disparity; division within the government or the political class; political exclusion; alienation; the economic situation; and the overall political climate of a country.

However, one of the most important 'opportunities' involved the rupture of political elites.

In this regard, Tarrow argued that to be successful, movements must utilise those 'political opportunity structures' within a given political environment which increase the chances for movement success, thus providing incentives for people to undertake collective action. Generally arising from either disagreements among elites or shifts within the ruling alignment (such as schism inside the dominant 'power bloc'), political opportunity structures allow disadvantaged citizens to participate by lowering the costs of collective action. Political turbulence may facilitate the identification of potential allies, and may enhance a propensity to mobilisation along with the highlighting of elite weaknesses (Tarrow, 1998: 81-85).[30] As Garner and Tenuto noted:

> A major component of the environment is the political opportunity structure, which includes the form of political institutions in the society, the behavior of incumbent elites, the level of social control and repression of movements, and intended and unintended reductions in the level of social control exercised against movements (1997: 24).

McAdam further argued that regardless of the causes of expanded political opportunities, such moves can facilitate increased political activism on the part of excluded groups, either by seriously undermining the stability of the entire political system, or by increasing the political leverage of a single insurgent movement (1982: 42); Indigenous organisational strength is the third factor which allows social movements to develop. McAdam divided indigenous organisational strength into four components: members; established structure of solidarity incentives; communications

---

30 The notion of 'power bloc' originates from Marxist theorists. For Gramsci, society is made up of the relations of production (capital v labour); the state or political society (coercive institutions) and civil society (all other non-coercive institutions). Thus, the executive, legislature and judiciary of the liberal state are organs of political hegemony: 'here hegemony is firmly situated within the state - no longer confined to civil society. The nuance of political hegemony, contrasting with civil hegemony, underlines the residual opposition between political society and civil society' (quoted in Anderson, 1977: 22-25).

networks; and leaders (1982: 44-51). The already existing ideology and sense of allegiance that develops within aggrieved communities, when combined with these four elements, can be used to overcome problems encountered in launching a movement.

Here, the success or failure of a social movement and its formation, depend on the structure of political opportunities created by situations that disrupt the political status quo (ruptures in the institutional structure) and undermine the 'ideological hegemony' of power-holders.[31] Thus, 'revolutions owe less to the efforts of insurgents than to the work of systemic crises, which render the existing regime weak and vulnerable to challenge from virtually any quarter' (McAdam, 1982: 24). Three essential components characterise this theory. The first views the political structure as an external factor not under the direct control of challengers, but critical to a movement's success. The second is an internal factor: the organisational strength of activists, viewed as the product of interaction between movement members, leaders and incentives.

The final piece in the jigsaw involves what McAdam's terms 'cognitive liberation', or a change in group consciousness, 'whereby potential protesters see the existing social order not only as illegitimate, but also as subject to change through their own direct efforts' (Buechler, 2000: 37). However, at root the PP model was not much different from RM theory and consequently endured many of the same criticisms,

---

31 While Gramsci accepted the analysis of capitalism put forward by Marx and accepted that the struggle between the ruling class and subordinate working class was the driving force that moved society forward, he did not embrace fully the traditional Marxist theory of power, which is regarded as a very one-sided one based on the role of force and coercion as the basis of ruling class domination. He pointed out the role played by ideology in legitimising the differential power that groups hold and concentrated on the power of the subtle but pervasive forms of ideological control and manipulation that served to perpetuate all repressive structures. He identified two quite distinct forms of political control: domination, which referred to direct physical coercion exercised by the police and armed forces: and 'hegemony', which referred to both ideological control and more crucially, 'consent through the permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations' (Boggs, 1976: 39). Also see 'Selections from the Prison Notebooks' (Gramsci, 1971).

particularly over its emphasis on the rationality, instrumentality and individuality of participants in collective action. It also denuded participants of agency, given the reliance on external factors to facilitate change. However, the importance placed on new ideas found in the notion of 'cognitive liberation', anticipated a paradigm shift in social movement theory, one in which cultural analysis rose to prominence (Zald, 1996: 263-265).

Social Constructionism (SC): cultural formation with frames

RM and PP(POs)'s tendency to concentrate on the importance of resources and political opportunities as enablers of social movements while ignoring the role of culture in collective action, provoked a reaction amongst social movement scholars, particularly those seeped in a European tradition. Indeed, this reaction was the harbinger of the paradigm shift from a structural to cultural analysis of collective action (Swidler, 1995: 30). Cultural theorists (Touraine, 1995; Melucci, 1996) strongly resisted the 'degrading' of social movement analysing to that of formal organisation and structural determinism. These theorists placed emphasis on creativity and subjectivity in the formation of a social movement. From this perspective, for example, Melucci argued that social movements have their most enduring existence within 'cultural ground':

> Today, we refer to the changes under way in contemporary systems by using of allusive terms such as, complex, post-industrial, postmodern, late capitalist society... [with this changing system] ... social movements too seem to shift their focus from class, race, and other more traditional political issues towards the cultural ground ... never before have human cultures been exposed to such a massive reciprocal confrontation, and never has the cultural dimension of human action been as directly addressed as the core resource for production and consumption ... with its tightly woven networks of high-density information requires for its proper functioning the development of a distinct degree of autonomy of its component parts (1996: 7-8).

From this perspective, networks are not merely seen as a source of recruits to be

mobilised for demonstrations and political protests when the occasion demands, but are

ongoing 'cultural laboratories' in which new lifestyles and forms of social relations can

be developed. Cultural analysts shift the focus of attention away from organisational

characteristics and concerns, into forms of everyday living, arguing that social

movements are concerned with values and life-styles as much as with demands for the

inclusion of excluded groups in the policy formation process.[32] Indeed, from this

perspective the goal of social movement activity is often to alter and extend the

boundaries of political discourse itself (Mayer, 1995: 176).[33] Social movements seek

change through cultural as well as political innovation - reconstructing values, collective

identities and cultural symbols, so contributing to the emergence of alternative life-

styles (Cohen, 1985; Snow et al, 1986; Eyerman and Jamison, 1991; Jonston and

Klandermans, 1995; Melucci, 1996). Membership in a movement or organisation is a

matter of informal networking and grass-roots mobilisation - displaying interest, turning

up at events and meetings, participating in the alternative lifestyle - rather than paying a

standardised subscription and receiving in return standardised privileges and services.

Movement actors may, indeed, express considerable suspicion of the formal and

hierarchical types of organisation typical of representative democracy (Melucci, 1989:

---

32 Among European theorists, the influence of Marxism and Critical Theory generated a preoccupation with linking types of movement to types of societal epoch, for example, Touraine's (1995) attempt to identify and contrast the social movements found in 'Industrial' and in 'Post-Industrial' or 'Programmed Societies'. If the classical social movements of 'industrial society' differ from those new forms emerging in late modernity, then collective action is undergoing a historical change in character - becoming less formally organised (Scott, 1990), less involved in the pursuit of 'emancipatory' political goals, more concerned with meaning, culture and the elaboration of alternative values, and in particular with the articulation and defence of new or marginalised social identities. This shift from 'instrumentalising' to 'expressive' collective action demonstrates, for NSM theorists, that a real transformation has occurred in contemporary society as a whole.

33 Although Laclau and Mouffe use the term 'discourse' rather than 'culture', as Nash argues, 'their model of politics is best understood as a model of cultural politics which is implicated in all social practices, institutions, and identities, including those more conventionally demarcated as economic, social, or political. In other word, for Laclau and Mouffe, everything is cultural' (Nash, 2000: 31).

7).[34]

An emphasis on culture first emerged in social constructionist theory (SC), which

revisits the symbolic interactionist version of CB discussed above, interpreting

collective action 'as an interactive, symbolically defined and negotiated process among

participants, opponents and bystanders' (Buechler, 2000: 41). Central to this theory is

the concept of 'framing', which describes 'how activists make sense of their social

worlds' (Hunt et al., 1994: 190). A 'frame' is 'an interpretive schemata that simplifies

and condenses "the world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects,

situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past

environments' (Snow and Benford, 1992: 137). 'Frames' constitute shared

understandings and identities that generate the trust and cooperation among activists

necessary for collective action. In the context of social movements, 'frames' dignify

discontent, identify grievances and 'assemble' the grievances of various groups (Tarrow,

1998: 14-17). 'Framing' has been used to initiate or incite conflicts. Social movement

theorists have described how framing is employed strategically by movement organisers

to incite conflict. The 'frames' invoked typically portray a particular group as victims

who have suffered unjustly at the hands of others (Klandermans, 1997: 41).[35] This type

of framing is called 'diagnostic framing', because it defines the existing circumstances

as unfair and attributes to others responsibility for the injustice. 'Prognostic framing',

following this line of argument, offers the victims a roadmap for how to address or

---

34 Melucci stressed the tension between post-industrial democracy and contemporary social movements. In his view: 'contemporary social movements are deeply reticent about politics. They tend to act at a distance from the world of official politics and are equally suspicious of Leninist political organizations and strategies. They are not interested in capturing state power and they have an aversion to violent confrontations with government and state authorities' (1989: 7). See 'Rethinking Democracy: Interview with Alberto Melucci' (1989: 180-232).
35 According to Gamson: 'frame amplification can also fortify the identity of their targets by delivering a strong 'negative' identity' (1992a: 63).

remedy the injustice they have experienced. Finally, 'motivational framing' provides an

impetus for the victims to take action on the proposed solutions. More specifically,

grievances are framed in three ways.[36] 'Diagnostic framing' identifies a problem as

well as a target for action, while 'prognostic framing' suggests solutions, including

strategies and tactics specific to the target. Together, they mobilise consensus, creating a

base from which movements may recruit. However, collective action is not the

necessary outcome of this process. In order for people to act contentiously, they must

have compelling reasons to do so. Thus, 'motivational framing' provides inspiration and

rationale for action (Hunt et al., 1994: 191). Such a theoretical approach is applied not

only to denote the processes through which social movements attract resources and

members, but also to point to the construction of common understandings as central

elements in the forming of social movements (Melucci, 1988, 1996).

Other elements add to the complexity of the concept of framing. According to

Snow et al., the process of 'frame alignment' includes rhetorical strategies that attempt

to align collective and personal identities. Social movement actors thereby work to

create an intersection between a target population's culture and their own values and

goals (1986: 467-469). 'Master frames' - successful collective action frames that are

---

36 This is called the 'stage' or 'lifecycle model' of social movement development (Cohen, 1996:
199). The stage model included 'Frame Theories' (FTs), which are utilised by authors as far apart
theoretically as Przeworski (1985), Snow and Benford (1986), McAdam et al. (1988) and
Jamison (1996). It holds that 'political' and 'cultural' designations do not refer to different
theoretical perspectives on movements, nor to movements located in historically separated
periods, but to the different stages of development through which individual movements
characteristically pass. All social movements, it is suggested, undergo a developmental process
in which they evolve from non-institutionalised, mass protest forms of action to institutionalised
and routine interest group or party politics. Features often attributed to 'new' social movements,
such as the presence of loose network forms of organisation and the absence of distinctions
between leaders and followers, members and non-members, simply indicate that the movement
is in an early developmental stage. This inevitably gives way to a second stage of movement
activity, when action shifts from the expressive and solidarity-creating, to the instrumental and
strategic: 'The logic of collective action at this stage is structured by the politics of political
inclusion', and social movements undergo 'a learning process involving goal-rational adaptation
to political structures' (Cohen, 1996: 200).

appropriated as a cultural and ideological resource by subsequent social movements –

are viewed as crucial to the formation and evolution of social movements (McAdam,

1994: 42).[37] Similarly, 'audience framing', whereby the values and goals of a

movement are imputed to its observers, is equally important, acting as a gauge for other

framing efforts (McAdam, 1994: 41-43).[38]

Despite advancing social movement theory and acting as a bridge between the

'rational choice' approach and its cultural critique, SC is not without certain limitations.

The main criticism holds that it is not an inclusive, over-arching model for

comprehending collective action; rather, it has offered some analytical tools, such as the

concept of framing, for examining social movements more closely. For example, while

framing is very useful for understanding aspects of contentious collective action, it is

situated within a broader context that remains untouched by the concept. Advancing this

argument, Buechler (2000) suggests that both RM and SC are similarly fallible in their

ahistorical, abstract and general approach to theorising collective action. The rise of

New Social Movement Theory (NSM) signaled an attempt to fill the gaps left by its

predecessors.

---

37 In this thesis, the definition of 'culture' is used as 'both the means and values which arise among distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationship, through which they 'handle' and respond to the conditions of existence' (McQuail, 1994: 100). That is, culture is regarded as a set of values and attributes of a given group, and the relation of the individual to the culture and the individual's acquisition of those values and attributes: the collective programming of the mind.
38 However, Johnston and Oliver criticised this frame approach and its terms: 'it goes without saying that nobody ever called for abandoning the concept of ideology; but it equally goes without saying that Snow and Benford moved to focus solely on frames instead of ideology ... the framing approach is the best way to study those elements of ideology that are most relevant to mobilization, and thus dispute the claim that they "abandoned" ideology. The concept of ideology embraces issues that framing does not. Although Snow and Benford themselves have been careful in the ways they use these terms, we have found that many scholars since them have been less careful. It is common to encounter "frames" and "ideology" being merged or used synonymously' (2000: 61-63).

NSM: new actors and cultural identity

SC heralded the 'cultural turn' in social movement theory that occurred during the 1980s and arose as a challenge to RM, then the dominant paradigm for interpreting 'the dynamics of social movements', such as 'grievance, costs and incentives, resource cumulation and organizational competition', as well as 'the dualistic legacy of structural analysis as a precondition for collective action and the analysis of individual motivations' (Zald and McCarthy, 1979: 2-3). Melucci argued that 'these parallel, and sometimes intertwined, sets of explanations never fill the gap between behavior and meaning, between objective conditions and subjective motives and orientations' (1995: 42). Thus, many scholars started to question 'why' and 'how' social movements are stimulated or frustrated by the cultural characteristics of host societies and why individuals abide by rules, codes and institutions. Additionally, as far as the processing of culture is concerned, 'how public discourse generates collective action frames, how socially constructed meaning influences action mobilization, which are extremely relevant for social movement literature' (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995: 22-23).

'Culture' is usually regarded as a broad and interrelated phenomenon consisting of many elements: customs, beliefs, values, symbols and rituals. Thus, the concept of 'culture' is a complex, evolving and widely ranging one that is difficult to pin down. However, while aware of these difficulties, many social movement scholars hold that 'culture is an overarching factor that shapes and constrains the course of mobilization much the way political cultures influence the shape of politics in different countries' (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995: 6).[39] Other commentators also agree with the

---

39 In this regard, Johnston and Klandermans posit that: 'it is so obvious that social movements are shaped by culture and at the same time themselves form and transform culture. Symbols, rituals, patterns of affective orientation, values, discourse, and language – to mention only a few key elements of culture - have always been part and parcel of social movements' (1995: 20).

definition of culture as the 'symbolic expressive aspect of social behavior'. For this reason, even a vague definition of culture was deemed necessary for analysing social movements during 1980s and 1990s, leading to the promotion of the notion of culture as a key theoretical and analytical tool in social movement theory (Melucci, 1985; 1996; Johnston and Klandermans, 1995; Meyer et al., 2002).

The relationship between culture and collective action was viewed as being of particular importance. NSM theorists consequently started to interpret emerging new social actors through the utilisation of cultural and constructive terms: 'identity' was seen as a process whereby actors are recognised as part of broader groupings, which, in turn, give meaning to experiences.[40] Thus, identities were not just preconditions. They evolved through collective action, by their inclusion in (and modification of) aspects of the dominant culture. Thus, 'collective identity' can be regarded as a performative view with positive spin, beyond a simple reaction to a destabilised system by their breaking with the dominant cultural code (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995: 6). Contemporary NSM theory, thus, focuses on collective actors' cognitive and emotional investment in the construction of collective identity. It embraces culture as a mode of analysis for examining collective action and attempts to deal with how collective identity is mediated through culture: the cultural meanings of everyday life, interpersonal relations, subjective experience, lifestyle and the 'popular' or political culture of a host society.

---

40 Alain Touraine, Jürgen Habermas and Claus Offe are prominent here. Touraine's effort to account for the student movement of 1968, as well as the subsequence emergence of the environmental, feminist and anti-nuclear movements across Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, provided an important stimulus to research. Equally important was Habermas's theorising of the public sphere. Finally, Offe's analysis of the separation between 'old' and 'new' actors, served to advance the NSM paradigm. Offe argued that 'new' actors were 'striking' as 'they do not rely for their self-identification on either the established political codes as ideologies (left/right, liberal/conservative, etc.) nor on the party corresponding socioeconomic codes as class (working class/middle class, poor/wealthy, rural/urban population, etc.). The universe of political conflict is rather coded in categories taken from the movements' issues, such as gender, age, locality, etc.' (1985: 831).

This emphasis on cultural identity formed part of a broader move toward an analysis of collective action that examined culture as it shaped, and was shaped by social movements.

Developing this line of argument, Melucci (1995) suggests that social conflicts: 'have not expressed themselves through political action, but rather have raised cultural challenges to the dominant language, to the codes that organize information and shape social practices' (quoted in Johnston and Klandermans, 1995: 41). What was being contested, then, was not the political or economic systems that ordered society, but the dominant cultural codes that facilitated or complemented those systems. In this regard, the move toward cultural analysis, reflected a clear distinction from political activism through RM and POs, which sought change at a political structural level with the groups objective experience, to the process of individual or groups' subjective experience. Following these perspectives, the cultural dimension of collective identity became a focal point of NSM theory and practice – especially for those born in the counterculture revolution of the 1960s (like the civil rights movement) and those that matured in the 1970s and 1980s (feminism, environmentalism and gay/lesbian rights).

As noted, European scholars first began to theorise these movements that did not appear as 'rational' instruments of social change. Instead, 'organized protest was emerging in social sectors and forms and with a focus on issues that could not be explained by classical Marxian categories and predictions' (Darnovsky et al., 1995: xiv). Thus, the turn to 'culture' in new social movement theory signaled a shift away from the structural analysis that had typically marked the European tradition. Accordingly, these scholars transcended class structure and started to search for cultural identity in social movement formation (Laraña et al., 1994). Today, in much NSM theory, the collective

identity searching process is reviewed as a central aspect of movement formation. Mobilisation factors tend to focus on cultural and symbolic issues that are associated with sentiments of 'belonging' to a differentiated social group where members can feel powerful; they are likely to have sub-cultural orientations that challenge the dominant system.

The critique of cultural identity

Here, the centrality of cultural identity in NSM theory, within the parameters established by a cultural analysis, is evident. However, while the cultural identification of exploited groups has been rightfully acknowledged, an exclusive focus on cultural identity conceals the political and economic foundation of exploitation, as well as the structural parameters that produce difference.

Leading the post-Marxist charge were Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who essentially broke with the major tenets of Marxism to formulate a theory within a non-materialist framework, arguing for a new basis to unite social movements. Under this framework, no subjectivity was privileged; 'thus, cultural identity movements, political economic ones, and struggles with the terms of everyday domestic life can be equally valued in the struggle for liberation' (Starr, 2001: 39). Laclau and Mouffe's theory of 'radical democracy' urged 'expanding the chains of equivalents between the different struggles against oppression' (Ibid: 176). They considered 'classism' to be a theoretical obstacle, suggesting that the working class was in large part dependent upon the radicalisation of multiple democratic struggles that existed largely outside the parameters of class. Thus class and class struggle were excised from an analysis of the so-called NSMs, being replaced with the theory that movements could be 'constructed by ideological and

political means which are relatively autonomous from economic class conditions, motivated not by the crude material interests of class but by rational appeal of universal human goods' (Wood, 1988: 2).

In turn, these intellectuals (and post-Marxism in general), have been criticised roundly for their misinterpretation of Marx. Admittedly, as Wood points out, 'there are numerous impediments to class-based organisation. However, these are not determinants that obscure the common interests of class. To suggest, otherwise, is to accept the very mystifications that sustain the hegemony of capitalism' (1988: 199).[41] Additionally, as Geras, along with a host of others, observed, Marxism has always opposed all forms of oppression – sexual, national, racial, religious and economic – while regarding the working class and the abolition of capitalism as imperative to the ultimate goal of human emancipation (1987:80).[42]

A schism thus occurred within social movement theory developing in Europe, effectively dividing 'old' social movements – those dominated by labour – and the 'new' ones increasingly led by the middle class. Marxism, as the traditional master framework for understanding collective action was usurped by culture, under whose rubric the concept of 'cultural identity' rose to prominence. Commenting on this trend, it was observed that: 'NSM theorists stressed that social transformation is mediated

---

41 In the theoretical terrain, this thesis proposed a preliminary definition of hegemony as 'a struggle for dominance, generally limited to the symbolic, geographical, economic and political context of the particular nation-state or group of states' (Day, 2005: 47).

42 In his hard-hitting critique of 'Hegemony and Socialist Strategy' (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985), Geras argued that: 'for Laclau and Mouffe, it is no longer possible to regard the working class as having a special, or privileged, connection with the struggle for socialism. They do allow, it is true, that there is no incompatibility here. But fundamental interest in socialism is not deducible from any economic position' (1987: 81). Laclau and Mouffe responded with 'Post-Marxism without apologies' (1987). They argued that: 'by locating socialism in the wider field of the democratic revolution, we have indicated that the political transformations which will eventually enable to transcend capitalist society are founded on the plurality of social agents and of their struggles. Thus the field of social conflict is extended, rather than being concentrated in a privileged agent of social change ... the myth of the transparent and homogeneous society - which implies the end of politics - must be resolutely abandoned' (1987: 106).

through culture as well as politics narrowly defined – that the personal and the cultural are as politically real as, and are not reducible to, power struggles in the state and economy' (Darnovsky et al., 1995: xiv). The Marxist formulation of ideology as a unifying and totalising element for collective action, therefore, stands in stark contrast to the 'pluralism of ideas and values' advocated by NSM theorists (Laraña et al., 1994: 7).

This paradigmatic shift in social movement theory reflected a similar change in the action of contemporary movements. Melucci observes that: 'conflicts move from the economic-industrial system to the cultural sphere. They focus on personal identity, the time/space of life and the motivation and codes of daily behaviour' (1994: 109). That is to say, activists in NSMs turned their gaze inward, focusing on issues as they affected their personal lives, and pursuing social change through politicising culture. By choosing to view social injustice through such a narrow lens, however, NSMs neglected to situate their concerns in the broader political and economic context. In this way, they effectively restrict the possibility for lasting change, instead settling for advances and improvements within the existing status quo. Unfortunately, a primary critique of NSM theory is that it lacks a larger strategy to implement the precise societal transformation it seeks. Moreover, it has been argued that NSMs are incapable of using the language of the liberal and the socialist traditions because they lack an institutional design for a new society, reflecting the 'anti-institutional posture of NSMs' (Pichardo, 1997: 416; Buechler, 2000: 48).

As noted, recent scholarship has been critical of the cultural analysis of contentious collective action, particularly its focus on cultural identity as a conceptual framework for explaining social movements. Fitzgerald and Rodgers (2000)

acknowledge the importance of cultural identity formation, but suggest a single-issue approach may restrict collective action. Starr notes other problems: 'no single identity ever completely captures anyone's shifting and complex sense of self; every articulated identity already excludes' (2001: 32). She also has doubts about the potential for agency offered by culture, adding that cultural analysis has not demonstrated how movements can impact structure, which is necessary for progressive social change to occur. The absence of class from the discourse of NSM theory is also problematic for Epstein, who states that: 'it is impossible to take our understanding of race, gender, or questions of social division and disintegration further without acknowledging the fact of class polarization' (1996: 136). Finally, Carroll and Ratner argue that 'the affirmation of particular identities and interests', such as cultural identity, 'discourages the formation of more inclusive and encompassing visions that might unite oppositional groups within a counter-hegemonic unity-in-diversity' (2001: 606). Unlike a structural analysis, that roots social preconditions and situations in the economic and capitalist system that organises society, cultural analysis does not present a universal paradigm; it does, however, remain critical to the development of a holistic theoretical model for understanding contemporary social movements.

Conclusion: efforts of synthesising toward seeking collective Identity

In sum, even though there have been many attempts to define 'collective identity' within a social movement, it still remains a contested issue in political sociology literature. For a long time, researchers tried to find a single collective identity in the formation and everyday practice of social movement activity based on various concepts and tools – structures, resources, organisations, political opportunities, external

conditions, master frame and culture. However, research (CB, RM, POs, SC and NSM) has been shaped by two quite different traditions concerning collective identity related with socio-structures - including socio-economic, socio-political boundaries (as pre-conditional factors) and the socio-cultural dimension with evolution of cultural identity in its formation, as well as the process of collective action. This thesis has attempted to generate interaction and dialogue between them. On the one hand, the predominantly US approach (RM and POs) characterised by 'rational choice' based on 'liberal individualism', emerged from the critique of the structure functionalism theory (CB) of Smelser and others (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1988; Scott 1990, 1992; Zald and McCarthy, 1987). This literature developed initially to analyse individual choices and SMOs by focusing on political opportunities and the strategic mobilisation for resources. In contrast, the predominantly European tradition engaged in a critique of Marxism, being influenced by critical theory (post-Maxism) and its meditations on the consequences of the incorporation of the working class into late capitalism. This approach addressed the cultural identity surrounding newly emerging forms of collective identity in new social movements, related this to social transformation (i.e. the so-called 'post-industrial' society).

Despite vigorous interchange between these contrasting schools over the past decade, the distinction between two more-or-less opposed ways of analysing social movements persists in the literature and constantly reappears in reworked forms. It is now more likely to be expressed as a distinction between: (i) identified 'political characters' connected with organisations and affecting economic and political interests, which view social movements as political entities emerging for economic reasons; and (ii) approaches which emphasise a 'constructed cultural dimension' - cultural-oriented

movements characterised by particular symbolic and expressive identities. From the latter perspective, social movements are essentially cultural. Given this dichotomy, certain authors maintain that the emphasis should be on finding ways to integrate (rather than differentiate) the two perspectives (Cohen, 1996; Maheu, 1996). The historical formation of contemporary debates about collective identity in social movements has also produced competing ways of defining or conceptualising them, and continues to shape our interpretations of empirical movements. 'Political' perspectives understand social movements primarily in their formal organisational manifestations, whereas 'cultural' accounts are more likely to view them as loosely inter-related informal networks of actors outside of political institutions.

In conclusion, the process/processes of collective action and social mobilisation are frequently dependant upon an individual researcher' tools and conceptualisation. The CB model focuses on behavioral attitudes and material grievances - or 'relative deprivation'. Marx, for example, put his faith in the revolutionary power of an over-exploited proletariat. Later studies on the formation of collective identity recognise the fallacy of assuming a direct link between emotion and action, while 'political opportunity' theorists suggested that the formation of collective identity relies heavily on a conducive political environment through SMO's. NSM theorists have emphasised the cultural reading of collective identity, which is essentially hidden from the political structure and in the process of collective identity formation. Thus, it is necessary to aggregate these theoretical arguments. All views, from emotions or consciousness, actions, visible political activities through organisations and invisible or cultural meanings of collective identity, must converge. Together they make a single *sui generic* identity of collective action in social movements. An appreciation of these differences,

as well as a more critical approach to rigorously identifying collective identity in social movement literature is needed. This will permit Latin American social movements to be more clearly viewed as 'a careful blending of the two prevailing theoretical and methodological approaches' (Alvarez and Escobar, 1992: 319). With this mind, Chapter III will explore some of the theories of Latin American social movements that have dominated academic studies since the 1960s, taking into consideration 'why' and 'how' Latin American social actors ('who') mobilise.

III

COLLECTIVE IDENTITY IN LATIN AMERICAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Introduction

Since the latter decades of the twentieth century, Latin American societies have struggled to rebuild organs of civil society that were destroyed during the military regimes of the 1970s and the following 'lost' decade. This has largely been undertaken as a consequence of the activities of a plethora of grassroots organisations of all shape and sizes, who demand entitlements, seek to reaffirm their identity and vent grievances. On the one hand, they protest against violations of human rights and strive to engage in the collective self-management of public goods, such as education, health and other socially beneficial resources. On the other hand, they embody a new understanding of politics with new values, new ways of working for social change and new organisational forms.[43]

This chapter investigates Latin American contemporary grassroots movements which mushroomed during the dying years of Latin America's military dictatorships and which became identified as 'new' social actors, demarcated from 'old' forms of collective identity in social movements, as epitomised by the trade unions (Lehmann, 1999: 139). Firstly, the chapter describes the multiplicity of collective actors identified

---

43 In this regard, Roberts argues that: 'their struggle for social transformation occur at multiple points in civil society and is driven by the political protagonism of diverse social actors, from labour unions to neighbourhood associations, ecclesial base communities, women's groups, human rights organisations, and other forms of grassroots collective action. For this new conception of political agency, social transformation is not directed from above following the conquest of state power by a party or guerrilla vanguard. Instead, it occurs in a decentralized manner through a multiplicity of grassroots initiatives and eventually percolates upward through the cumulative modification of power relations' (1998: 68-9).

with the new wave of popular Latin American grassroots organisations, comparing them to the main European and US mobilisations in evidence during the first half of the twentieth century, which are traditionally seen as 'old' forms of political and social mobilisation. Secondly, it views these multiple actors from within the sophisticated identity debates concerning contemporary Latin American societies. When discussing this issue, Escobar and Alvares argue that:

> The 'old' is characterized by analysis couched in terms of modernization and dependency; by definitions of politics anchored in traditional actors who struggled for the control of the state, particularly the working class and revolutionary vanguards; and by a view of society as an entity composed of more or less immutable structures and class relations that only great changes (large-scale development schemes or revolutionary upheavals) could significantly alter. In contrast, the new theories see contemporary social movements as bringing about a fundamental transformation in the nature of political practice and theorizing itself. An era that was characterized by the division of the political space into two clearly demarcated camps (the bourgeoisie and the proletariat) is being left behind. In the new situation, a multiplicity of social actors establishes their presence and spheres of autonomy in a fragmented social and political space. Society itself is largely shaped by the plurality of these struggles and the vision of those involved in the new social movements (1992: 3).[44]

Many of these movements arose from shanty town organisations and human rights groups, which were followed in the 1980s and 1990s by the spread of indigenous movements and, later, organisations seeking to advance the position of blacks in countries as diverse as Brazil and Colombia.[45] Usually referred to as 'collective social

---

44 Carlos Vilas identifies 'new' actors and their organisations in the following terms: 'a variety of forms of popular organization and mobilization contributed to ending the military regimes in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru. The new organizations called for an expansion of the democratization agenda, towards issues of social welfare and a variety of concerns that had traditionally remained marginal, such as identity, the environment, and ageing, among others. These aspects provided the principles of identification and articulation of new actors' (1998: 4-5).

45 More empirically, Petras posits that: 'the third and newest wave of social movements is centered in the urban areas. It includes the dynamic barrio-based mass movements of unemployed workers in Argentina, the unemployed and poor in the Dominican Republic, and the shantytown dwellers who have flocked to the populist banners of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. In addition to the urban movements, new multi-sectorial movements, engaged in mass struggles that integrate farm workers and small and medium-sized farmers, have emerged

movements', these actors have been seen by many observers as embodying a new form of collective politics, one that is not concerned about taking political power, but rather with democratising societies, claiming citizenship rights and pressing multiple demands on the state. Even though highly diverse in form and occupying differing degrees of presence in public space, that could sometimes be strong and combative while at others be apparently insignificant, these collective actors have raised hopes that they comprise the building blocks of a qualitatively different and more participatory society (Kirby, 2003: 163). Biekart clearly adopts this position:

> From the early 1990s onwards, social movements of very different backgrounds have been at the forefront of social protests, at the local as well as national and supranational level. Whether the themes are free-trade agreements, privatisation of public services or corrupt politicians, there have been impressive mobilisations and campaigns that cannot be considered as isolated activities. The diversity of movements includes those from urban and rural areas, 'traditional' trade unions as well as 'modern' indigenous movements, and therefore old as well as new social movements. This growing strength and diversity is visible throughout Latin America, from North and South (2005: 86).

Furthermore, since the poor have formed the core of many contemporary collective actions, it has been commonplace to view these organisations as 'doing the politics of the poor', of representing a challenge to the status quo 'from-below'. This provides the opportunity to enhance 'grassroots democratisation', so contesting the established forms of elite control that have long characterised most Latin American urban societies. These collective actors rising from below, it is posited, have 'restored social actors in modern society to a fully conscious life' (Foweraker, 1995: 36). They have organised along more informal, as well as less hierarchical and more democratic

---

in Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, and Paraguay' (2002: 2). In the case of Zapatista Movement, it is argued that the Zapatista uprising was preceded by 'a general re-awakening process of indigenous movements that had started in the early 1990s throughout Latin America' (Biekart, 2005: 86). In January 1994, they rebelled for 'control of their own historical territories and forms of representation' (Hayden, 2002: 7).

lines, and have combined struggles for material resources with a cultural politics which is regularly seen as crucial 'in challenging and resignifying what counts as political and who – besides democratic elites - gets to define the rules of the political game, to fostering alternative political cultures and potentially, to extending and deepening democracy in Latin America' (Alvarez et al., 1998: 12).

Dual development with collective actions (actors)

More specifically, however, the term 'collective actions' or 'actors' has been interpreted in Latin America to refer to dual forms of collective identity. On the one hand, class-based identity involving participants in labour and rural movements appeared from the 1910s onwards; on the other, popular movements possessing a wide variety of different forms of social organisation and community association emerged post-1960, giving voice to the needs of both working class and marginalised popular sectors. In particular, 'urban popular movements' are distinguished from the large class-based labour unions or peasant movements that predominated in the period of import-substitution industrialisation (ISI) and populist politics from the 1930s to the 1960s (Kirby, 2003: 164). The emergence of these mass-based movements is linked to the growing crisis of the ISI economic and political model, as it proved less able to satisfy the material demands of an increasingly urbanised poor majority. Urban popular movements also arose in reaction to the wave of military dictatorships that followed the 1964 coup in Brazil and the spread of neo-liberal economic restructuring in the aftermath of the 1982 debt crisis. These events led to the suppression of trade unions and political parties and a rapid growth in the informal economy.[46]

---

46 This thesis adopts Portes' 'informal proletariat' concept that is used to analyse the growing

Class-based movements

It seems reasonable to argue that the development of social movement theory in Western

Europe and the US has proved problematic for the study of these important social trends

in Latin America. Many scholars hold that US and Western European theorists operate

within very different social and political contexts (Slater, 1988; Eckstein, 1989;

Foweraker, 1995; Davis, 1999, Munck, 2003; Kirby, 2003). Foweraker, for example,

doubts the extent to which 'First World' theory can apply to Latin American societies,

given the differing historical experience and contemporary socio-political context:

> In Western Europe this included a social democratic consensus, the growth of the welfare state,
> strong corporatist traditions and a highly institutionalized labour movement. In this context new
> social movements really did look new, and the theory sought to explain the novelty by major
> shifts in society and culture. In contrast, the United States had no such social democratic or
> corporatist traditions, and the labour movement was less important to national politics (1995: 2).

Foweraker, in common with other analysts, consequently maintains that too many

differences exist in the relationship between state and society for social movement

theory manufactured in Europe to be applicable to the Latin American context.[47]

---

informalisation of Latin American societies post-1980 (Portes et al., 1989). He defined this new class as follows: 'the informal proletariat is similar to the formal proletariat in its lack of control over the means of production or lack of authority over the labor of others. However, three major differences exist, first, the informal proletariat does not receive regular money wages; second, it does not receive the 'indirect' wage of social security coverage; and third, its relations with employers are not contractual. Informal workers are remunerated in various ways that include a wage that is verbally agreed upon, a piece rate, and nonmonetary compensation such as food ... the average income of this class is consistently inferior to the minimum legal wage' (1985: 5). In a later article, he stated that: 'operationally, it is defined as the sum total of own account workers (minus professional and technicians), unpaid family workers, domestic servants, and waged workers without social security and other legal protections in industry, services, and agriculture. The vast majority of labor in microenterprises is informal, but there are also informal workers in large and medium firms. These are mostly temporary workers hired off the books and without written contracts' (Portes, 2003: 50).

47 On this point, Eckstein argues that: 'Latin America is more of a "living museum" than Europe. New forms of defiance have appeared on the scene there, while old forms persisted. Centuries-old types of protest, such as food riots and rural land seizures, appear alongside strikes, demonstrations, and protest meetings ... rooted in the more partial nature of the region's industrial transformation, the restricted economic opportunities associated with "dependent development" and the more limited power of the nation-state over ordinary people's lives. Economically, Latin American industrialization has produced a proletariat with a minority of the labor force. The majority of laborers continue to work in agriculture or are self-employed or

Equally, important contrasts are to be found between Western Europe and the US, especially with regard to the degree of state involvement in economic management, level of welfare provision, as well as strength of working class organisation.[48] Indeed, in Western Europe the formal political and economic arms of the working class not only helped develop a strong welfare state, in the 'Fordist' epoch post-1945, they became an integral component of 'system'.[49]

This is in stark contrast to Latin America, where organised labour was regularly repressed during the second half of the twentieth century (Davis, 1999: 595-96).[50] As a result, in Latin America, minimal integration occurred. In addition to widespread exclusion among the working class and peasantry, a proportionally weaker middle class existed, who although they might be enfranchised with political rights, could not make Western assumptions about modernity or provide support for democracy and citizenship and were in a much more precarious economic position compared to their Western European counterparts. Roberts suggests this particular concatenation of factors provided the space for the emergence of social movements:

---

employees in small-scale paternalistic enterprises. Latin America's broader repertoire is also rooted in its political history. Twentieth-century Latin American history has been punctuated by shifts between authoritarian and democratic rule' (1989: 10).

48 Davis argues that: 'the US labor movement was hardly a movement, but more like an interest group, which for the most part wanted racial exclusiveness, patriotic obedience, male dominance, and unfettered economic growth' (1999: 596).

49 On this point, Offe clearly argues that: 'After World War II ... capitalism as a growth machine was complemented by organized labor as a distribution and social-security machine. It is only the basis of a prevalent concern with growth and real income that both the preparedness of organized labor to give up more far-reaching projects of societal change in exchange for a firmly established status in the process of income distribution and the preparedness of *investors* to grant such status to organized labor can be explained. On both sides, the underlying view of society was that of a "positive sum" society in which growth is both continuously possible' (1985: 822).

50 According to Kirby: 'European movements were a reaction against some of the consequences of successful development and took for granted the rule of law and other democratic freedoms; in Latin America on the other hand social movements were a response to underdevelopment and the failure of the state to integrate the majority into the benefits of modernity, and they were often responding to harsh military regimes that violated the law with impunity and eliminated democratic freedoms' (2003: 168).

The novel promise of these movements is that they embodied a new understanding of politics with new values, new ways of working for social change and new organisational forms. As Roberts describes it, their struggle for social transformation 'occurs at multiple points in civil society and is driven by the political protagonism of diverse social actors, from labour unions to neighbourhood associations, ecclesial base communities, women's groups, human rights organizations, and other forms of grass-roots collective action. For this new conception of political agency, social transformation is not directed from above following the conquest of state power by a party or guerrilla vanguard. Instead, it occurs in a decentralized manner through a multiplicity of grass-roots initiatives and eventually percolates upward through the cumulative modification of power relations (1998: 68-9).

As part of the coercion-cooption experience of the Latin American working class, the most traditional labour movements were sometimes incorporated into the state. This meant that key sectors of labour, especially in industry and the public sector, were organised within state-controlled labour unions closely integrated into the bureaucratic apparatus. This form of corporatist control characterised the regimes of Vargas in Brazil, Cárdenas in Mexico and Perón in Argentina, among others.[51] Also, and most importantly, within the working class a huge division has existed between the employed and those within the informal sector. Petras views this split as having significant socio-political consequence:

One major development is the growth of a lumpen proletariat, a spin-off from the disarticulated working class and impoverished self-employed ... the dual development of working-class disarticulation and deepening social polarization usually mean that the traditional political controls exercised by the electoral party machines and bureaucratized trade unions cease to be effective. Mass spontaneous protests, sacking of stores, street mobilizations, and unauthorized strikes begin to merge as the class identity of neoliberal regimes becomes transparent (1992: 17-

---

[51] In this regard, Munck argues that: 'the Peronist social movement probably shows most clearly the weaknesses and strengths of the more typically Latin American nationalist/populist labour tradition. From when Perón was driven into exile in 1955 until his triumphant return in 1973, the social movement that bore his name gained considerable strength ... this was comprised of a political class of union bosses and career politicians who pinned their colours to Perón's. Characteristically, this Peronist movement survived the death of its supposedly irreplaceable leader in 1974 and has gone on to become a vital part of the mechanisms for survival deployed by the nearly half of the population in Argentina deemed officially to be living in poverty' (2003:108). On this general point, see Foweraker (2001: 2-4).

18).

These cleavages have usually acted to weaken solidarity, so preventing the urban dispossessed from acting as a strong, united, radical force (Portes, 1985; Cubitt, 1995: 186-87). The common factor affecting both the formal and informal working class, according to recent analysis, is the social division between the economically, politically powerful elites and a truly excluded, marginalised labour force, both formal and informal.[52] In a sense, labour movements and urban popular movements were, at the same time, experiencing two different types of change. In this context, trade unions and workers should be viewed essentially as a critical social movement, rather than as a sole central protagonist capable of overthrowing capitalism.[53]

This ongoing co-existence of different collective actors in urban popular-based movements together with many types of collective identity, cannot be simply separated in a Latin American context, because they are inevitably interrelated through people, networks and shared context. Vilas, for example, emphasises the interconnections:

> The widespread social mobilizations of recent decades thus highlights the importance of the 'popular', meant here as the intersection of economic exploitation, political oppression, and poverty. In Latin America the 'popular' is a mixture of socioeconomic and political and cultural elements. The popular encompasses but is not limited to poverty. Incorporating also a political and cultural dimension, the 'popular' includes middle-class groups mobilized not so much by

---

52 The debate over 'class essentialism' has been stimulated by post-structuralist approaches that view the 'working class' as a unifying identity which had once created the proletariat, and the new 'post-industrial' model based on social fragmentation and exclusion, which sees the new capitalism of the 1980s as a period of class decomposition and surging individualism, a process in which people will be set free from the social forms of industrial society such as class and stratification (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Offe, 1985). This thesis, however, follows Munck's alternative argument that embraces the concept of social exclusion: 'when we move on current debates on social inequality these two terms (working class and lower class) seem to have been superseded by that of "underclass", it belongs to the imagery of a society which is not all-embracing and comprehensive. This is a group of people "beyond" class and "excluded" from a society where they no longer have a role as even the "working class" clearly did' (2005: 31-49).
53 On this question, Burbach argues that: 'certainly, no major alterations of the current order can occur without the participation of the working classes, but neither can fundamental change occur without the active participation of the civil rights and ethnic movements, the feminist movement, the environmental movement, the peace and anti-war movements, and others, depending on the configuration of any given society' (2001: 89).

strictly economic demands as around calls for democratization, public freedoms, and citizenship rights. The political and cultural dimensions of the 'popular' imply a self-identification of subordination and oppression (labor, ethnic, gender ...) in the face of domination that is articulated by exploitation (insufficient income, meager wages, denial of a dignified life or prospects for the future) and is expressed institutionally, through insecurity, arbitrariness, and socially biased coercion. It therefore implies some type of differentiation and, ultimately, opposition to established power. In particular it signals opposition to the institutions and organizations that represent and articulate exploitation and domination in its various forms (1998: 6).

Following Vilas' argument about popular-based collective actions in Latin American societies, tremendous diversity exists among these collective actions, which logically spawns a wide spectrum of social movements: many of them centre on specific actors, others are self-referential or monadic; some are synchronic and latent, others of long duration; some are the product of the intensification of capitalism, others of exclusion; some are unprecedented in respect to grievance or mobilising 'spark', some are ambiguous, constantly changing with polyvalent meanings. Summerising this situation, it has been noted that 'all of the movements, based on identities that are often changing, are internally complex and produced themselves within novel historical processes. In short, they have represented new historical movements in the making' (Calderón et al., 1992: 23-24).

Urban popular-based movements with multiple collective actors

As noted, Latin American collective actions are frequently different from those that arise in advanced capitalist society. In the US and Europe, the middle class played an important role in shaping civil society; in Latin America the 'popular' crowd played a leading part (Hellman, 1990: 2).[54] Evers discovered the new hidden side of popular

_____

54 If new social movements in Europe mainly represent a response to 'post-industrial'

identities:

> Leaving aside interpretations in the line of Marxist traditionalism which try in some way to reaffirm the political monopoly of parties ... and closing down the traditional channels of political articulation which had the counterproductive effects of politicizing the primary expressions of social life such as housing, consumption, popular culture and religion. Coming at a time of a profound crisis of the left – less because of repression than because of the theoretical and practical defeat that led to it – the invention of new and autonomous forms of social expressions was as much a necessity as a opportunity. The manifold variety of groups, workshops, centers of self-help, committees, etc. was 'spontaneous' only in the sense that they followed no common plan and obeyed no central control; but behind this spontaneity was a patient and arduous ants-labor of organizing and structuring small nuclei which were trying to cope with the hardship of everyday-life (1985: 46).

Despite the different national settings, however, Latin American theorists have found that Western arguments about NSM are useful because many movements (e.g. gender, ethnic, human rights, gay, environmental), are concerned with similar issues, i.e. the construction of new identities outside the traditional working class preoccupations, or are linked to increasingly international arenas of debate (Mainwaring and Viola, 1984; Slater, 1985; Evers, 1985; Assies et al., 1990: 70-72). For example, Mainwaring and Viola argue that while concern with post-materialistic values and non-state orientedness are criteria for discriminating between 'old' and 'new' movements, causing neighbourhood associations to score low in this respect, they nevertheless can be regarded as 'new' in that they present a challenge to a dominant political culture of elitism, populism and corporatism. Furthermore, these collective actions are due to a particular set of circumstances: 'the adverse political consequences of the military regimes under which they emerged, the crisis of the traditional left, the questioning of

---

contradictions, those in Latin American primarily arise in response to clear material demands (basic needs). Also Slater observed that the comparatively different identities between Europe and Latin America flow from: 'the degree of state penetration of civil society; differences in welfare functions of the state; the degree of centralization of state power; and the erosion of state legitimacy' (1988: 8-9). A similar argument is advanced by Hellman (1990: 7-12).

the populist style of politics which preceded the military regimes and the development

of new social movements in the North, especially Europe and the United States' (quoted

in Assies, 1990: 71).[55] For their part, Escobar and Alvarez deny that any single label

can encompass 'all struggles', so diverse have been the different identities of collective

action and mobilisation that emerged:

> Popular mobilization by no means disappeared during the 1980s, and it is unlikely that it will in
> the 1990s. Indeed, the mosaic of forms of collective action is so diverse ... From squatters to
> ecologists, from popular kitchens in poor urban neighborhoods to socialist feminist groups, from
> human rights and defense of life mobilizations to gay and lesbian coalitions, the spectrum of
> Latin American collective action covers a broad range. It includes, as well, the movements of
> black and indigenous peoples; new modalities of worker's cooperatives and peasant struggles;
> middle- and lower-middle-class civic movements; the defense of the rain forest; and even
> cultural manifestations embodied, for instance, in Afro-Caribbean musical forms (such as salsa
> and reggae) and incipient antinuclear protest in some countries. This rich mosaic of identities is
> at the heart of our project. Clearly, it represents a changed social, cultural, economic, and
> political reality in the continent (1992: 2).

Recent mobilisation has not only on occasions denied the legitimacy of the old

state system, it has increasingly demonstrated a change in orientation towards a greater

propensity to work within the state apparatus and engage in political power games.[56] In

this process, movement participants have discovered new values, such as the importance

of linking struggles for political and social rights with citizenship rights, of not only

---

55 Contemporary work of Roberts and Portes has assessed the changes and continuities in
urban collective action in Latin America over the late twentieth century. See their article, 'Urban
Collective Action in Latin America: 1980-2000' (2004), which focused on urban change and is
based on case studies from six major Latin American urban cities: Buenos Aires, Lima, Mexico
City, Montevideo, Rio de Janeiro and Santiago.
56 Roberts and Portes note this shift in strategy: 'by the end of the twentieth century, there
appears to be a gradual change from collective action based on class interests, whether in terms
of housing or in terms of work-place conditions, to collective action around citizen demands.
Though the interests that drive class-based and citizen-based collective action often overlap and
the change is more a continuum than a sharp break, there is a fundamental difference between
the two types of collective action. Whereas class-based collective action aims to change the
existing distribution of resources, citizen-based collective action seeks to access the
opportunities and avoid the risks present in the existing economic structure. Citizen-based
collective action will tend, it is claimed, to work within the state not in opposition to it, as did
the urban popular movements of the 1970s' (2004: 10).

operating democratically in their own movements, but also of the need to demand improvements in the 'quality' of democracy through newly legitimated institutions of political democracy.[57]

Many new actors arrived on the scene striving to promote 'the defense and affirmation of solidarity, the struggle against hierarchy and alienation' (Slater, 1988: 6). In particular, ethnic groups demanding human rights and neighbourhood associations developed these characteristics in their everyday mobilisations during the 1980s and 1990s; more recently, the same can be said of the Argentine unemployed movement. The multiple collective identity of these actors contrasted with the less visible role typical of more traditional organisations, such as trade unions and class-based parties (Slater, 1985; 1994; Zapata, 2001; Biekart, 2005: 92).[58] Slater argues that the excessive centralisation of decision-making power, the state's incapacity to provide adequate services and the eroding legitimacy of the state, coupled with scepticism towards established political parties, may provide alternative factors in the explanation of the

---

57 Foweraker also noted the growing emphasis on 'rights': 'the combination of urban expansion and repressive government did prove a fecund context for the emergence of new social actors, especially women; for the discovery of new forms of organization and new strategic initiatives; and for the increasing statement of demands in terms of 'rights' that became widespread throughout Latin America from the 1970s onwards' (1995: 8).

58 In the process of neo-liberal globalisation, many scholars argue that Latin American trade unionism has witnessed a declining importance of its principal interlocutor and source of its power and has, therefore, changed toward 'a neo-corporativist model which had ensured pro-government trade unions with a monopoly of representation in exchange for labour peace' (Zapata, 2001: 8). In other words, the institutional framework developed by the populist state and the ISI model started to break down after 1970 (a trend that accelerated during the 1980s) as a result of its incompatibility with the new model of accumulation, which is functional for the development of globalisation. To support his argument, Zapata explains that: 'the rate of unionization is at an historical low, many of their hard-won gains such as job security, collective negotiation and workers protection are being fast eroded and workers in key areas of the new globalized economies do not have unions to defend them. These developments constitute a very serious threat to their survival' (Zapata, 2001; quoted in Kirby, 2003: 167). In contrast, Munck argues that: ' ... trade unions and rural movements have not disappeared, so that they are not a thing of the past and they are constantly recreated in new situations in Latin American contemporary politics ... given this continuity, it would be wrong to draw a hard and fast line between old and new social movements, let along to consider one set better or more radical than the other' (2003: 111, 114).

shape taken by new social movements (1985, 8-12).

However, compared to many European analyses of NSMs (which gave greater emphasis to the quality of individualised middle-class lifestyles rather than the material aspects of life), many Latin American social movements are involved with bread and butter issues, particularly access to resources.[59] The actors in many cases comprise the underprivileged, the excluded and long-term unemployed locked into the informal economy. On this basis, Gezerlis argues that the characteristics of popular movements in contemporary Latin America, particularly in the era of neo-liberal modernity and globalisation, differ from their First World counterparts:

> The difference in the class structures of Latin American to those of the Euro-American societies is obvious. In the first, given the absence of the strong middle class, the ruling elite comprises a small percentage of the population and most of the rest of the population is fairly poor, while in the second, apart from the ruling elite there is a significant percentage - what has been called the contended electoral majority - that consists of middle strata. As a consequence of this massive 'immiseration', in Latin America there are significant numbers of people (usually peasants) that participate in marches/insurrections, even in the era of neo-liberal globalization, while in the Euro-American societies the frequency of such events is slowly but surely dropping in the last few decades (2002, 93-94).

In addition to emphasising the greater 'need' for social movements in the Latin American context, Gezerlis implies that the greater 'complexity' of social relations over much of the continent gives rise to more complex factors priming involvement, as well as a greater heterogeneity in membership. A straightforward class-based 'identity' and motive for participation is less likely to occur in the Latin American context. Such a situation has also been encouraged by the return to elected government, which has

---

59 Against this view, Vilas argues that: 'this is not incompatible with the fact many of these movements and expressions of social activism had well-defined social profiles' with NSMs involving considerable participation by the 'new' middle class, 'professionals, technicians ... accompanied by elements of the old middle class and peripheral groups outside the labor markets - the unemployed, students, housewives, retirees ... ' (1998: 5).

shown up 'the fragmented, defensive and vulnerable character of much organisation' (Lievesley, 1999: 122). Economic difficulties and political 'desencanto' have combined to produce many collective actions which 'are unlikely to radically transform large structures of domination or dramatically expand elite democracies' (Alvarez and Escobar, 1992: 325).

The paradox of double transformation and collective actions since the 1980s

While endless debates about 'old', 'new' and 'old/new' collective actors continue, few scholars have studied the multiple conditions underlying the formation of collective mobilisations in contemporary Latin America. More attention needs to be paid to the interconnection between 'various forms of collective identities' and structural elements. Factors here include socio-economic structure, changed political circumstances and cultural developments, and how these combine to produce a particular collective identity (see Chapter II). This requires further analysis based upon three important characteristics in the evolution of social movement theory since the 1980s. Firstly, in Latin America, many collective actions have revolved around the question of attaining 'freedom' from state domination, given the 'well-founded fears of co-option and incorporation from above and ideological frameworks that mobilized people for alternative state projects, have shaped the collective action tradition' (Pearce, 2004: 487-88).[60] Various forms of state co-option, control and regulation formed the strategy

---

60 On the question of state-civil society relations, Avritzer argues that: 'between the 1930s and 1960s, political regimes turned to populist and corporatist mechanisms of inclusion from above. This mechanisms operated through melting down into an undifferentiated concept of the people through the social - often termed popular - mobilisations without class differentiation' (2002: 74). The concept of populism describes efforts by the state to mobilise a domestic constituency in favour of a national industrial project. It involved an alliance between the urban masses, organised labour in the formal economy and the state, under the leadership of a charismatic and frequently authoritarian political figure. According to Pearce: 'the best known example is Juan

of most populist and bureaucratic regimes from the 1930s to the 1960s. On the spread of populism, Foweraker noted that:

> The populist state grew in tandem with the creation of mass publics in the major cities of the region as a result of immigration, industrialization and rural-urban migration. The populist state both responded to and nurtured this new public through policies of import-substituting industrialization and social welfare, the latter often channeled through the major labour corporations. It was an era of mass politics, mass media in radio and newspapers, and charismatic leaders who appealed directly to the new publics (2001: 3).

Political mediators played an important role in all forms of state-society linkages. Local party bosses, for example, delivered the vote in exchange for services and privileges, creating a situation whereby 'the state is responsible for the 'social wage' - including health and education services, subsidized urban transport, subsidized staple foods and so forth - which provides the minimum conditions of survival for the poor majority in both city and countryside' (Foweraker, 2001: 3). This system built a form of vertical integration from localities to the state. These efforts at 'inclusion from above' did not preclude challenges 'from below'. However, social protests and collective identity grew in the 1960s throughout Latin America as economic modernisation generated very uneven social effects, but mostly favoured those already powerful in the state and the market. Thus, challenges 'from below' were channelled via various left-wing collective actions involving armed and non-armed movements who aimed to alter the status quo through 'capturing the state for a distinct political project' (Pearce, 2004: 494). Upon the end of military regimes, however, collective action shifted from attempts to implement radical social transformation (often through revolutionary models), towards the pursuit of democratic objectives, particularly human rights

---

Perón in Argentina, but there were many variants of shorter or longer duration in different countries of Latin America in this period. Some forms of populism shifted from direct appeal to the undifferentiated masses to incorporation of social groups into the state' (2004: 493).

movements, aimed at achieving more limited changes to the political regime.[61]

Commenting on this shift, Garretón notes that:

> There is a shift from national popular movement towards the democratic movement: that is to
> say, towards a central social movement that for the first time is not oriented to global and radical
> social change but to change of political regime. Authoritarian rulers were seen as the main
> adversaries, and the ending of the regime and the installation of democracy became the main aim
> of collective action. With this change the social movement gains in instrumental terms, but this
> is counterbalanced by the fact that particular demands tend to be subordinated to political goals.
> This in turn gives a leading role to political actors. Negotiations and agreements at the top and
> the elite level tend to replace social mobilizations during the democratic transition and
> consolidation processes. In this sense, the political democratization process tends to split every
> collective action into two different types of logic that penetrate all social movements: one is the
> political logic oriented towards the establishment of a consolidated democracy as a condition for
> all other types of demands; the other is the particular logic of each social movements oriented
> towards concrete gains in social democratization as the condition of active support to the new
> democratic regime (1997: 72).

Secondly, the pursuit of separate demands, such as the establishment of a

consolidated democracy and concrete social gains, have regularly come into conflict

with the logic of neo-liberal market 'reforms' which prioritise economic growth (via

privatisation, tax reduction, etc.) rather than redistributive ones.[62] Collective actions,

post-1980, have taken place against a backdrop of a process of 'paradoxical

---

61 According to Roberts and Portes: 'collective action in Latin America in the ISI period
reflected, though inexactly, the forms of mobilization and repertoire of actions that were
common in Europe - labor unions and class-based political parties using strikes and
manifestations as a means of making demands on those in power. Political opportunities were
limited in the ISI period by authoritarian governments who routinely used repression as a
means to suppress collective action. It was not until the 1980s and 1990s that democracy
became more firmly entrenched in Latin America' (2004: 3).
62 The particular logic of neo-liberal market economy has been labeled aptly by David Harvey
'accumulation by dispossession' – a contemporary form of 'primitive accumulation' where social,
ecological, cultural, and intellectual 'commons' are commodified 'and brought within the
capitalist logic of accumulation' (2003: 146). The core achievement of the neo-liberal project of
'accumulation by dispossession' has been the restoration of the class power of capital over
labour. The restoration of the power of capital over labour is evident in the upwardly
redistributive effects of neo-liberal restructuring: 'while economic growth during the 1980s and
1990s fell far behind the average rates of the 1960s and 1970s, such mechanisms as privatization,
financialization, crisis management and manipulations and state redistributions have increased
the incomes and decreased the expenditures of capital and, conversely, decreased the incomes
and increased the expenditures of labour' (2004: 27-34).

development' (Roberts and Portes, 2004: 3).[63] In this regard, Kingston argues:

> Roughly two decades into the dual-transition of democratization and neo-liberal economic reforms, neither process looks particularly robust. A large number of Latin American regimes appear stuck in a limbo of neither really regressing nor progressing from the status of relatively limited, disappointing democracies. The economic reform process has also yielded disappointing results. In particular, neoliberal reforms did have important negative consequences in the labor market - a decline in manufacturing jobs, a rise in the informal sector, and in general, inadequate creation of high-quality jobs ... the possibility, of course, returns us to the million-dollar question of why is democracy - and economic development - not sinking in (2006: 153-164).

This particular combination of malfunctioning political democracy and neo-liberalism causes many eruptions of collective action in opposition to the dominant ideology structured around a 'free' market and 'minimal' state. It has also given rise to a situation whereby there is much talk about 'consolidation of democracy' while extreme social inequalities persist and even deepen. Despite the heady promises of neo-liberal apologists, continuing high poverty rates and regular economic crises, appear to indicate that Latin American democracy lacks the necessary solid socio-economic underpinning.[64]

The outcome has been neatly summarised as 'the poverty of democracy and the democracy of poverty' (Petras, 1992: 7), which creates both 'limits to consolidation of democracy and political development' (Kingston, 2006: 154). With the return to formal democracy in the 1980s and 1990s, many of the demands that gave rise to the

---

63 Roberts and Portes interpreted this 'paradoxical development' as a: 'double liberalisation both a political and economic agenda in this region. Their impact is consistently in supporting the decentralization of the state's role in economy and society. State owned assets in manufacturing, mining and the services are privatized. Public sector employment in the areas of administration, education, health and social security shrinks absolutely or relative to private sector employment in these same areas. Administration is devolved to lower order authorities or delegated to non-governmental organizations'(2004: 3).
64 On the question of the place of social movements in the 'democratic environment', 'Lievesley argues that the transitologists (O'Donnell and Schmitter) in Latin American democracy studies concluded that a trade-off exists between political democracy and the real socioeconomic change associated with radical democratic theory. However, she argues that the emergence of new social movements throughout the region may have changed that historical equation, making the presumed trade-offs less relevant than in the past' (Oxhorn, 2001: 165-66).

movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s remain unresolved, providing a continued

raison d'être for social movement activism. Electoral politics have not replaced the

politics of contention in the region, because the return to political democracy has not

been accompanied by increased security, well-being, by political institutions that

represent the interests of the majority, or by socio-economic improvement (Mattiace,

2005: 239). As Robinson observes:

> Economically, Latin America countries experienced a thorough restructuring and integration into
> the global economy. But by the turn-of-century the model was in crisis in the region, unable to
> bring about any sustained development, or even to prevent continued backward movement.
> politically, the fragile polyarchic systems installed through the so-called 'transitions to
> democracy' of the 1980s were increasingly unable to contain the social conflicts and political
> tensions generated by the polarizing and pauperizing effects of the neo-liberal model ... the
> polarization between the rich and the poor, and the escalation of inequalities, marginalization,
> and deprivation taking place under globalization, have profoundly changed the terrain under
> which social struggle and change will take place in Latin America in the twenty-first century
> (2004: 136-37).

Thirdly, Latin American theorists also argue that the region's political elites, who

have been responsible for authoritarian and democratic government alike, have

enthusiastically adopted neo-liberal projects and implemented austerity programmes,

the same strategy that has even been pursued by recently elected progressive

governments in Brazil and elsewhere (Biekart, 2005: 90). Elites implemented these

projects without taking fully into account that those who elected them suffered most

from its consequences.[65] With regard to the working population, for example, 'the

---

65 Elites are defined as persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful
organisations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially. Elites are the
principal decision makers in the largest or most resource-rich political, economic, military,
professional, communications, and cultural organizations and movements in a society (Higley
and Gunther, 1992: 8). With regard to the Argentine case, however, Burton, Gunther and Higley
critically argue that: 'it is impossible to identify for the consolidation of Argentine democracy
with elites and its politics in the conditions of: (i) having long histories of costly elites conflicts
and unstable regime; (ii) limited number of disciplined parties and other organizations whose
leaders could reflect a range of interests while at the same time striking authoritative

social reproduction of labour became less important for accumulation as the output of each nation' within a globalised world system.[66] In this process, the power of national states diminished; hence the return to democratic politics offered restricted leeway for the negotiation of social and economic demands. The strength of internationally-backed repression also meant that local political defiance was increasingly ineffective.

Against a backdrop of the decline of trade unions, erosion of welfare provisions, and greater labour market 'flexibility', many collective actions thus acquired a new contentious edge. Political democratisation meanwhile gave the space for collective actions to take on a defiant aspect, a connection made by Carey Jr.:

> Instead of ameliorating economic inequality, neoliberal reforms reinforce structural poverty. Thus although democracy and neoliberal economics are often packaged together, they have a parasitic relationship. For this reason, indigenous, women's, environmental movements, and unions, peasants and other grassroots organizations, and even segments of the business community, have all protested these economic reforms. As these groups increasingly develop networks that supersede both national and issue-specific boundaries - a process that is empowering the globalization-from-below-movement - they are emerging the most visible challenge to global elites, especially since the left has failed to offer a counterhegemonic alternative (2005: 260).[67]

---

compromises; and (iii) sometimes unqualified outsiders, who use past economic and political failure (huge foreign debts, massive unemployment and hyperinflation) and entered to elites groups, produced more disunified elites groups who are operating in unconsolidated democracy' (1992: 335-37).

[66] According to the Robinson: 'the hegemony of transnational capital and new pattern of post-Fordist "flexible" accumulation has involved a restructuring of the capital-labour relation in Latin America and worldwide' (2004: 143). He also posits that: 'Latin American elites found that continued access to power, privilege and wealth meant pursuing the path of integration into the global economy. These elites based development on the virtually exclusive criteria of achieving maximum internal profitability as the condition sine que non for attracting mobile transnational capital. This meant the provision of cheap labour, depressed and lax working conditions, the elimination of state regulations, such as environmental controls; little or no taxation; the absence of transnational corporate accountability to local populations, and so on' (2004: 142-43).

[67] Walton's 'anatomy of social unrest' purports to explain the mechanism of social uprising since the 1980s: 'in most cases protests were precipitated by economic policies urged by the IMF operating in collaboration with other lending agencies such as WB, the U.S. government, and consortia of private banks. In a telling phrase, the protests came to be known as "IMF riots" and Latin America came to be regarded as the seedbed of this recusancy' (1998: 308-309).

As a result, many current Latin American social movements contain the following characteristics: (i) collective actions have frequently been launched in opposition to state domination; (ii) they have emerged in a conjuncture where a 'democratic opening' has proceeded hand-in-hand with poverty-inducing neo-liberalism; and (iii) mobilisation has been targeted against neo-liberal elites, who have been seen as responsible for the enthusiastic adoption of austerity programmes and are viewed as having little real commitment to 'democracy'.

Social exclusion: unemployment, poverty and social inequality

Although considerable social mobility has taken place in Latin America since 1980, despite the spread of 'democracy' the experience of the majority has been deprivation, exploitation, discrimination, inequality and oppression.[68] Acknowledgement of this hash reality is imperative for an understanding of the formation of collective identity within Latin America and elsewhere in the Third World (Roberts and Portes, 2004: 3; Oommen, 1997: 56). According to traditional class analysis, economic exploitation is the major source of deprivation. This, in turn, is structurally embedded in the necessity of working for a livelihood, with the employer extracting surplus value from labour. People experience deprivation within concrete settings. Workers' anger is typically directed at employers, who they believe are the oppressors. Marx consequently held that industrial workers would become defiant, not only about their wage and working

---

[68] Focusing on the multi-dimensionality of deprivation, people may be excluded from livelihood, employment, earnings, property, housing, minimum consumption, education, the welfare state, citizenship, personal contacts or respect (Silver, 1994). In fact that it refers to exclusion in the economic, social and political sphere. 'People can be excluded by many different sorts of groups, often at the same time: landlords exclude people from access to land or housing; elite political groups exclude others from legal rights; minorities may be excluded from expressing their identity; labour markets, and also some trade unions, exclude people (non-members) from getting jobs; and so on' (Haan, 1998: 26).

conditions; they would also have the capacity to organise due to the large numbers of proletarians experiencing their misery collectively.

Since Latin America post-1930 has promoted industrialisation via ISI, initially for domestic consumption and more recently for export, Marx's logic should have produced high levels of conflict at the point of production (Eckstein, 1989: 13). However, industrial workers were always a minority. As development and social transformation continues, the structure of deprivation also changes and consequently the composition of the 'deprived' undergoes a change too. To a backdrop of accelerating informalisation, the concept of social exclusion (currently recognised as a denial of fundamental rights) has fallen to common usage as an explanatory term to cover the lack of entitlement to jobs and lack of access to basic goods and services. Under present conditions, it is held that poverty results from extreme inequality derived from labour market conditions and wages below subsistence level. For the vast majority of the Latin American 'working class', work was always flexible, badly paid and unqualified, thus leading to poverty (Vilas, 1998: 7; Bombal, 2003: 10; Munck, 2005: 31).[69]

The concept of poverty in the Latin American context is often related to other factors, such as marginality, inequality, vulnerability and state of risk. Conceptual debate has largely been neglected in favor of operational policy-orientated views, spread through international institutions such as the World Bank and ECLAC, which adopt particular images or perspectives on poverty. For that reason, poverty is usually defined as a frontier, that of permanent income insufficiency, which results in the non

---

[69] Vilas argues that: 'other referents are articulated around the specific modes of insertion into the labor market, differences in access to economic resources and particular positions in power relations influence how actors build their own notions of gender, ethnicity, class, or other categories. No identity is definite or static; what remains permanent for the popular subject is oppression and exploitation in a context of poverty' (1998: 7).

satisfaction of basic needs. This perspective leads to a 'decomposition' of the poor and socially excluded groups, and to the establishment of a hierarchy of situations which focus on selective emergency intervention with urgency as the primary concern. Social policies against poverty become a compilation of programmes which, in turn, deny the very notion of citizenship rights. This implies permanent state responsibility as the guarantor of rights, in wealth as well as in poverty.

The Latin American social protection system, though inspired by the European model, never came close to a comprehensive welfare state, with the result that: ' ... social security, health and social assistance becomes one of the main issues for structural conservative reforms in the continent' (Dain, 2003: 7). As economic crises developed post-1980, traditional social assistance policies, already limited to a few countries in the region, became even more restricted and addressed themselves simply to the implementation of a minimal (and invariably inadequate) safety net, aimed at ensuring a basic level of social reproduction to mitigate the devastating effects of adjustment policies (Morley, 2004: 1; Solt, 2004: 152).

'Safety net' programmes were consequently implemented throughout the continent by the World Bank and other institutions. Most Latin American countries are against these kind of focused and temporary actions based on low-range, means tested social assistance programmes. Even in the latest versions of World Bank anti-poverty policies, or those of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) on the management of social risk, where poverty is finally seen as a multi-causal and interdependent phenomenon, policies for the poor are dissociated from a long-range, wider approach towards social protection.[70] The central role of the state in social protection and in

---

[70] Cammack criticises the World Bank which has regularly proclaimed its commitment to

social inclusion policies finds little recognition by these agencies. Subsidiarity of the state is the rule, even where dependent and stagnated markets have long shown that they lack the capacity and interest to deal with a sustained fight against poverty. Even the state, by not assuming the social dimension as a part of every policy initiative, contributes to increase the dichotomy between the economic and social aspects of growth.[71]

Portes and Hoffman in their recent study of changing class composition in Latin America have stressed spreading informalisation and the decline of regular jobs.[72] This has not only increased income insecurity and the likelihood of falling into a 'poverty trap', it also suggests that the nature and context of collective actions would undergo transformation (Oommen; 1997: 65). With the decline of formal employment, non-work place collective actions are not only proportionally more numerous, they also become more important in helping the excluded survive neo-liberal market tension, than they are

poverty reduction: 'the manner in which it promotes its policies, passing off strategies of subjection to market dependence (under a condition for capitalist accumulation can be secured firstly) as promises to bring direct benefits to the poor' (2001: 210). Thus, the Bank has represented 'empty rhetoric, hypocrisy, incompetence, confusion, or overload in the absence of a coherent agenda' (2004: 189).

[71] From the early of 1990s, many Latin American economists believed that economic growth contributes in an important way to the reduction of poverty. However, 'in the 1990s the rate of decline in poverty was not commensurate with the rate of aggregate income' (Gindling, 2005: 208). According to Gindling, 'one potential explanation for the increase in inequality is the change in the structure of employment and pay brought by technological changes and structural adjustment reforms' (2005: 208). 'Along with these changes, the rules of game also changed regarding access to social programes with social spending: from universal programmes (subsides or prices control on basic foods, utilities, housing, trasfortation, and other goods and services) to targeted social spending as a way to allocate increasingly scare public funds to have the largest possible impact on current poverty' (Sheehan, 1998: 185-196; quoted in Gindling, 2005: 209).

[72] Employing empirical evidence, they argue that: 'During the import-substitution era, formal employment grew steadily, although it never succeeded in absorbing the bulk of the Latin American labor force. Between 1950 and 1980, 60 percent of all new employment was created in the formal sector, with government being responsible for 15 percent and modern large and medium enterprises for the remaining 45 percent. During the 1990s, the situation changed drastically, with the modern formal sector reducing its share of employment creation to 20 percent and the government sector actually shrinking' (2003: 49). In this process, much of the labour force was relocated into the informal sector, labelled by Portes and Hoffman as the 'informal proletariat'.

in challenging and changing 'the system'.[73] In this regard, Eckstein argued that:

> Protests over austerity measures, which operated under pressure from international creditors including IMF such as the elimination of food and transport subsidies, wage freezes and the dismantling of state-owned enterprises, were ignited by sudden government initiated price increases that cut deeply into the capacity of the urban poor to address their subsistence needs. The salaried middle class, who had to cope not only with a steep rise in the cost of living, but with unemployment caused by cutbacks in the public-sector, have also not always quietly accepted their sudden loss of status and means of livelihood (1989: 20).

In addition, despite 'democratisation', political oppression remains as much a source of deprivation as economic exploitation or inequality. This combination of circumstances has given birth to numerous collective actions in Latin America, as Vilas argues:

> The conjoining of oppression, exploitation, and poverty in Latin American society means that the popular is constituted on the basis of multiple reference points situated in a complex web of complementarity and contradiction, in which subjects 'choose' those ingredients that best express their condition of oppression and exploitation. In some cases, the popular is constructed around class identities, in others it is based on ethnic referents, while in still others gender or symbolic elements became central. Other referents are articulated around these, in addition to the fact that specific modes of insertion into labour market, differences in access to economic resources, and particular positions in the power relations influence how actors build their own notions of gender, ethnicity, class, or other categories (1998: 7).

During the 1980s and 1990s, neo-liberal economic reform seriously eroded the social and political position of Latin American labour (Weyland, 2004: 146): rising unemployment and underemployment; the precarious informalisation of labour; the reduction of public sector employment; and traumatic experiences with hyper-inflation, severely weakened the organised workers movement. [74] Impoverishment and

---

73 On the question of amelioration as apposed to transformation, Scott argues that: 'social movements typically bring about change, or attempt to bring it about, not by challenging society as a whole, though they may appear to do so, but opposing specific forms of social closure and exclusion' (1990: 150).

74 Many scholars (Roxborough, Veltmeyer and Petras) highlighted the weakening of the labour movement since the 1980s under the impact of the: (i) debt crisis, economic stagnation; (ii) the retrenchment of military and authoritarian regimes and their replacement with democratically-

marginalisation also reduced the capacity for organisation and mobilisation (Roxborough, 1994: 375; O'Donnell, 1996: 19). Simultaneously however, poor people were more likely to recognise and strive to ameliorate their situation without recourse to organisation, thus putting:

> Their energy and attention on survival and on the search for individual exit are options. This applies particularly to the popular sectors which are the disadvantaged groups in highly segmented, unequal societies. In urban areas, popular sectors include both organised and unorganised workers in the formal economy, the unemployed workers who are seeking employment, people working in the informal economy, and the lumpen proletariat who are largely outside the formal and informal economies (Oxhorn, 1998: 202).

For his part, O'Donnell links growing marginalisation with increasing differentiation and a 'thinning' of Latin America's middle classes:

> Considerable decreases in pensions and in the salaries of public employees, particularly the lower ranking ones, unemployment resulting from privatizations and various 'rationalization' programs, high rates of bankruptcy of small enterprises during economic crises and at least during the first phases of economic stabilization, and the deterioration (or disappearance) of various social services to which these sectors had good access have combined to bring about a sharp fall of the income and the standard of living of significant numbers of people in the middle sectors ... it seems, consequently, that 'the middle' has significantly differentiated itself, with some moving toward the poor and some toward the rich poles, while the 'middle of the middle' has become thinner. Thus, despite the simplification it entails, the image of dualism still fits Latin America - now better than ever. Some time ago the Latin American middle sectors were supposed to be the main carriers of social modernization, economic development, and democracy (1996: 17-18).

---

elected civilian regimes; (iii) neo-liberal structural reforms with an amalgam of stabilization and austerity measures; and (iv) the refoundation of the capital accumulation process based on a radical change in the capital-labour relationship. These situations and structural changes demonstrated its incapacity to influence social policies aimed to resolve conflicts over economic growth, income distribution, inflation and even wages (Roxborough, 1994; 1997; Veltmeyer and Petras, 2000: 106). In this process, several social groups have found themselves expelled from the traditional social formation of society, while new groups are being integrated into this emerging reconfiguration of civil society. Entities such as trade unions and the military have seen their power eroded, while NGOs, trans-national political agencies and new social movements are moving to fill the void. However, It has been also argued that these development threaten to 'broaden the gap between the civic and the disorganized segments of society' (Abel and Lewis, 2002: 12).

As the aforementioned authors indicate, more than two decades of socio-economic change driven by neo-liberal restructuring ensured that, by the 1990s, poverty and inequality within Latin American societies increased to levels that were higher than in any other historical periods.

The last decade of the so-called 'consolidation of democracy', or 'deepening' has consequently been accompanied by widespread disappointment vis-à-vis the performance of many political leaders who were supposed to act differently from their authoritarian predecessors. Popular rejection of the political class has resulted from their failure to search for alternative policies to 'the recent illegitimatisation of the neo-liberal model'; despite popular demand, most political elites 'on the contrary, have tended to reinforce that very model' (Zibechi, 2005: 1). Additionally, political instability and corruption remain key impediments to reducing poverty and inequality in many Latin American countries, which further undermines support for the status quo, while many of the basic institutions necessary for a 'deepening' of democratic governance (judiciaries, legislatures, political parties, and so on) remain weak and discredited.[75] Without strong and legitimate government structures in place, impoverished citizens can find little of the effective government support necessary to address their needs.[76]

---

[75] In O'Donnell's argument, 'delegative democracy' is characterised not only by certain institutional relationships, but also by a style of leadership linked to those relationships. He argues that: 'delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office. The president is taken to be the embodiment of the nation and the main custodian and definer of its interests. The policies of his government need bear no resemblance to the promises of his campaign—has not the president been authorized to govern as he (or she) thinks best? In this view, other institutions—courts and legislatures, for instance—are nuisances . . . a mere impediment to the full authority that the president has been delegated to exercise' (1999: 164). Thus, this operation of delegative democracy limits democratic governance accountability which 'runs not only vertically, making elected officials answerable to the ballot box, but also horizontally, across a network of relatively autonomous powers in Latin American political institutions' (1999: 165).
[76] Government corruption is a serious violation of public trust wherever it occurs, but especially in countries that are hard-pressed to meet the most basic needs of large impoverished

75

These failures have fuelled a simmering sense of distrust among the poor in the virtues of the profoundly elitist political systems, producing:

> The varied resistance, defence and empowerment strategies pursued by these poor, marginalized and victimized communities, as well as of those sectors who campaign for respect for citizenship rights in their attempts to have an impact upon the "old politics" of exclusionary and authoritarian institutions (Lievesley, 1999: 195).[77]

In an increasingly explosive contemporary Latin American socio-political environment, neo-liberal austerity measures have led to a proliferation of Scott's 'everyday forms of resistance', as well as more overt forms of protest (Eckstein, 1989: 8). These include land seizures, street demonstrations, riots, rebellions, strikes, looting, attacks on government buildings and street violence, especially in urban Latin America.

Urban movements through resource mobilisation

Primarily, urban movements resulted from the problems of rapid urbanisation post-1930, caused by the 'mincing' of the peasant economy and the capitalisation of agriculture. Since the 1940s, patterns of urban migration have taken a radical turn. Foreign immigration tapered off and most city-bound migrations came from Latin America itself.

---

populations. Glade argues that: 'in an environment in which *amistad* (friendship) shades quickly into *amiguismo* (cronyism) and outright venality, in which political turnover and governmental instability often inhibit the development of experienced professional management, or in which authoritarian cliques and parties monopolize the exercise of power, the situation is fraught with possibilities for the misuse of resources' (1986: 312, quoted in Manzetti and Blake, 1996: 667). For a discussion of these issues in Argentina (Menem), Brazil (Collor) and Venezuela (Pérez), see Manzetti and Blake (1996: 671-697); Little (1992: 41-66; 1996: 64-69).

[77] Arguing along the same lines, Biekart holds that: 'people have been excluded from jobs and land, health and public education services, or from life itself. However, these socio-economic and political exclusion processes merged into a powerful blend that multiplied support for the range of collective actions that eventually proved capable of toppling regimes as a result of mass mobilisation' (2005: 88). To counter these ills, the following changes are deemed necessary: 'the decentralization of power to regional and local government, which would be underpinned by ending the power of local and regional bosses within both party and state bureaucracies. Implicit in this process would be a reduction in executive power and an increase in legislative influence over policy-making, and ensuring the accountability of public officials. Opposition parties should be brought into decision-making, as should popular organizations. Corruption should be rooted out both in terms of fraudulent elections and patronage and malpractice within the state' (Lievesley, 1999: 199).

Increased rural poverty, landlord oppression and armed conflicts forced large segments of the population to move to the city in search of employment and housing. Eventually migration became easier as transportation routes improved. Furthermore, as kinship and employment networks became established in urban centers, chain migration mushroomed. However, 'the public services and infrastructure have not been able to keep up with the rapid pace of urban demographic growth' (Overmyer-Velázquez, 2002: 91). The resulting discontent fostered urban mobilisations, with the process of demand-making itself enabling increasing numbers of activists to acquire a 'new sense of efficacy' and a belief that they can 'alter their lot' (Piven and Cloward, 1979: 4).

Against this backdrop, theorists found that three types of collective action cover a broad spectrum of urban movements in urban Latin America: (i) labour mobilisation aimed at countering policies specifically harmful to labour; (ii) collective consumption action, including mobilisation by consumers of urban services, focused on the availability of 'public goods'; and (iii) political and human rights activity, which involves popular mobilisation around non-material issues of justice, representation, security, freedom from repression and democratisation (Walton, 1998: 462-63). However, among these different spheres of mobilisation, collective action concerned with material issues predominates. Activists have focused on social mobilisation to gain resources and services and are often pursued as a rational response to the potential costs and rewards to be gained. The upsurge of mass-popular based collective actions, in particular urban social movements since the 1960s, stemmed mainly from economic necessities and encouraged various organised groups with leaders to negotiate concessions from a reluctant state. Thus, Cubitt holds that 'housing shortages and lack of urban utilities created by rapid urbanisation along with the economic crises of the

period exacerbated the problems of the poor and heightened their awareness of the inability of existing structures to solve them' (1995: 196).

Urban social movements, especially those agitating around issues of land, public services and government austerity measures, have consequently been on the rise since the late 1960s, despite a prevalence of clientelism, political co-optation and repression. Effective urban movements have more often come from grassroots groups made up of students, women's association, residential and church organisations, because the trade unions have historically been linked closely to political parties. These urban social movements, arose to claim additional 'collective consumption' in the shape of affordable housing, public utilities, education and transport provision, access to land, water and other public amenities (Castells, 1978: 3; Lehmann, 1999: 139).[78] Particularly in the larger cities, collective consumption has been the 'bone of contention' in social conflict' (Lehmann, 1999: 140). In other words, the previous predominance of class-based movements gave way to broader-based urban movements, a catch-all category that included a wide range of popular initiatives.[79] Thus, the rise of these urban grassroots movements has been a response to both the precarious conditions of urban life and state policies, a point stressed by Castañeda:

> Everywhere in Latin America, the rural exodus and exploding demographic growth rates transformed already overcrowded capitals into urban planners' and mayors' nightmares. Grass

---

[78] According to Lowe: 'the term is used here to mean organizations standing outside the formal party system which bring people together to defend or challenge the provision of urban public services and to protect the local environment. The implication of these organisations as "social movements" is that their objectives are undertaken collectively by the mobilisation of a distinct social base and that the momentum of their activity is towards changes in policy direction - urban issues of collective consumption such as housing, food, school, hospitals, transport services and leisure amenities, etc.'(1985: 3-11).

[79] Castells argues that: 'it expresses the fundamental contradiction between, on the one hand, the increasing socialization of consumption (as a result of the contradiction of capital and the means of production), and on the other hand, the capitalist logic of the production and distribution of its means of consumption, the outcome of which is a deepening crisis in daily life of all social groups at the same time as popular protest demands an amelioration of the collective material conditions of daily existence' (1978: 3).

roots struggles for land, deeds, housing, drinking water, sewage, public transportation, health, education, and sometimes simply food dotted the landscape of the continent's cities. Huge, unmanageable, nearly apocalyptic urban areas became the scene of squatter riots, self-help programs, and heroic response to natural catastrophes and their man-inflicted consequences (1994: 219).

Many of these demands are rooted in sector, territory and community, and represent claims for social inclusion and greater participation in the 'republic' (Foweraker, 2001: 4-5). Depending on time, space and circumstances, they have represented an authentic popular response against state repression and economic austerity, a link noted by Foweraker: 'the combination of urban expansion and repressive government did prove a fecund context for the emergence of new social actors for the discovery of new forms of organization and new strategies initiatives throughout Latin America from the 1970s onwards' (2001: 2).

Urban social movements have also sought to overcome problems of collective action through increasing organisation and tried to increase their resources by adopting low-risk and more 'institutional' forms of action. They have developed their own organisations to assume the executive functions previously exercised by informal groups, and to carry out 'the crucial task of mediating between the larger macro environment and the set of micro dynamics on which the movements depends' (McAdam et al., 1988: 696). This has often necessitated a 'turn towards the state', as their leaders strove to win concessions and influence, as well as on occasions secure their own position and prestige. This process has been referred to as the 'inevitable institutionalism' of Latin American social movements (Foweraker, 2001: 6). Over time, groups began to play significant roles in negotiating policy decisions and political outcomes. New links have been forged between their leaders and state personnel, frequently causing their goals to become more 'political', a development that brings

with it the danger of co-optation by state agencies. Additionally, the success of a social movement can lead to its absorption and consequent decline (Foweraker, 2001: 6).

Given this environment, many observers have suggested that the majority of material demands made by grassroots movements could be readily absorbed or diverted within political systems organised along clientelistic and corporatist lines. Indeed, such systems are especially effective in separating and isolating grassroots activities through combining partial satisfaction with co-optation via the granting of personal favours and according restricted privileges.[80] While noting this danger, Eckstein also makes the important point that one consequence of neo-liberal restructuring might be to reduce the capacity of state actors to engage in patron-client style co-option:

> The material and symbolic resources including charismatic and populist appeal that may diffuse potential unrest include patronage and subsidies. Such resources may be administrated so as to cultivate relations of the patron-client type, and thereby deference and dependence. While contemporary Latin American regimes have relied on and cultivated patronage politics, their capacity to continue to do so contracted with their fiscal crises in the 1980s. Moreover, the IMF has insisted on state-sector cutbacks as a prerequisite for debt refinancing. Thus, at the very time when increased unemployment and deteriorating standards of living make the need for relief greater, governments are less able to address civilian needs through patronage and other subsidies. Protests may well increase with the retrenchment of the state's presence in society (1989: 41).

In reality, however, patron-client ties have most frequently worked to minimise popular unrest.[81] However, while this classical mode of co-option has continued,

---

[80] On the same line, Castells argues that: 'an urban social movement ... cannot, however, be a social alternative, only the symptom of social limit, because the city it projects is not, and cannot be, connected to an alternative model of production and development ... urban social movements are aimed at transforming the meaning of the city without being able to transform society. They are a reaction, not an alternative' (1983: 327). Also see Oxhorn's 'The Social Foundations of Latin America's Recurrent Populism: Problems of Popular Sector Class Formation and Collective Action' (1998).
[81] Castañeda holds that: 'classical patronage and corruption - a mainstay of Latin American city politics for decades – gave way to more democratic, more politicized networks ... Urban grass roots movements blossomed, voted to the left, and then encountered the disappointments and contradictions of electoral politics at any scale, let along at a local level' (1994: 219).

grassroots movements were also often involved in the pursuit of citizenship rights (e.g. human and social rights) that aimed to recover or conquer autonomy.

Searching for citizenship rights

Social movements are often engaged in the pursuit of rights which are well established in the western context on the basis of 'democracy requires civic participation and social citizenship' (Marshall and Bottomore, 1992: 120). Indeed, the centrality of citizenship rights within First World politics has been emphasised by Bottomore:

> In all the industrial countries indeed, social rights are those which are most fiercely debated, not only with regard to the existing provision for education, health care, pensions, unemployment benefits and other kinds of social assistance in welfare states that differ in their level of development, but in respect of the scope of social rights in principle, and the place they should occupy in the social and societal policies of an advanced industrial country. These issues clearly divide political parties of the left and right, but they also involve social movements and organizations concerned with the rights of particular groups in the population: women, pensioners, the very poor, the homeless, the unemployed and others. Undoubtedly, these groups experience specific hardships and problems with which social policy has to deal (1992: 86).

In most Latin American countries, in contrast, access to social services for the urban and rural poor was physically limited and politically rationed. Only since the 1980s has the tenor of the debate embraced both a market and citizenship dimension, in which public goods are explicitly presented as an unconditional right of citizenship, even where supply is restricted. Hence, access to public goods is the benchmark of full citizenship and state survival depends on an efficient delivery of social goods (Abel and Lewis, 2002: 13). Although Latin American societies have progressed civil autonomy in terms of political rights with the democratic transitions experienced since the early 1980s (e.g. voting in reasonably free and fair elections, freedom to choose alternatives, voting as the determinant of the outcome), civil rights in the sense of the effective rule

of law, protection against discrimination, security and the respect for the right to life, remain significantly weak areas and impact on the exercise of political rights and public associational life.[82]

The expansion of political rights resulting from an improving electoral democracy has also been off-set in many countries by a brutal and biased system of criminal justice that negates civil citizenship (Galdeira, 2001). Abel and Lewis have highlighted this important weakness in Latin American societies:

> Sociologists have stressed that the rights attached to citizenship have been of little practical value to Latin Americans as elites established them in order to rally support for particular projects while curtailing participation in policy-making. Political scientists have emphasized the difficulties that popular actors have confronted during democratic openings in forging strong links of any kind - social pacts, democratic class compromises - with democratising movements. Economic and social crises precipitated by policy failure and external currency shocks may impede the arduous tasks of democratic institutionalization and of rendering administrations accountable to citizens. At local level, the inert structure of municipal government has further limited the exercise of citizenship (2002: 10).

To compound matters, poverty, inequality, high levels of unemployment, allied to a poor standard of education, remain problematic aspects of social rights that pose a serious challenge to contemporary Latin American democracy, in that they impact mostly on those groups who have limited participation in the political and civil fields. Latin America's 'democratic deficits' are now recognised by major international financial and development institutions and the region's 'colonial legacy' of exclusion and discrimination are acknowledged to be variables that contribute to the persistence of these deficits (Pearce, 2004: 484).

Despite these shortcomings, many scholars have also put an emphasis on the

---

[82] 'A liberal stress on civil and civic citizenship prevails by which freedom for the individual citizen and control of his/her destiny are achieved through capitalist growth and liberation from political despotism, political religion and a hierarchical social order. And optimism surrounds the record number of citizens in terms of formal voting rights' (Abel and Lewis, 2002:12).

importance of collective action in expanding rights.[83] As a result, the citizenship rights model of collective action has found considerable support amongst social movement theorists, who reject what they see as an over-reliance on the neo-liberal equation of 'free' markets and 'free' politics.[84] Indeed, it is the key argument of many social movement theorists. In their study of citizenship rights and social movements, for example, Foweraker and Landman argue that collective action struggles aim to advance individual rights, which must be won through (and often against) the state, along with recovering of their autonomy. This entails in a situation where 'democracy is not so much about the delivery of goods as the achievement of rights' (1997: 242). Social movements have also contributed towards democratisation by encouraging new perspectives on 'democracy'. For instance, Peruzzotti argues that 'the human rights movement represented a cultural turning point in Argentine society, in which rights and constitutional guarantees were revalued' (2003). Such collective actions on occasions became involved in competition over control of the political apparatus.

In countries that experienced authoritarian regimes during the 1970s and 1980s, many popular movements were involved in fights for democratisation and constitutional

---

[83] Citizenship is an inherently multidimensional concept 'involving legitimating norms and cultures, identities, and even the right to be different. Emerging conceptualizations of citizenship reflect the distribution of power within democratic systems, but may lead to a redistribution of power in accordance with the outcomes of specific struggles. Citizenship becomes a historically contingent concept whose breadth in terms of rights (individual and collective) results from the struggle and bargaining between expanding states and their subjects' that created citizenship where it had not previously existed' (Oxhorn, 2001: 80).

[84] Commenting on recent scholarship on social movements in Latin America, Mattiace argues that: 'many authors are centrally concerned with describing the interaction between and among movements and states in the current context of neoliberalism and democracy in Latin America, leaving aside the definitional questions (e.g. old or new, class or identity-based) that preoccupied social movement scholars in the past' (2005: 237). For example, Munck argues that: 'the struggle against social exclusion is a key element of the struggle for citizenship rights. It reintroduces into traditional poverty debates the social element as against individual responsibility, and it foregrounds agency. It also serves to unify struggles against diverse forms of social inequality' (2005: 32).

rules.[85] Thus, popular protests started to challenge the system based around claims to universal human rights, and later confronted the state with specific demands concerning their everyday needs. These included rights to livelihood, to body, to land, to human rights and the 'right to work'. To the extent that many demands of the social movements are based upon struggles to establish rights, it may be said that they are part of the attempt to create, or recreate, their unrecognised citizenship rights through collective action. They start from the recognition that the basic right is 'the right to have rights', which is followed by moves aimed at the extension of civil rights; next political rights expand; and finally, social rights are increasingly recognised. In this view, 'the development of the welfare state can be conceived of as the public face of the process by which the socioeconomic rights of citizens are expanded' (Jelin, 1996: 103-104). From this perspective, rights are won through social struggle by subordinate groups.[86] It is by struggling to 'improve their lot' (Giddens, 1982: 17) and being 'willing to fight' (Tarrow, 1990: 103) that these groups come to 'demand and obtain citizen rights' (Clarke, 1993: 19). Such mobilisations, moreover, can have an eventual impact on the

---

[85] On the link between economic stress and democracy, Walton held that: 'paradoxically on the surface, the period of economic crisis and reform begun in the early 1980s has helped promote a new and global movement of democratization. The explanation for this somewhat unexpected development lies in the interplay of national and international constraints. From the international side: structural adjustment programs have weakened former mechanisms of state co-optation and coercion, neoliberal ideology supports a limited bourgeois state, post-cold war geopolitics no longer require stable authoritarian states, and global competition for capital compels states to pursue democratic harmony and investor stability. From the national standpoint: less developed countries constrained by fiscal austerity can no longer afford clientism, greater popular sovereignty is a condition that citizens expect in exchange for austerity, civil society thrives under these conditions, and new social movements for democracy rise to the structural opportunity' (1998: 476).

[86] 'The working class movement is just one of many social movements to emerge in the modern period. Insofar as these movements struggle to defend or expand social inclusion and participation they are inevitably about the rights of citizenship' (Turner, 1986: 92). In other words, citizenship is the result of 'the way in which different groups, classes and movements have struggled to gain degrees of autonomy and control over their lives in the face of various forms of stratification, hierarchy and political oppression' (Held, 1989: 199; quoted in Foweraker and Landman, 1997: 2).

great issues of 'political rights and obligation' (Tilly, 1975: 299). Social movements have also defined and redefined the contours of citizenship in unhopeful locations, like on the periphery of a large conurbation where there was no 'effective representation for social interests and associated networks have in places flourished, characterised by flexible adaption, day-to-day pragmatism, non-hierarchical structures (autonomy) and a purposeful interconnectedness aiming to shape public policy' (Abel and Lewis, 2002: 13).

However, these rights have usually not been granted easily or willingly. The historical record suggests that 'collective violence' is often required to 'overcome the resistance of the government' (Foweraker and Landman, 1997: 1). The social movements are not the equivalent of civil society of course, but they may be seen as participating in the process of constructing that society, or of recovering it from the state (Foweraker, 1995: 6).[87] From such a perspective, what links all Latin American popular movements and collective actions is what Oxhorn calls 'the social construction of citizenship' (2001: 80). He argues that the current 'challenge of women's and poor people's movements, human rights groups, peasant organizations and indigenous mobilizations, is to create more inclusionary definitions of citizenship, just as those who seem to oppose them attempt to maintain or further restrict what it currently means to be a citizen' (2001: 81).

---

[87] On the same line, Habermas emphasised the 'public sphere' as a symbolic space for participating in the process of constructing a new society: 'public's critical debate took place in principle without regard to all preexisting social and political rank and in accordance with universal rules. These rules, because they remained strictly external to the individuals as such, secured space for the development of these individuals' interiority by literary means. These rules, because universally valid, secured a space for the individuated person; because they were objective, they secured a space for what most subjective; because they were abstract, for what was most concrete' (1989: 54).

Conclusion

A shift in the nature and origins of 'popular' movements has been widely noted through this chapter. The role of trade unions and the traditional labour movement has become less central, while a great array of grassroots organisations, of which unions are now just one type, has become prominent. Initial assessments of these urban grassroots movements were optimistic, lauding the strengthening of civil society in political systems that historically lacked structures capable of making government accountable, of representing the majority, or of sustaining democratic regimes. Particular traits of grassroots movements were also seen as beneficial. Unlike trade unions, grassroots movements relate to one another in networks rather than in the hierarchical and bureaucratic structures from which Michels derived his 'iron law of oligarchy'.[88] Conceptualised as internally participatory, they were seen as efficacy-promoting for grassroots democracy and potential building blocks of an inclusionary system of representation. Furthermore, some analysts have been confident that grassroots movements could move into the representational empty space being vacated or unfilled by political parties, which are widely seen as becoming socially disembedded catch-all parties which, in Mair's terms, continue to play a procedural role (recruiting office-holders, organising government and making policy), but whose representative role,

---

[88] Robert Michels was disturbed to find that, paradoxically, the socialist parties of Europe, despite their democratic ideology and provisions for mass participation, seemed to be dominated by their leaders, just as the traditional conservative parties. Studying political parties, he concluded that the problem lay in the very nature of organisations. Modern democracy allowed the formation of organisations such as political parties, but as such organisations grew in complexity, they paradoxically became less and less democratic. With this point, Michels formulated the 'Iron Law of Oligarchy': 'who says organization, says oligarchy. The iron law of oligarchy states that all forms of organization, regardless of how democratic or autocratic they may be at the start, will eventually and inevitably develop oligarchic tendencies, thus making true democracy practically and theoretically impossible, especially in large groups and complex organizations. The relative structural fluidity in a small-scale democracy succumbs to "social viscosity" in a large-scale organization' (2001: 224).

particularly regarding the mass of the population, has atrophied (Mair, 2000). After an initial period of optimism, however, many social movement analysts working on Latin America have turned markedly more cynical, noting the inability of grassroots movements to apply telling pressure on political elites, so to meaningfully affect macro-political outcomes and 'deepen' grassroots democracy. Instead, the continent has been experiencing a crisis of political representation.

To better explore these changes, this chapter has analysed the shift in popular movement. The union-party mode of popular organisation often experienced diffculty in getting created and accepted, but could gain (eventually) influence within state institutions; whereas the grassroots movements, in contrast, represent organisations that are relatively easy to form, but encounter difficulty in attaining considerable impact in socio-economic policy terms. In particular, the grassroots movements have tended to become embroiled in local level patron-client relationships of a traditional 'populist' hue. While they might faciliate participation, gain access and win influence in areas of policy at the local level, they were largely ineffectual in influencing macro-policy at the national level. Nevertheless, these representational tensions play out in diverse ways in different national settings: in Argentina, the unemployed movement has displayed enormous mobilising capacity, constructed solid organisations and had an impact in the policy-making sphere, e.g. the workfare social programmes shaped the nature of the demands of the unemployed movement and 'succeeded in expanding the programmes tremendously' (Collier and Handlin, 2005: 27).

This chapter has also stressed the complex factors underpinning recent urban social mobilising. Since the early 1960s, collective action has created new political arenas, voicing demands for collective consumption, including urban services and the

availability of 'public goods' (Castells). These actions showed that participants were aware of their exclusion from the benefits of 'development', and therefore on occasions came to view the state as their 'enemy' (O'Donnell). To this backdrop, since the early 1980s urban grassroots movements have built autonomous associations and made their demand in ways that showed an ability to resist conventional mechanisms of political co-optation. They devised new practices that attempted to shun the mediation of elite politicians and strove to maintain their autonomy vis-à-vis old institutions (the state, parties and bureaucratic trade unions) and practices (populism, corruption, etc.).

When analysing the factors behind the emergence of popular grassroots movements in Latin America's urban areas, two dimensions - actors and structures – have been employed via the concept of 'multiple collective identity'. This mode of analysis has been rare. Theorists tend to focus on either the traditional working class, or 'new' social actors, with those who prioritise class-based identity positing that 'class-based old movements such as labour, or peasant movements do not disappear' (Petras 2002, Munck, 2003). However, if one puts class into one identity category, with 'class as a kind of collective identity which should not be separated from old and new forms', arguments about 'old' and 'new' forms of Latin American collective action can be circumvented. Furthermore, whether identity is viewed as 'old' or 'new' in collective action, we can still focus on the actions of excluded groups reacting to many forms of oppression, who mobilise around material concerns. This may include the working and 'popular' classes in both town and country. In addition, they have recently developed another 'raison d'être' for struggle: the advancement of citizenship rights within a process of hoped-for 'democratic consolidation' post-1980. This also brings into the equation the issues of the 'right' to work, which had already been guaranteed as a

universal right in Argentina (to be discussed below). However, before addressing the various forms of identities that appeared within the unemployed movement, Chapter IV will look at the historical background that fashioned its emergence.

<p style="text-align:center">IV</p>

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDS: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ARGENTINA

Once upon a time there was a country called Argentina ... where many people disappeared and where, years later, the money disappeared, too. One thing is related to the other ... anyone who wishes to understand what happened to Argentina's missing wealth must first journey back into its past, to find out what happened to its missing people ... there has been a grassroots explosion of groups embarking on precisely such a journey, a kind of national forensic detective mission that is linking the economic interests of the generals' dictatorship with the policies that drove the economy into ruin years later. The belief - the hope - is that when these pieces are finally put together, Argentina may finally be able to break the cycle of state terror and corporate plunder that has enslaved this country, like so many others, for far too long (Klein, 25 January 2003 in the Guardian).

Two dominant traits of Argentina's political life have been the inability of political elites to reconcile conflicting interests and the resolution of conflict through coercion rather than consent (Peralta-Ramos, 1992: 1).

Introduction

To comprehend the nature of the unemployed movement requires some understanding of Argentina's economic and political history, which during the twentieth century has been turbulent in the extreme. The importance of a historical perspective has been highlighted by Kirby, who argued that:

Political economy, by contrast with economics or political science, is concerned with historically constructed frameworks or structures within which political and economic activity takes place. It stands back from the apparent fixity of the present to ask how the existing structures came into being and how they may be changing, or how they may be introduced to change (2003: 12).

Following such a perspective, the present chapter outlines the historical background to the appearance of the unemployed movement, focusing on the political and economic history of twentieth century Argentina. It reviews the main explanations

<p style="text-align:center">90</p>

that have been advanced to account for the turn of century crisis, which not only engendered economic collapse. The crisis also brought a breakdown in social services, along with a sharp decline in the legitimacy of the political system and most state institutions, as well as severe erosion in the moral authority and hegemony of business and political elites.

Argentina: a society of endemic conflict?

Argentina is often described as a paradox: a country with the geography, cultural modes and early prosperity of the 'lands of recent settlement' on the US, Canadian and Australian model, whose economic and political experience during the second half of the twentieth century has nonetheless assumed familiar Latin American dimensions of underdevelopment and repression. Argentine historian Alberto Romero, for example, advanced such a view of Argentina at the dawn of the twenty-first century:

> The country in 2000 held little resemblance to the one that in 1916 established a democratic political system that crowned the expansion of its economy and society. Nor did it resemble the other one that in 1945 linked growth of its internal market to the promotion of social justice directed by the state. With respect to its hopes, illusions, and utopias, neither did it resemble the country that in 1960 dreamed of modernisation and caught a glimpse of a promising future. In 2000, the prospect that the new Argentina presented was one of uncertainty regarding a difficult future. Some negative past traits had reappeared. Argentina's experience in the twentieth century is that of Sisyphus: successive attempts that take off vigorously and end in catastrophe, falling far short of established objectives. At the beginning of the 1990s, many thought that there was a new opportunity, the other side of the shore was near, or certainly within range, provided that a great and determined effort was made. Ten years later, the question remained open, but predictions were more pessimistic and less quixotic (2002: 319-20).

Regarding this so-called 'Sisyphus' of frustrated development, many attempts have been made to explain Argentina's stagnation. A leading analyst, Guillermo O'Donnell pointed out that unfulfilled ambition forms a constant historical legacy,

whose roots lay in the dependence of the Argentine economy on international trade and capital movements and the disaffection of a large proportion of the populace as a result of socio-economic inequality and the unequal distribution of political resources. Non-economic factors also played a part in undermining the country's potential, including the everyday political behaviour and praxis of formal institutions (which contravened the ideology of liberal democracy), the application of democratic 'rules of game' only when they were acceptable to dominant social forces and the strong resistance shown by established political elites to the participation of new actors, even when such participation involved relatively low risks (Brysk, 1994: 192).[89] Such 'limited, diminished forms of accountability' seem to be a constant in Argentina over the course of the twentieth century (O'Donnell, 1999a: 165; 1999b: 38; Schmitter, 1999: 60).[90]

For Waisman, the basic destabilisation mechanism afflicting the Argentine polity centres on balance of payments problems. These, he argues, 'lead to recessionary policies, which produce labour mobilization, which lead to inflation, which polarizes society and threatens the bourgeoisie and state' (1987: 101). This economistic argument, which Waisman terms, 'the reversal question of development in Argentina' (1987), as

---

89 Through the Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism (BA) model, O'Donnell suggested fundamental tensions within the core of the system of domination (1973: 118-32). In this model, 'the social sectors excluded by the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime (among those excluded) were popular groups, frequently labour if it had previously been politically active' (Espinal, 1988: 3-4).
90 According to O'Donnell's notion of 'vertical and horizontal accountability', he argues that: 'accountability runs not only vertically, making elected officials answerable to the ballot box, but also horizontally, across a network of relatively autonomous powers (i.e., other institutions) that can call into question, and eventually punish, improper ways of discharging the responsibilities of a given office' (O'Donnell 1999a: 165). He defines horizontal accountability as the: 'existence of state agencies that are legally enabled and empowered, and factually willing and able, to take actions that span from routine oversight to criminal sanctions or impeachment in relation to actions or omissions by other agents or agencies of the state that may be qualified as unlawful' (1999b: 38). On this point, Schmitter argues that: 'non-state actors—media organizations, party secretariats, trade union confederations, business peak associations, lawyers' guilds, mass social movements, even large capitalist firms should be included among those capable of exercising horizontal accountability' (1999: 60). Also see Kenney's reflections on 'Horizontal Accountability in Latin America' (2000).

an explanation for the present crisis, is controversial, for other analysts give an emphasis to political factors.[91] When attempting to answer the riddle of the 'development of underdevelopment' in a resource-rich country like Argentina, economic historian Paul Lewis posits that a particular concatenation of economic and socio-political factors need to be considered: (i) the traditional cattle-raising and export oligarchy's refusal to accept modern social and political change; (ii) the military's increasing interference in politics, which exacerbates instability rather than avoids it; (iii) the exploitation of Argentina by foreign capital; (iv) the lack of an indigenous industrial class with a true 'entrepreneurial spirit'; (v) the personal machinations and legacy of Juan Domingo Perón (president from 1946 to 1955); and (vi) the Argentine national character in general, which is held to be 'egotistical, inflexible, and conflictive, thus making impossible all cooperative effort, including that required for development' (Lewis, 1990: 1). A wide variety of explanations have obviously been advanced to account for 'Argentine paradox' during the twentieth century. It is to be a consideration of these that we now turn.[92]

Argentina characterised as a distributional conflict society

From the Great Depression (1929-30) to the present (2005), Argentine political

---

91 According to Bambaci et al., when commenting on the 1990s market-orientated reforms, 'the idiosyncrasies of Argentina's political institutions' conditioned this reform process and strategy, i.e. reform was operated not by economic logic, but political logic and the ensuing social and political chaos accompanying the 2001/2002 collapse of the convertibility regime' (2002: 75).
92 Munck, for example, sketches Argentina's political economy from 1890 to 1990 in the following terms: 'from 1890 to the 1929 crash, Argentina lived through what was known as the 'golden era' based on an agro-export economy. After the Depression of the 1930s, the Peronist period (1945-55) led to a fundamental reorientation based on state-led industrialisation. After the 1955 military coup there were a succession of weak civilian governments and illegitimate military regimes. The turn to neo-liberal globalisation occurred under the 1976 military dictatorship that was singularly repressive. In 1983 democracy returned but led to the post 1989 Menem government that completed the neo-liberal agenda in Argentina' (2001: 69).

economy has been characterised as a distributional conflict, with politics a quest for political and economic hegemony.[93] Powerful political, economic and social actors (including elites, business interests, labour unions, political parties, the military and the state bureaucracy) have competed for national resources. This has been noted by Wynia:

> All of the social forces and interest groups defend their rights and privileges without paying attention to the formal rules of democratic politics even though doing so never satisfies their needs. It is as if the group's triumph over its rival was vital to its survival, or at least sufficient to cause it to ignore the rules that society needs to secure the co-existence of its members. Loyalty to the group, of an almost tribal character, gave rise to an "everyone for himself" attitude evident in political parties as well as economic interest groups. The military want to save the military, labour unions the CGT and every opposition party is intent on getting revenge no matter how much their doing so undermines the community (1986: 196).

The intensity of these 'tribal' conflicts has allowed little room for compromise and accommodation, resulting in 'a lack of self-sustaining independent power' over long periods (Sawers, 1996: 44).[94] For example, Adelman argues that:

> For the next three decades, civilian and military regimes sought to dismember the vestiges of a populist system which had mobilized labour and factions of capital. With Perón in exile, unions and industrialists faced each other in increasingly open conflagrations. But the naked contradiction between labour and capital did not necessarily translate into the independent strength of either. Both sides mediated the power struggle through competing claims over a hobbled state. As a result, both sides were able to deny the existing government legitimate rights to rule, but neither was able to create a regime of its own liking. The internal crisis of the populist alliance led to a hegemonic crisis of the Argentine state, culminating in the tragic dictatorship of 1976–83 (1994: 68).

---

[93] Regarding the politics and political economy of distributional conflict in Argentina, see Merx (1969); Mallon and Sourrouille (1975); O'Donnell (1978); Wynia (1978, 1986); Cavarozzi (1983); Crawley (1985) and specially Waisman (1987); Smith (1989); Erro (1993) and De la Balze (1995).
[94] With regard to the notion of 'a lack of self-sustaining independent power', Argentina's dependence on Europe or the US has been regularly advanced as a major cause of stagnation. Many economists and social scientists (e.g. Raúl Prebish, Aldo Ferrer, James Fuchs, etc.), including the United Nations' Economic Commission on Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC, recently CEPAL), blamed industrialised countries for the problems of the Third World – poverty, underdevelopment and unequal trade relationships. However, 'it has been argued that dependency theory contributes little to understanding the sources of Argentina's failure' (Sawers, 1996: 44).

The outcome, according to Rock, has been economic stagnation and political breakdown:

> Argentine society has invariably failed to revolutionize itself in a self-sustaining independent direction. Instead, following such ruptures, society has turned in on itself in fierce competition to monopolize static or diminishing resources. Such are the common general features of the seventeenth, the early nineteenth and the later twentieth centuries. In each case, although the competitors for dominance were different, external rupture was closely attended by severe political stress and usually by political breakdown (1987: 24).

Lewis argues along similar lines, holding that in Argentina 'economics and politics became a zero-sum game of consumption versus accumulation and of power versus exclusion. Ownership of political office was a mechanism to secure sectional objectives and deny resources to opponents - and a means for settling old scores' (1993: 113). Under conditions where the socio-political battle assumed the character of a 'winner-takes-all' contest, in the medium-term no single agent was sufficiently powerful to impose a sectoral project on other forces in society nor, in the long term, to encourage accommodation with them. No actor could hold the ring or dominate it. The outcome, Waisman sustains, has been 'the reversal of development in Argentina':

> The economic and political development of the country was curvilinear: high levels of economic and social development and an expanding liberal democracy up to the 'Depression', followed by economic sluggishness and political instability ever since. More specially, the reversal of Argentine development began as industry expanded and diversified in a short time to large-scale industrialization, and thus to the maldistribution of capital and human resources and developed a self-limiting economic system, in which a large share of the surplus generated by the competitive sector was allocated to the noncompetitive one. When stagnating tendencies set in, the tie between state and labour characterized as corporatist relationship broke down, and the conflict over the distribution of the surplus led to illegitimacy and political instability (1987: 254-56).

Thus, Argentine politics was represented by a sequence of abrupt shifts from civilian to military, from pragmatic to ideological, and from business to labour-dominated administrations: the economy displayed a tendency to shortening,

increasingly volatile cycles, accentuating political discontent and protest.[95] Particularly after Perón's fall, Argentina began a long and ultimately unsuccessful struggle to surmount the economic impasse that had arisen during the 1940s. As the country failed to regain prosperity and growth, chronic inflation and recurrent cycles of recession and recovery arrested its progress toward industrialisation, while simultaneously social and political divisions grew increasingly tense and violent. Despite this unfavourable backdrop, however, since 1983 elections have occurred regularly, and post-1991, a modicum of macroeconomic stability arose. Unfortunately, this proved short-lived as recession at the end of the twentieth century led to considerable economic and political turbulence, which provoked multiple forms of popular protest, including *saqueos* (the sacking of supermarkets), *cacerolazos* (street protests involving the banging of pots and pans), *apagónes* (blackouts), *la fábrica recuperada* (factory occupations) and, last but not least, the *piquetero* (unemployed) movement.

Social movements arise out of the failings of neo-liberal political economy

These movements arose in response to an unprecedented level of unemployment, long-term poverty and the soaring income inequality that resulted from the neo-liberal economic policies followed by Menem from the early 1990s. Menem's version of 'populist liberalism' enabled the president to disarticulate opposition inside his party

---

95 The roots of Argentina's decline are to be found not only in the country's inability to respond to the new global economic order. Political illegitimacy, severe instability and conflict 'resulted from the struggle between organised social groups – unionized workers, army officers, business sectors, government bureaucrats, etc' (De la Balze, 1995: 2). De la Balze also argues that: 'from 1940 to 1983, the political system was highly unstable. This period was characterized by military coups, populist politics and various forms of "restricted democracy" in which major political players were not allowed to participate formally in the electoral process. As a result, governments lacked the necessary legitimacy and popular backing to implement and sustain a democratic political system or to introduce the policies necessary to rekindle economic growth' (ibid: 3).

and its affiliated unions, while cementing close (and sometimes corrupt) relations with

the country's captains of industry and finance (Montero, 2005: 256).[96] The profound

structural adjustment policies implemented during 1990-1999 led directly to the 2001

economic collapse, epitomised by debt default, devaluation and severe depression.

Before and after this debacle, the unemployed movement emerged as a powerful

popular resistance group against the neo-liberal policies of successive governments.[97]

The key to understanding the emergence of this kind of new protest is as a response to

long-standing economic stagnation and ever-expanding socio-economic inequalities,

which encouraged 'the poor and the unemployed to stand side by side against neo-

liberal economic policies and the political regimes' (Montero, 2005: 260).[98]

In the Argentine case, the imposition of a neo-liberal economic model led to

instability and to contestation by powerful social forces, despite the fact that these

policies were accepted as legitimate during the 1990s by a number of trade union

sectors and most political leaders. This political backdrop is crucial to explaining later

---

96 Adelman also argues that: 'what Argentina was witnessing is the outcomes of a series of
political crises - themselves products of a continental hegemonic vacuum. Privatization and
liberalization are last-ditch measures and not forethought visions. Even if Menem was elected
on the basis of a traditional populist platform (post-populist), he operated these neo-liberal
policies by 'using of traditional corporatist mechanisms to fragment and divide any counter-
alliance' against his attempt. That is, 'post-populist Argentina is a hybrid of inherited
institutions and responses to political contingencies, but which nonetheless marks a sea-change
in the country's development' (1994: 90).
97 According to Montero, the first generation of neo-liberal reforms in Latin America, during
the 1980s and the early 1990s, focused on the main macroeconomic policies. However, he also
argued that they were implemented incompletely in the context of severe economic crisis,
including hyperinflation and a government whose democratic legitimacy was new and therefore
fragile. He called this period the 'lost decade'. The second generation of post-neoliberal reform
he termed the 'difficult decade' - he notes that 'even with the consolidating and more mature
democracies not experiencing hyperinflation or financial crisis, reforms also failed and resulted
in economic stagnation and ever-expanding socio-economic inequalities' (2005: 260).
98 Montero argued that: 'the generation of neoliberal reforms during the 1980s and early 1990s
focused on the main macroeconomic policies proposed by the original Washington Consensus.
These were implemented incompletely in the context of severe economic crises, including
hyperinflation, and by governments whose democratic legitimacy was new and therefore fragile'
(2005: 259).

social protests.[99] Regarding the neo-liberal consensus, clear evidence came from the

dominant faction of the political class, who ignored the opinions of an increasingly

hostile population, an attitude which eventually created a profound legitimacy crisis.[100]

Finally, as unemployment rates, long-term poverty and income inequality expanded, so

too did a 'critical social consciousness', producing a 'ni un paso atras' ('not one step

back') attitude towards social protest, which began to develop even prior to the

economic meltdown of 2001.

To this backdrop, almost all excluded social sectors turned into self-legitimated

protesters and attached themselves to organised groups fighting government neo-liberal

policies. This attitude shift among a large swathe of the population provoked a

legitimacy crisis, undermining political and economic governance. It eventually gave

birth to the unemployed movement, which became the most prominent of grassroots

protest groups and adopted different strategies: 'saqueos' (1989-90, 1999-2001), the

'santiagazo' (1993), street protests, popular kitchens, occupations and sits-ins,

escraches. These actions were organised at national and provincial levels, as were the

infamous 'cortes de ruta', or roadblocks (Recalde, 2003: 151). Each of these different

modes of protest contained their own dynamics, which in turn, contributed to

establishing new forms of identity politics during the late 1990s and early 2000s. New

social actors emerged at the forefront of political life, those who were either divorced

---

99 On Carlos Menem's version of 'popular liberalism', Montero criticizes the political outcome:
'Menem's main contributions to state building were the concentration of executive authority in
the presidency and not full constitutional provisions' (2005: 256-57). It is characterised as 'a
continuation of partial, halting and half-baked democracy' in Argentina (ibid: 266).
100 One way to think about governance and its legitimacy is to ask how the system of formal
and informal structures, rules, regulations and institutions that make up a modern state, create
incentives that influence (but do not determine) the political and economic behaviour of
individuals and organisations. When this system generates perverse and anti-social incentives,
bad governance results, which may result in a crisis of legitimacy. On the other hand, when this
system works, good governance and political-economic stability is the reward.

from, or only loosely connected to, the 'traditional' civilian organisations that had hitherto dominated the socio-political arena, namely established parties and trade unions.

The unemployed movement - the *piquetero* movement - arose under specific socio-political conditions: when neo-liberal theory dictated government policy and when the status quo, both economic and political, had lost its legitimacy. By the late 1990s it was widely believed among the socially disadvantaged sector of Argentine society that the prevailing 'rules of the game' were skewed against them. In consequence, grassroots movements emerged at the national and provincial levels, as a plethora of heterogeneous organisations engaged in highway blockades, the occupation of public buildings, negotiated about jobs and social provision with public officials, and make food demands to supermarkets. These actions were mostly centred in the cities and with time became labelled 'the unemployed movement' (*'los movimientos desocupados'*). From the beginning, they questioned the neo-liberal policies pursued by successive governments and even expanded their critique to bemoan the stop-go economic cycles that had frustrated Argentina's development since 1930. Another crucial aspect of the developing crisis – and one that provided impetus to the unemployed movement – was the weakening of trade union influence among the working class, and with this, of political parties that traditionally found their support among the popular classes.

Argentine economic policy in the 1990s attracted significant international attention and was promoted by organisations such as the World Bank as a model case of neo-liberal restructuring.[101] Being one of the early examples of neo-liberal restructuring

---

101 In this regard, Taylor argued: 'Latin American countries undertook radical reforms to their macroeconomic and developmental policies between the late 1980s and early 1990s. The prevailing import substitution industrialization strategy was replaced by a new market-oriented paradigm, and the attainment of macroeconomic stability became a crucial policy goal. These

associated with the rise of the 'Washington Consensus', it had been identified as a successful case during its early phase. From the late 1990s, however, Argentina was the focal point of international attention once again, but this time for different reasons. In retrospect, the crises in Argentina exposed the limitations of a model of economic growth based on short-term capital inflows and heavy exposure to foreign borrowing, rapid privatisation together with labour flexibility in the marketplace, which produced mass unemployed and underemployed, expanded the informal sector and resulted in increased poverty and social inequality.[102]

The recent crisis also raised major question marks concerning the effectiveness of neo-liberal models. The present study aims to highlight the key dilemmas experienced by countries like Argentina who have been engaged in the process of neo-liberal restructuring since 1976 and more strongly during the 1990s, drawing attention to some of the inherent limitations of the model and the repercussion for liberal democratic political systems. At the same time, an attempt is undertaken to identify some of the grave problems that 'new' democracies face when they are confronted by the strong resistance from popular movements mobilising against pro neo-liberal governments.

The collapse of Argentine political economy

---

shock stabilization programs were very effective in controlling inflation and became prominent political achievements of the administrations of Menem in Argentina, Fujimori in Peru, and Cardoso in Brazil. Moreover, their success created a favourable momentum for the introduction of further economic reforms. Both Argentina and Peru launched radical privatization programs almost simultaneously with the stabilization programs, and these two countries and Brazil deepened substantially the liberalization of their foreign trade as part of the stabilization package' (1999: 1).

102 Levy notes that: 'in 2002, by the government's own estimation, one person fell under the poverty line every four seconds. More than five million households were poor, accounting for 22.3 million people. Of these, 11.9 million people were extremely poor, a euphemism for the fact that they were hungry. All told, 61 per cent of the population was poor or extremely poor' (2004: 13).

This section provides a brief overview of Argentina's economic crisis in the late twentieth century, singling out continuities within the 'politics of economic instability' and the background to experiments with neo-liberal initiatives during the 1990s.[103] The emergence of contemporary Argentine unemployed movements is linked to the repeated 'development frustrations' experienced in preceding decades. The analysis proceeds to examine events that have unfolded post-2001, a period during which the movement has flourished. Based on this historical overview the role the unemployed movement has played in recent Argentine political history is discussed. Finally, the significance surrounding the emergence of unemployed movements in the era of global neo-liberalism is examined.

Argentina achieved considerable industrialisation during the twentieth century. Yet the country has never managed to fulfill its development potential and emerge as a major success within the group of late industrialising economies. Argentina expanded rapidly from the 1880s and became a rich agricultural exporter. At the time of the First World War, it was one of the wealthiest societies in the world and attracted many immigrants from Europe. However, since 1945 development performance has been quite disappointing. Argentina recorded low rates of economic growth while pursuing a prolonged Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) strategy, which provoked unusually severe income distributional conflicts. A strong pro-ISI coalition involving inward-oriented industrialists and organised labour became confronted with an equally strong anti-ISI coalition, a major component of which was a class of large landowners who had traditionally wielded considerable economic and political influence (Peralta-

---

103 Writing in 1975, Rock described Argentina in the following terms: 'Now she is more frequently seen as just another bankrupt and stagnant, weak and exploited corner of South America, compelled to exist in the future, as she now has done for so long in the past, in a maelstrom of disorganisation and decay' (1975: 1).

101

Ramos, 1992: 36).[104]

This schism exercised a negative impact on economic growth over most of the post-war period. Since then, the nodal point of Argentine capital accumulation has swung between agrarian and industrial. They struck a bargain and from that dubious marriage came something misshapen: 'A society in which an incomplete industrial system drew funds from an inefficient rural structure and could not grow without constant protection from the state' (Corradi, 1985: 2). Corradi strongly argues that:

> As different members - classes, interest groups, and so on - were precarious, the state began to maneuver and compensate for their weakness. The slender body gave rise to Caesar's head, a cumbersome authoritarian state, which paid off now one sector, now another. Just as the old agrarian Argentina had paid off a sizable middle class during the apogee of exports, the new Argentina paid off the working class when international prosperity shone briefly during World War. Caesarism turned into populism - a revolution on the cheap. Peronism added much but resolved little: it was accretion, not creation. The cumbersome system collapsed when exceptional international circumstances changed and funds to underwrite the payoffs ran out. There was a failure to develop by themselves, a failure to have confidence in each other and a failure to understand the sources of their misery. Argentina remains a peripheral capitalist society, a non-metropolitan country, a Latin American nation, a fitful republic (1985: 2-3).

Argentina's pace of industrial transformation consequently lagged behind that of Brazil and East Asian's 'tiger economies'. To compound matters, the ISI development model did little to address an extremely high level of income inequality (Parelto-Ramos, 1992). ISI only produced a chronically inefficient and stagnant economy (low growth and inflation) with perennial foreign exchange crises.[105] Indeed, Argentina has had an

---

104 In these periods, 'the agricultural sector sought to do away with all state control on the export and commercialisation of agricultural products and called for a "free and fluctuating" exchange market' through the devaluation of the peso. On the other hand, industrialists demanded 'more capital-intensive branches as well as heavy subsidies, high tariff protection and the incorporation of technology and foreign capital' (Peralta-Ramos, 1992: 36).

105 According to Sawers, the ISI model created more problems than it solved and is the best to understand Argentina's economic stagnation. He views ISI as political nationalism and argues that 'in order to generate the resources needed to subsidise industry, the agricultural sector is squeezed. The farm sector declines, but since it is typically the principal generator of foreign exchange, the balance-of-payments crisis is exacerbated. In order to protect infant industries

unusually long and intense experience with ISI, which began in the 1930s, whereas most developing countries began ISI in the 1950s and 1960s. Importantly, in addition to low growth and periods of hyperinflation, the country also suffered an extended seventeen years of military governments between 1966 and 1983 - from Onganía (1966-70) to Bignone (1982-83) - which were characterised as periods of 'suffering quite significantly in terms of the misallocation of resources, a slow rate of growth, recurrent internal and external crises, a slow rise in wages, big fiscal deficits, a skyrocketing foreign indebtedness and increasing inflation' (Di Tella and Dornbusch, 1989: 8).[106]

Even through a transition to democracy occurred after 1983 under a presidential system and Carlos Menem carrying out neo-liberal reforms post-1989, the situation has not improved. In retrospect, Argentina's reform experience is of much shorter duration, but of much greater intensity, compared with most other Latin American countries such as Brazil. This tendency for abrupt policy u-turns in the late twentieth century is similar to the pattern established in previous decades.[107] One consequence is that macroeconomic instability and economic difficulties have usually been associated with political crises that have caused periodic breakdowns in democratic politics, making

---

from foreign competition, tariff and other forms of trade protection are instituted. Without the challenge of foreign competition, these industries (for example appliances, electronics, intermediate goods and autos) which are usually capital intensive and require imported components, remained infantalised, requiring permanent subsidies and trade protection. This permanently curses the consumer with high prices, poor quality and indifferent service' (1996: 37-38).

106 According to Di Tella and Dornbusch, Argentina's economy acquired a stop-go character from 1946 to 1983 (1989: 8). For their part, Nouzeilles and Montaldo depicted the 1976 to 1983 period in the following manner: 'it was not until the 1970s, when salaries dropped steadily and political dysfunction became pervasive, that pessimism took hold. Disenchantment grew out of the realisation that modern Argentina was no longer capable of fulfilling its promises of democratic progress and economic opportunity for all, delivering instead a series of authoritarian political regimes and increasingly ineffective economic programs. Frustration reached unprecedented levels in the 1980s and 1990s' (2002: 5).

107 According to Wynia, Argentina has witnessed: 'intense conflicts among political parties and energetic interest groups that process information quickly and respond to government decisions with amazing skill and rapidity' (1978: 10). This argument is developed in Wynia (1978), Chapter 9.

consistent economic and political planning impossible. Stable economic management (policy implementation) has also been interrupted by pervasive distrust among economic and social groups that prevents sustained cooperation among the owners of land, labour and capital. Furthermore, given the degree of endemic economic and political instability, the country failed to attract long-term capital investment that could have speeded up growth, which in turn compounded the problems facing a newly established, fragile democratic administration.

Argentina's recent political upheaval should therefore be viewed in the context of its historical political development. Before 1930, Argentina enjoyed some 70 years of political stability that facilitated rapid economic growth and made Argentina one of the world's wealthiest countries. It ranked seventh in the world in per capita income in the 1920s. In contrast, from 1930 until 1983 Argentina experienced significant political instability, characterised by numerous military coups, 25 presidents, 22 years of military rule, and 13 years of 'Peronism'. When the military intervened in 1943, the regime came to be dominated by a colonel serving as Secretary of Labour, Juan Perón, who went on to build a formidable political base through support from the rapidly growing union movement. Perón was elected president in 1946 as the candidate of the Argentine Labour Party, which later became the Peronist Party. During his presidency, Perón bestowed considerable benefits on Argentina's working class through wage increases, fringe benefits and the creation of a social security system. He also sought rapid industrialisation of the economy by establishing state-run industries protected by trade barriers (Ratliff and Fontaine, 1990: 12-13).

Perón's mobilisation of the working class had an enduring effect on Argentina's political system over the next four decades. Even when Perón was ousted by the

military in 1955, Peronism as a political movement survived despite attempts by the military and anti-Peronist sectors to defeat it. After his removal from office, a series of civilian and military governments ruled until 1973, when Perón was re-elected after 18 years of exile. Just a year later, however, Perón died and was succeeded by his second wife Isabel, who had little political experience. Economic and political chaos ensued, with political violence surging and Argentina experiencing its first bout of hyperinflation. As a result, the military intervened once again in 1976, but this time ruled directly until 1983, when it fell into disrepute in the aftermath of its failure in the Falkland Islands/*Islas Malvinas* War with the UK in 1982. It was during this period that the military conducted the so-called 'dirty war' against leftists, guerrillas and their sympathizers; thousands of Argentines 'disappeared'.

In 1983, Argentina returned to civilian democratic rule with the election of Raúl Alfonsín of the moderate Radical Civic Union (UCR). Alfonsín was widely credited with restoring democratic institutions, but economic conditions during his tenure were chaotic, with hyperinflation and considerable labour unrest. As a result, Alfonsín left office six months before his six-year term ended, letting the winner of the 1989 election, Carlos Menem of the Justicialista Party (PJ, formerly the Peronist Party), assume office early. Menem transformed Argentina from a state-dominated protectionist economy to one committed to free market principles and open to trade. Most state-owned enterprises were privatised, hyperinflation was eliminated, and the economy was opened up to foreign trade and investment. In 1991, under the direction of Minister of Economy, Domingo Cavallo, the government pegged the Argentine *peso* to the US dollar and limited the printing of *pesos* to the extent that they were backed by dollars, a policy which helped keep inflation in check, but became a major factor in Argentina's recent

financial turmoil. It not only led to an overvaluation of the *peso* and made export sectors uncompetitive, but also led to continued overspending resulting in large increases in the external debt. What made Menem's transformation of Argentina even more extraordinary was that he broke with the traditional Peronist protectionist policies favourable to the working-class and labour. Under Menem, the PJ began to attract middle-class voters and even some business interests (Pastor and Wise, 2001).[108]

Yet increasing corruption and high unemployment at the end of Menem's second term were factors that led to the defeat of his party in the October 1999 elections - Menem himself was prohibited constitutionally from seeking a third term. Notwithstanding the economic incentives generated by convertibility, the institutional structure of the Argentine state also mitigated against policymakers taking the economic and political decisions necessary to forestall the crisis. Institutions contributed to poor governance by creating incentives that undermined political co-operation, rewarded political opportunism and patronage, while weakening political responsibility.

The IMF and World Bank

No one doubts now that the Argentine authorities made serious mistakes, but the international financial community also bears responsibility for the crisis. The IMF and the World Bank backed Argentina's economic programmes with money and advice throughout the ten years that the convertibility regime was in place. Argentina was

---

108 The Argentine presidential system tends to a variety of structural problems that undermine good governance and cooperation between the parties (Linz and Valenzuela, 1994). Principal among these is the problem of legislative deadlock when the presidency and Congress are controlled by different parties. On the tradition of hyper-presidentialism and the effect of electoral incentives on the behaviour of legislators, see O'Donnell, 1994. Under Menem, presidential unilateralism and discretion increased substantially (Peruzzotti, 2001). The use of executive decree powers has marginalised the role of Congress in formulating, scrutinising and passing legislation, undermining trust between the executive and the legislature.

highly praised as an exemplary case of a country adopting the type of structural reforms based on a neo-liberal agenda that international financial institutions and private markets have been promoting over the past three decades. Argentina opened itself enthusiastically to world financial markets, which backed the country with significant resources. However, it is also important to note that the rapid shift to a neo-liberal agenda did not represent a voluntary choice on the part of Argentina's domestic economic and political elites. They were forced to move due to pressures from key external actors (primarily the IMF and World Bank). Paul Cammack explains this shift as 'dependent and disciplinary' negotiation, using internal World Bank texts:

> The Administration of President de la Rúa, which took office in December 1999, is firmly committed to improving fiscal and social performance within the framework of the Convertibility Plan. This is an ambitious agenda and the first steps have focused on the fiscal front. Faced with a prolonged recession, high unemployment and high levels of poverty, plus a fiscal deficit of more than two percent in 1999, the new administration has moved quickly to cut expenditures, raise taxes, and negotiate a new IMF programme ... importantly, the Government has proposed a major piece of legislation on labor reform ... (revealed World Bank Texts, 8 September 2000) ... within this context, the World Bank affirmed its continuing commitment to a three-point programme of enhancing social development, including poverty alleviation and human resource development, improving the public sector's performance and institutional capacity, particularly at subnational levels, and consolidating structural reforms, including public finance, labour markets, and the financial sector ... as this summary and the extended discussion in the text revealed, key priorities were the extension of fiscal discipline to the provinces, and reform of labour markets to induce greater flexibility (2002: 92).

The adoption of this agenda coincided with unique circumstances in international financial markets and led investors to respond enthusiastically to the new opportunities. Ironically, however, the massive inflow of foreign money was a mixed blessing. It helped speed up reforms and defrayed the costs, but it is also led to inertia in tackling the sources of Argentina's poor economic performance, lowering the urgency and creating new problems: 'The success of tackling inflation, the unprecedented growth in

trade among neighbouring countries and the euphoria of foreign investors, obscured the drag on the region's economic prospects created by high income disparities, low productivity, low international competitiveness' (Naím, 1995: 46). Referring to lessons from the Argentine crisis of 2001, political economists also criticise 'the role of the IMF and WB':

> In light of the gravity of the crisis that unfolded while the country was engaged in a succession of IMF supported programs, it is not surprising that the Fund has come under harsh criticism for its involvement in Argentina. Indeed, with hindsight, the Fund — like most other observers — erred in its assessment of the Argentine economy by overestimating its growth potential and underestimating its vulnerabilities. These misjudgments resulted in IMF supported programs that were insufficiently ambitious and excessively accommodative of slippages, particularly through 1998 when the economy was booming. Although the authorities received warnings from the Fund, at least by early 1998, over the country's growing vulnerabilities, stressing the need for further fiscal adjustment and structural reform, the institution continued to provide its support on the basis of a policy package that was ultimately inadequate (Geithner, 2003: 63).

> Throughout this period [1991-2000], Argentina received loans from the IMF and World Bank. They saw that Argentina had faithfully followed at least part of the Washington Consensus; they saw modernisation and growth and controlled inflation. They let it break and renegotiate numerous letters of intent. The IMF never said convertibility was bad, because it forced the government to curb emissions and go into debt instead. It painted a picture of Argentina as a country without structural problems and that was not true. The Fund exerted no discipline on Argentina from 1991-2000 (Green, 2003).[109]

The IMF and WB have, with reason, been strongly criticised for the role they played both before and after the outbreak of crisis in Argentina. Many social protesters on the streets of Buenos Aires have pointed to the IMF as the main culprit, along with the Argentine authorities. Argentina's crisis has the IMF's fingerprints all over it.

---

[109] See, http://www.cafod.org.uk/archive/policy/argentina200301.shtml

Intensive neo-liberal turning of political economy during the 1990s

Neo-liberal policy initiatives started to be implemented in Argentina in 1976, when the military seized power and instigated 'the dirty war'. Early measures included the reversal of decades of protectionism aimed at promoting industrialisation, tariff reduction and the partial opening of markets to trade (total opening would take place in the 1990s), which caused the bankruptcy of many national companies. Capital markets were also 'liberated', giving rise to international financial speculation. The dictatorship, however, was not long lasting: it ended in economic, social and military disaster after the gamble of the Falklands War. By 1983, the brutal repression of what was a militant and organised labour force - the so-called *'Proceso'* - left 30,000 'disappeared' and wiped out a generation of activists. State violence managed to stifle organised social and political opposition, but failed to provide substitute structures of participation, leading to the isolation of the military regimes from society.

Society consequently became increasingly opaque to the rulers, making potential opposition less predictable. Thus, 'the lack of feedback signals from society compounded rather than corrected the strategic and tactical errors of the authoritarian regime. When these errors were perceived, it was late. At this point, the regime changed course in a fitful manner and tried to escape from one crisis by jumping into another - War' (Corradi, 1985: 136). On the economic front, the country's external debt increased substantially, industrial capacity contracted, purchasing power diminished steadily and income distribution became highly unequal, leading to the 'disappearance' of much of Argentina's middle class.

In 1983, democracy in the country was restored with the elected civilian

government - headed by President Raúl Alfonsín. The restoration of democracy was greeted with high hopes of much needed political and economic reconstruction.[110] Nevertheless, the economic situation inherited by the new administration provoked concern: 'The rate of inflation was running at 600 per cent per annum in the last quarter of 1983. There was a fiscal deficit equal to about 15 per cent of GDP. The external debt amounted to 67 per cent of GDP and arrears of US$3.2 billions were already owed to foreign creditors' (Machinea, 1993: 124). In addition, there were few signs that Alfonsín and his Radical Party would be able to execute economic stabilisation programmes except for the 'Austral Plan'. This operated heterodox shock methods of increasing prices and freezing incomes, much needed to prevent an even higher inflation rate, but left serious problems unaddressed. Argentina's trade deteriorated continuously between 1984 and 1987. After losing the 1987 election, the Radical Party lost support from the Peronists in Congress to secure the passage of a package of severe adjustment reforms. The reforms were also opposed by the CGT, who organised massive strikes.[111] The new government's heterodox plan consequently failed to sustain a long-running price stability, with hyper-inflation occurring in 1989 (Figure 4.1).

---

110 In the past, 'the very principle of representative democracy based on consent and the rule of law had suffered a succession of shattering blows from Peron's quasi-fascist populism, from military authoritarians who all of them had so far failed because they had been overwhelmed by the conflicts of interest that so deeply divided Argentine society' (Williamson, 1992: 479).

111 'Thirteen general strikes from 1984 to 1988 were proof of a complete opposition to the economic proposals of the government on the part of trade union leaders. The strikes variously targeted issues such as the non-payment of the external debt, an end to negotiations with the IMF, wage increases, a change in economic policy, etc.' (Machinea, 1993: 134). In addition, there was fierce opposition by a variety of groups which blocked change. Among these group were 'the unions of government employees, fearful of losing their jobs, whose ruling elites often participated in the control of government-owned enterprises; business sectors that benefited from government subsides or inflated sales to the public sector, or who made money from minimally productive businesses that could only have survived in the shelter of strong protectionist and interventionist policies; corrupt officials who got rich from the system; segments of ruling class unwilling to forgo their discretionary prerogatives over public expenditures; and speculators who profited from a setting of acute economic instability and volatility' (De la Balze, 1995: 69).

Figure 4.1:

The Evolution of Inflation Rates, 1970-2000 (%)

1989: 4929 per cent, 1990: 1345 per cent
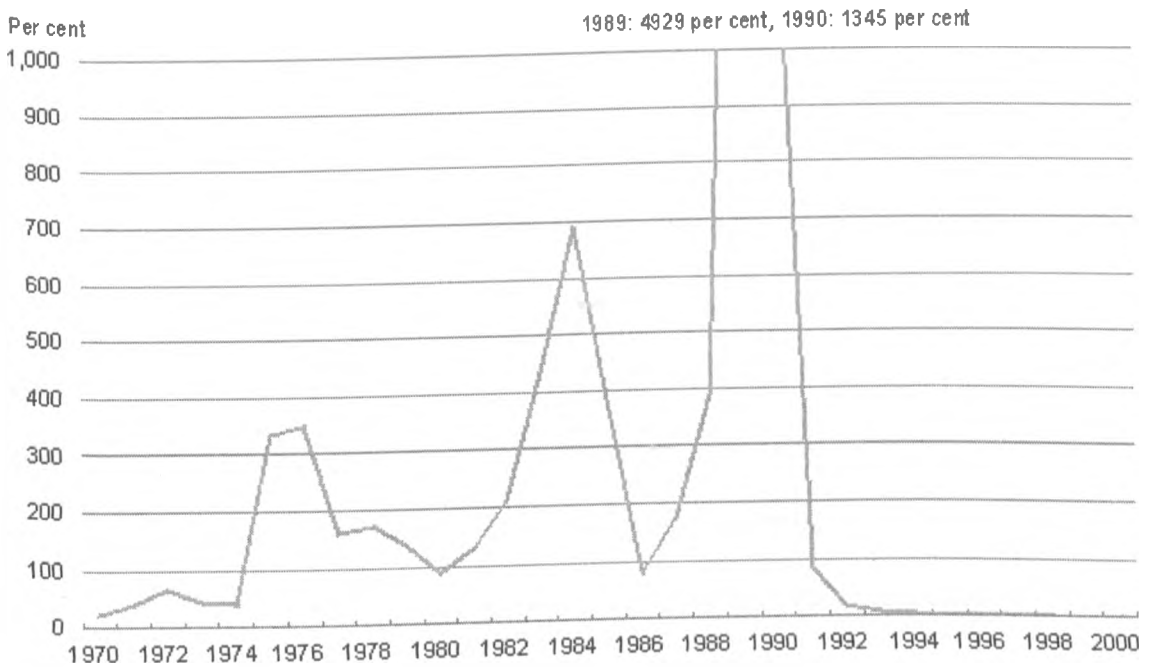
Per cent

Source: Modified from Sturzenegger and Moya (2003: 87-121).

The state eventually became unable to pay interest on the national debt, the economy collapsed and inflation rocketed in 1989, reaching 200 per cent per month and topping 3,000 per cent annually. Lewis describes this difficult period (1988-90) in the following terms:

> The country experienced the reality rather than the threat of hyperinflation. Economic activity was paralysed as individuals and enterprises attempted to come to terms with a situation in which retail prices were marked up two or three times a day, the local currency depreciated precipitately in the parallel exchange market and the gold and foreign currency reserves of the banking system virtually disappeared. The proportions of households living below the poverty line climbed to about one third of the total and hunger and economic uncertainty seemed to portend social disorder on a massive scale. Inflation which had tripped into hyperinflation was not to be tolerated (1993: 3-4).

In the months leading up to Menem taking office, inflation rose to a compound annual rate of 28,000 per cent (Williamson, 1992: 483). President Alfonsín declared a

state of siege to cope with the food riots and looting that broke out in the poorer districts of major cities. In this tense environment, the survival of Argentine democracy hung on Carlos Menem's ability to recreate a consensus on the means of overcoming the appalling economic problems faced by the nation. He took office with a historical mission, once again, of 'preventing Argentina from Latin Americanisation'.

Carlos Menem, during his political campaign, promised that he would tackle the three horrors of the past: 'the memory and wounds left by the political violence and state terror in the 1970s; the military adventure in the South Atlantic in 1982; and the hyperinflationary trauma of 1988-1989' (Szusterman, 2000: 200). Menem promoted an interesting platform, presenting himself as a 'populist caudillo', the successor of Juan Perón, but soon after taking office carried out economic reforms in accordance with the 'Washington Consensus'.[112] On this point, Manzetti noted that:

> In 1989, with the Argentine treasury depleted, the country was experiencing the worst economic crisis of the century. Menem realized shortly before taking office that there was no room for the redistributive measures he had promised so vehemently. The consolidation of democracy had been all-important for the Alfonsín administration. Menem's top priority would be to resolve the economic crisis. In the most stunning policy reversal in Argentina's modern history, Menem reached the conclusion that turning the economy around no longer rested in the traditional populist, nationalistic, redistributive approach. The key to success was instead the establishment of a free market economy through the implementation of a sweeping market-oriented reform programme worthy of Thatcher and Reagan's applause. Oddly, it took a Peronist President to undo most of Perón's welfare and ISI policies of the 1940s (1999: 71).

These involved a drastic change in monetary policy, the deregulation of domestic

---

112 Williamson (1990) argued that the set of policy reforms that most of official Washington thought would be good for Latin American countries could be summarised in 10 propositions: fiscal discipline; a redirection of public expenditure priorities toward fields offering both high economic returns and the potential to improve income distribution, such as primary health care, primary education, and infrastructure; tax reform (to lower marginal rates and broaden the tax base); interest rate liberalization; a competitive exchange rate; trade liberalisation; liberalisation of inflows of foreign direct investment; privatisation; deregulation (to abolish barriers to entry and exit); and secure property rights.

markets, the downsising and/or privatisation of public companies which were the source of much spending (such as those providing telephone, energy and water services), the implementation of labour flexibility and wage cuts. In short, he did the opposite of what he had promised when on the campaign trail.[113]

Killing hyper-inflation instead of buying hyper unemployment rates

The neo-liberal policies introduced by Menem's government appeared to work. In reality, however, they only brought positive results for a short period of time (1991-1994).[114] As noted, the emblematic symbol of this seemingly triumphant neo-liberal economic model was the currency board, which pegged the value of the Argentinean currency (the *peso*) at US$1. How was the convertibility of the *peso* guaranteed? A law passed in 1991 by the Argentine Congress, the so-called 'convertibility law', comprised an agreement between the Argentinean government and *peso* holders, who were promised that their holdings of national currency could be exchanged at the fixed rate. This unorthodox system was made possible by ensuring that each *peso* in circulation was backed by a dollar in reserve.

The system worked well for a time. Convertibility put an end to hyperinflation, but once monetary stability was attained the situation changed. Economic growth

---

113 On these reforms, it has been pointed out that Argentine people tolerated Menem 'because he was responsible for wiping out inflation and restoring economic growth, something no other president had accomplished'. Also he moderated 'the populist extremism of his Peronist party, even if this meant fueling clientelism' (Corrales, 2002: 10).

114 Manzetti emphasises the other aspects of Menem's stabilisation package: 'moving beyond the immediate success on the inflation front, Argentina managed to implement a massive privatisation programme, as well as drastic trade and capital account liberalisation. By the mid-1990s, all public utilities and public industrial enterprises had been privatised. Privatisation revenues have been utilized as part of the government's overall macroeconomic policy package to counter fiscal and current account imbalances and contributed to the achievement of the fixed exchange rate. Macroeconomic stability, massive privatisation and drastic trade liberalisation, have been instrumental in generating large flows of foreign capital. In turn, they have made a major contribution to the process of economic growth' (1999: 71-149).

returned: GDP grew 10 per cent in 1992 and nearly 6 per cent in 1993 and 1994. However, as shown in Figure 4.2, the rates rapidly fell after 1998 and reached minus 15 per cent in 2002.[115]

Figure 4.2:

The Evolution of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 1994-2004 (%)
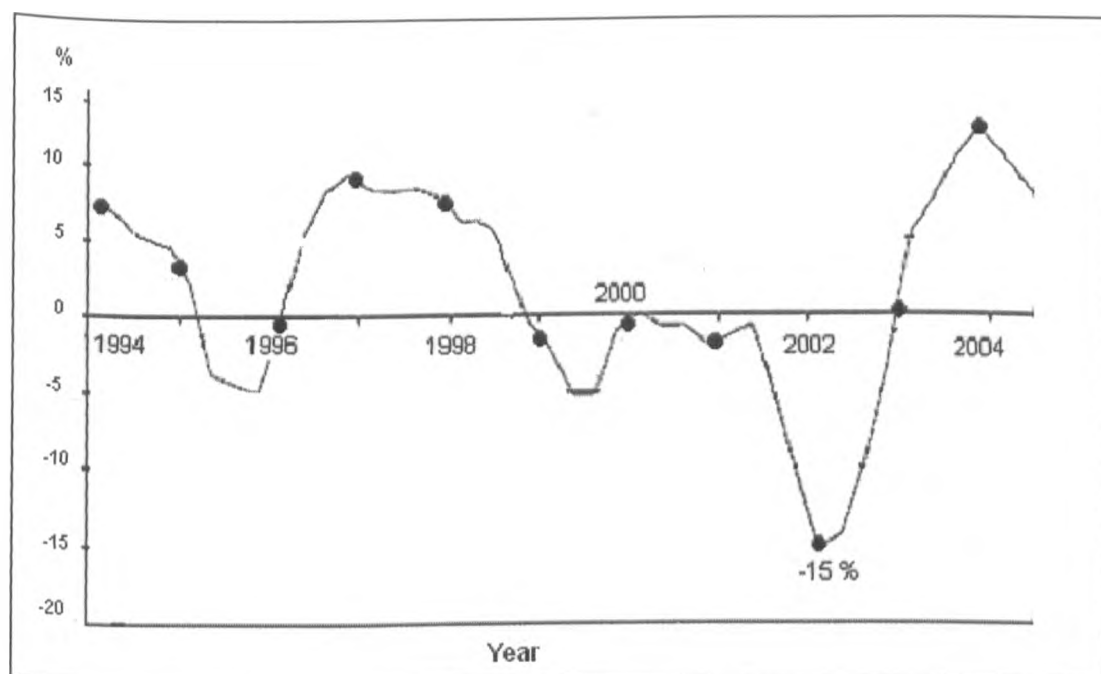
Source: Modified from FLEL, INDEC, 2005.

In this context, the real nature and significance of the 1991 convertibility law as an economic reform cannot be fully comprehended without some reference to Argentine economic history - as is acknowledged by its architects.

When the law was introduced, both President Menem and Economics Minister

---

115 'The economy initially responded favourably to the reforms, in terms of stability and growth. Stability was generated through the control of inflation, and this promoted a deepening of the financial sector; the economy grew strongly and per capita GDP expanded by 47% between 1990 and 1998, despite a temporary contraction in 1995 resulting from the Mexican crisis. The initial boom in private investment, based on privatizations and concessions, was used to achieve significant improvements in the provision of basic services and efficient infrastructure in certain areas. Moreover, total factor productivity grew at an average annual rate of between 2% and 3% between 1990 and 1998. The country rejoined international markets and became a major recipient of capital flows' (IADB, 2004: 3).

114

Cavallo, argued that the objective was to break with a discredited development model as well as with failed past stabilisation efforts. Menem, referring to the buoyant performance of the economy earlier in the century, confidently stated that the new strategy would enable the country to 'recapture its history'.[116] However, Menem's convertibility law only 'converted higher inflation in the late of 1980s into higher unemployment rates' in the late 1990s and severely declining GDP rates in the early of 2000s.[117] Under a currency board a country increases its money supply only to the extent that it earns foreign credits. Argentina, using the currency board, was able to maintain the exchange rate at one *peso*, but unfortunately inflation occurred at a higher rate than its competitors in world markets. As a result, Argentine businesses faced increased costs, losing market share to foreign competitors; higher unemployment ensued. After years of unemployment rates nearing twenty per cent, the economy was again in serious trouble. Indeed, the monetary regime launched in 1991 echoed a structure established almost a century earlier. By the 1980s, increasing economic volatility had inculcated in Argentines a sense of policy failure and a fear of imminent economic collapse. There was, too, an awareness of relative as well as absolute decline, a sentiment compounded by the fracas of the Malvinas War. Distributional crises, which had characterised the economy since the 1940s, had resulted in near hyperinflation in 1975/6, several years of triple digit inflation from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s,

---

116 See, for example, Menem and Baizán, 'Conversaciones con Carlos Menem: Como Consolidar el Modelo' (Buenos Aires, 1993); Menem and Dromi, 'El Estado Hoy: Integración, Participación, Solidaridad' (Buenos Aires, 1996).
117 Experts in labour market economics consider the main causes of higher unemployment are: 'the layoff of redundant workers in the privatised enterprises, favoured by a rapid and profound change in the legislative barriers to such measures; an significant increases in the intensity of work; the introduction of organisational changes, mainly in the tradable products industries exposed to competition through trade liberalisation policies; the disappearance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which could not adjust to the pressure of foreign competition in a context of rapid trade liberalisation combined with high interest rates and scarcity' (Nochteff, 2000: 35).

followed by two periods of hyperinflation in 1988 and 1989.

At the beginning of the century, Argentina had compared their country in positive terms with other 'settler' economies (the US, Canada and Australia), or with Western Europe. By the 1980s the comparison was being made, unfavourably, with neighbouring republics and the debate was increasingly about the 'Latinoamericanisation' of Argentina. Argentina was not an underdeveloped country during the period of externally-led growth; its social structure resembled the 'new country' type rather than the usual Latin American pattern. Two important characteristics of 'new country' social structures are a high land-labour ratio and labour shortage - labour had to be imported and there was no large 'reserve army'.

It was argued that the reversal of economic and political development, bringing 'Latinoamericanisation', was the result of processes that took place between the 'Depression' and the post-war period. Changes in the international system in that period did not determine directly the reversal of Argentine development. However, they contributed indirectly, for these changes caused a bifurcation between the state and the hitherto dominant class. The Depression led to a decline of the hegemony of the agrarian elite, and produced the economic and political fragmentation of the upper class as a whole. This fragmentation, and the external pressures derived from the War, produced the 'autonomy of the state' (Waisman, 1987: 262). Waisman's explanation for 'the reversal of Argentine political and economic development and Latinoamericanisation' centres on the 1940s. Radical protectionism, which enhanced state autonomy as the 'promoter' of ISI, produced an inefficient, bureaucratic and corrupt corporatist apparatus. This led to the combination of low growth and political instability, which has characterised the country ever since (1987: 262).

A concatenation of circumstances consequently facilitated the introduction of the 1991 Convertibility Law. National angst over a perceived creeping 'Latinoamericanisation' produced a search for new solutions to national problems. The semi-orthodox stabilisation packages pursued during the military dictatorship and the heterodox 'Austral Plan' (1985) also encouraged new thinking, while the blood-letting of the 1970s and early 1980s led many citizens to feel that drastic measures were required to reform the country. Popular opinion held that 'there was no alternative' - all other options had been tried and discredited. Established distributional conflicts, graphically manifest in political violence, regime crises and military intervention, bred a willingness to break with the past, bringing a grudging acceptance of the Cavallo recipe.

Out of this new consensus for change, which gradually emerged during the Alfonsín years and consolidated after initial failures in the early years of the first Menem presidency (1989-95), demands grew for a re-activation of the economy. When Menem came to power, the public sector accounts had been in deficit for more than three decades. Amongst most social groups and economic sectors there was a growing recognition that quasi-autarchic interventionist strategies were no longer working and could not be sustained. In short, there was an alliance in favour of economic stability and a near collective willingness to assume some of the burden of adjustment. Whether all sectors were aware of the full implications of fiscal rectitude, the rolling back of the state and renewed international insertion, are debatable. Arguably, the task of Menem was made easier because shock trade liberalisation under the military regime and hyperinflation during the Alfonsín government had decimated those sectors most wedded to statism, while at the same time provoking a society-wide anxiety for stability. Thus, 'the stability identified with the continuation of the Convertibility Law has

117

become the dominant social value - the defeat of inflation' (Szusterman, 2000: 201).[118]

The post-crisis era: 1998-2004

In 1998, however, economic conditions had deteriorated alarmingly. An overvalued fixed exchange rate (Argentina's main trade partner – Brazil in Mercosur - had devalued its currency earlier) and an excessive amount of foreign debt were the two immediate causes of the crisis. Because the exchange rate was set at too high a level, Argentine exports declined while imports surged; this trade imbalance (the neo-liberal model is dependent on foreign capital inflows) made it impossible for the country to earn the foreign exchange it needed to pay the interest on its foreign debt. In 1998, therefore, Argentina entered one of the worst recessions in its history, but its government, with the tacit support of the middle class, continued piling deficit upon deficit.

Soon, though, it became clear that the country could no longer borrow to roll over those debts and pay the interest, forcing Buenos Aires to default and to devalue the peso.[119] The resulting meltdown brought huge social problems; exacerbating long-term trends of unemployment, poverty and social inequality, which affected long term social

---

118 However, this stability plan operated with limited acceptance with regard to the middle class. Szusterman argues that: 'Menem had achieved a coalition, a political consensus in an alliance of competitive capitalists (this time agrarian as well as industrial), with the poorest sectors of the urban population, and the multi-class clientelistic bases in marginal provinces. The progressive middle classes were left out' (2000: 205).

119 Other analyses exist about the causes of economic collapse. According to the World Bank, the roots were as follows: 'firstly, a strict exchange rate rule that reduced competitiveness and the capacity to grow; secondly, a loose fiscal policy mix that generated an increase in public indebtedness; and thirdly, a continuous weakening of the institutional environment. But, it was not caused by the liberalization of the economy. Liberalization strengthened the economy. It initially reduced economic imbalances and the economy performed remarkably well until 1997. And if there is an additional lesson from Argentina regarding the role that liberalization played in the crisis, it is that liberalization can be piecemeal. The liberalization process should present domestic enterprises with heightened competitive pressures, both international and domestic, but it should also allow them to respond, both positively to new opportunities as well as to economic downturns. And in Argentina, lack of liberalization in labour markets reduced the economy's degrees of freedom when the economy needed to adjust under reduced competitiveness abroad' (World Bank, 2002).

support programmes (e.g. the *Plan Trabajar* and *PJJH*, shown in Table 4.1).

Table 4.1:

Long-term trends in poverty, unemployment, GDP and workfare programmes, 1980-2004 (%)

Year	Poverty Rate (Buenos Aires)	Unemployment Rate	Growth real GDP (%)	Workfare Programmes	
				Participants (monthly average)	Annual Expenditure (millions of $)
1980	8.0	2.0	4.5	-	-
1985	16.0	6.1	-2.0	-	-
1990	38.1	7.5	-1.8	-	-
1991	25.2	6.5	10.5	-	-
1992	18.6	7.0	9.9	-	-
1993	17.3	9.6	5.7	26,236	94
1994	17.6	11.5	5.8	33,365	118
1995	23.5	17.5	-2.8	48,909	125
1996	27.3	17.2	5.5	62,083	134
1997	26.2	14.9	8.1	126,264	299
1998	25.1	12.8	3.9	112,076	259
1999	26.9	14.2	-3.4	105,895	241
2000	29.3	15.1	-0.8	85,665	162
2001	34.1	17.4	-4.4	91,806	160
2002	52.0	19.7	-10.9	1,126,387	2,030
2003	51.7	15.6	8.8	2,171,265	3,924
2004*	42.7	14.6	9.0	2,017,165	3,631[e]

Notes: (*) Estimates for the first semester of 2004. [e] The figure is the annual estimated expenditure based on an expenditure equal to $2,723 millions to September 2004.

<u>Source:</u> Adopted from Ministerio de Trabajo and INDEC, 2004.

The combination of short-term success (1991-1994) and longer-term instability (1998-2004) epitomises Argentina during the twentieth century. The immediate

advantages of the Convertibility Law were counterbalanced by its longer-term disadvantages. Inflation had been reduced to single digit levels by the late 1990s at the expense of a complete loss of flexibility in monetary policy. As a result, the authorities were unable to respond to the emergence of a recession towards the end of the decade through an expansionary monetary policy. What is worse, as the economy continued on a downward slide and inflows of dollars dried up, the 'one-to-one rule' involving the *peso* and the dollar placed a further restriction on the use of monetary policy. A deflationary bias was injected into the economy. Hence, 'by the second half of the 1990s, Argentina appeared to accomplish a decisive break with its past, characterised by relative stagnation and endemic instability' (Öni, 2006: 244). Furthermore, the rigidity of the Convertibility Law rendered the economy particularly vulnerable to external shocks. During the late 1990s, the US dollar appreciated against other currencies, which immediately translated into an appreciation of the *peso*, a development that further undermined the competitiveness of Argentine exports. Similarly with the devaluation of the Brazilian *real*, following the outbreak of crisis in Brazil in 1999, the *peso* became seriously overvalued, hitting exports as Brazil forms Argentina's main trading partner in Mercosur.

Moving beyond the Convertibility Law, rounded appraisal of the background to the crisis needs to integrate additional factors. In retrospect, the privatisation programmes also played a crucial role rather similar to the Convertibility Law. Its impact was positive in the early stages (1990-1994), yet it helped to cover up growing fiscal disequilibria over time. Argentina experienced one of the most intense and far-reaching privatisation programmes of the recent era, with privatisation receipts serving an important function in terms of counteracting fiscal and current account imbalances

and maintaining a fixed exchange rate. Privatisation revenues, however, do not constitute a continuous source of government revenue. The end of the privatisation programmes had two major results. Firstly, Argentina could no longer attract significant inflows of long-term foreign investment. Consequently, Argentina had to seek refuge in portfolio capital in order to sustain the momentum of capital inflows. Secondly, it became increasingly difficult to sustain fiscal equilibrium over time, especially in an environment where municipal governments enjoyed a high degree of fiscal autonomy and were willing to incur large deficits (Öni, 2006: 248).

During the early 1990s, the positive signals provided by the opening up of the economy, the privatisation drive, as well as the high domestic interest rates relative to US interest rates, helped to attract foreign capital on a massive scale. The currency board experiment helped to reduce investment risks and contributed further to the process generating large capital inflows. These capital flows originating from the US and Europe, gave a strong boost to economic growth. Although foreign direct investment slackened by the mid-1990s, inflows of portfolio capital were maintained at high levels, notably through the purchase of Argentine bonds denominated in dollars. Pleased with this strategy, the IMF was ready to protect it with back-up credits taking into account the inherent volatility of portfolio capital. This line of defence worked during the 1995-1996 crises, but repeated injections of emergency credits failed to revive private capital inflows, or the economy, following the Brazilian crisis of 1999. By the end of the decade, the strategy appeared to be at a dead end.[120] Looking back on

---

120 Furthermore, the pattern of debt-led growth was extremely sensitive to exogenous shocks and deteriorating external conditions. Indeed, 'the Asian and Russian crises of 1997 and 1998, respectively exercised a negative influence over the economies of both countries. In addition, Argentina was negatively affected by the Brazilian devaluation, Brazil being its major trading partner ...' (Öni, 2006: 245).

the Argentine experiment, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the good times of the early 1990s were built on weak foundations. Economic growth during this period, substantial by earlier Argentine standards, as largely due to the accumulation of international debt, a domestic consumption associated with a large increase in the share of imports and once-only injections in government revenues from the sale of state enterprises. It was not unexpected, therefore, that by the end of the decade this initial rosy picture was substantially reversed.

At this point, it is important to draw attention to the social and distributional impact of neo-liberal restructuring. A wave of privatisations during Menem's presidency had already resulted in a significant increase in unemployment. Considering the fact that many of the privatised companies were utilities, prices for basic services like electricity and telephones registered massive increases, contributing to greater income inequality (Teubel, 2001: 460-488). Furthermore, as Argentina's recession deepened in 1999, the collapse of domestic demand resulted in additional bankruptcies and unemployment. In this environment, it became progressively more difficult to sustain broad social and political support for the overall economic programme, particularly for the component involving fiscal discipline. During the course of 2001, Argentina's recession became deeper. Although the IMF was willing to help through additional funding, this was under the condition that Argentina would eliminate her budget deficit. With the economy in recession and tax revenues declining drastically, the only way to balance the budget was to engineer a massive cut in government spending. Attempts by the Congress to accomplish this objective, however, met with massive waves of protest. In terms of social impact, Argentine society exploded and provoked the largest social disturbances of recent years, which ended in

the collapse of the De La Rúa government. Subsequently, a moratorium was declared on the external debt and the Convertibility plan came to an end.

One of the measures which had exasperated the people and triggered the fall of the government was the implementation of the 'corralito', which consisted of imposing banking restrictions putting a maximum limit on deposit holders' withdrawals. When faced with a devaluation, people began to empty their deposits on a large scale, causing a financial crisis. The outburst of public resistance was not only a response to the freezing of bank accounts, it was also a protest against high unemployment rates and cutbacks in public spending. Given the depth of the crisis, it badly affected sectors of the population that are usually better able to ride out recession: many educated and skilled people also lost their jobs. Small- and medium-sized enterprises were negatively affected because of bankruptcy and lay-offs. At a more fundamental level, the crisis helped to highlight the total bankruptcy of a development model based on clientelistic ties and patronage networks, which was the root cause of the problems involving chronic inflation, the massive build up of domestic and external debt, as well as stimulating unusual levels of corruption by international standards.[121]

Indeed, the degree of fiscal instability intensified during the second phase of neo-liberal reforms during the 1990s. This in an environment of an open capital account regime, created a highly fragile pattern of economic growth during the post-1990 era.

---

[121] In this regard, Felix argues that: 'De la Rúa had a political opening for changing policy direction. His predecessor, Carlos Menem, left office in 1999 pursued by corruption charges and accusations of having brought on the recession and debt crisis by over-issuing dollar bonds to finance fiscal deficits. De la Rúa's center-left coalition, which campaigned on an anti-corruption and economic recovery platform, won a decisive victory in the elections' (2002: 2). 'Even though De la Rúa's promises to fight corruption helped win him the election in October 1999, after ten scandal-riddled years under Peronist President Carlos Menem, his bribes charges have not only weakened his government but spoiled his image as an honest reformer' (BBC news, 21 October 2000), see, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/982599.stm

The result was that neither of the Argentine governments in the 1990s managed to achieve sustained economic expansion. The country experienced post-stabilisation and a surge in exports as the economy recovered, but these initial booms were not translated into increases in exports and economic growth. Given the inadequacy of export growth, financing the current account deficit at the prevailing exchange rate and levels of demand required substantial capital flows, resulting in a pronounced increase in the level of external indebtedness. Furthermore, the pattern of debt-led growth was extremely sensitive to exogenous shocks and deteriorating external conditions.

In the political realm, a critical role was played by highly charismatic 'neo-populist' leaders. Carlos Menem was identified closely with the neo-liberal restructuring process. His colourful personality was critical in building popular support and overcoming resistance to a potentially difficult and divisive set of economic reforms. The longer-term repercussions, however, proved destabilising. Menem, with his charismatic and top-down style of policy-making in an environment of weak checks and balances, had the advantage of accelerating the reform process, but his period in office had the negative effect of undermining democratic institutionalisation and the consolidation of the reform process, as Buscaglia maintains:

> The identity of the reformers (and their successors) lies at the heart of the Argentine crisis: in several emerging market countries, reforms were initiated not by free-marketers but by unlikely characters such as former populists and leftists. In Argentina, the hyperinflation opened a window for reforms, and these were adopted by President Menem, from the populist Peronist party, with the help of a group of competent technocrats lead by Minister Cavallo. Even though their populist origins made possible the launch of an impressive set of (first-generation) reforms, they left substantial 'illiberal' enclaves, they implemented them in an efficient and often corrupted way, and they did not reform any politico-institutional rules and practices. All this worked against the reform process, as the benefits of reforms did not reach the population at large, and corruption practices were seen as part of the same 'package as reforms' (2003: 1-2).

The ruling political group lost what little legitimacy it possessed. President de La Rúa was quickly ousted from office and replaced by a new president (Néstor Kirchner) in 2003. Argentine representative democracy was characterised by a greater degree of political turmoil in the post-crisis era (2001-2004), to an extent that the political system appeared to have passed rapidly from 'Latinoamericanisation' to 'Bolivianisation'.

Conclusion

In Argentina the exhaustion of the ISI model and the parallel decline of the populist experience marked the beginning of a quest to re-establish conditions for economic growth, reducing social conflicts and gaining political stability. Since the mid-1950s, the attempts made by democratic and authoritarian governments to modify the political economic structures by eliminating some of its redistributionist and nationalistic features, whilst also favouring a developmentalist, state-led strategy of growth, failed due to adverse international trends and effective opposition mounted by powerful socioeconomic and political actors whose fortunes were linked to the interventionist state.

The 1976-1983 authoritarian military regimes attempted to solve this problem by combining the use of harsh military repression with the implementation of a neo-liberal model aimed to atomise and weaken these socioeconomic and political groups. The use of military repression and free market policies succeeded in changing Argentina's socioeconomic structure and processes, but failed to attain its ultimate goal of creating a stable liberal economy and conservative political regime. The military government implemented some liberal trade and financial policies but, for political and social reasons, could not complete the application of an uncompromising neo-liberal model.

Nor could it guarantee, in the long-run, the creation of a free market economy. The continuity and deepening of neo-liberal restructuring seemed to require the existence of critical economic conditions and of a political regime able to legitimise the new economic model and ensure its survival during periods of economic and social strain. Argentina's authoritarian regime failed to meet these conditions and was finally forced to transfer power to a civilian elected government amid an acute socioeconomic crisis and humiliating military defeat.

Although initially reluctant to embrace a neo-liberal model, the civilian government rapidly found that attempts to implement Keynesian or heterodox economic programmes faced strong domestic and foreign opposition. Thus, the Alfonsín administration followed a hesitant path toward increasingly orthodox economic policies, but was unable to satisfy powerful internal and external actors who demanded a complete neo-liberal restructuring that comprised fiscal discipline, elimination of subsidies, moderate taxation, market-determined interest and exchange rates, trade and foreign investment, liberalisation, privatisation of state enterprises, deregulation and complete respect for private property rights. The Radical administration's wavering attempts to follow a moderate redistributionist approach whilst negotiating corporatist socioeconomic agreements with labour and capital, as well as its inability to overcome the opposition of important groups to the privatisation, deregulation and opening of the economy, contributed to generating an economic crisis characterised by stagnation and hyper-inflation at the end of 1980s.

The failure of the Alfonsín government created some of the necessary preconditions for the more successful formulation and implementation of a radical neo-liberal programme. Popular fear of a repetition of the 1989 hyper-inflation, produced

strong support for any economic model able to promote economic stability, even if it was done at a high cost in terms of income distribution, levels of consumption, social conditions and rates of employment. As a democratically elected government with ample control over Congress and the provincial administrations, the Menem administration was better prepared than its military and civilian predecessors to effectively apply neo-liberal adjustment policies, reduce public expenditures and promote trade liberalisation that supposedly would favour consumers over specific groups of producers. It could gain broader support for crucial privatisation and deregulation measures.

To this backdrop, neo-liberal restructuring was presented as the only viable strategy to ensure economic stability and growth, given not only the collapse of the state-led model of ISI, but also the simultaneous crumbling of socialist and populist experiences in other parts of the world. Furthermore, the critical socioeconomic situation in which Menem assumed office facilitated the concentration of power in the executive branch (especially in its techno-bureaucratic economic teams), which had the political opportunity and resources necessary to impose their will on Congress, parties and socioeconomic organisations. Moreover, the Peronist tradition of personal charismatic leadership encouraged this concentration of power in the hands of a popular president, reinforcing the trend toward the exclusion of other political or socioeconomic actors from the decision making process - who were denounced for their propensity to favour economic and social policies that could unleash a new inflationary surge.

Finally, the capacity of the neo-liberal policies to promote, after some initial difficulties, economic stability and a modicum of economic growth, gave the government the support necessary to complete most structural transformations before

the shortcomings of the programmes in terms of employment, income distribution, and social conditions became apparent. The impact of Menem's neo-liberal policies on employment, labour organisation, income distribution and social welfare has been substantial. The pattern of maintaining a relatively high level of employment and a relatively low number of underemployed workers - characteristic of Argentina since the 1940s - was shattered and replaced by the emergence and consolidation of a situation typified by a high level of structural unemployment and a significant number of underemployed. Since 1990, with the implementation of the Convertibility Law, Argentina has been characterised by a continuous increase in the size of the economically active population, accompanied by a very low growth in the total number of jobs and a decline in the number of jobs available for the less educated and poorer sectors. At the same time, there has been a decline in real salaries and wages, which has paradoxically been accompanied - in conditions of fixed exchange parity and economic opening - by strong indications of a rise in labour costs.

This situation led to attempts to 'flexibilise' labour legislation in the belief that it is the rigidity of these rules - particularly in terms of work hours, severance payments and fringe benefits - that leads to growing unemployment and economic stagnation. This interpretation has been disputed by other analysts, who point out that the unemployment problem might have resulted from a combination of growing labour productivity, privatisation and a shrinking of the state, along with indiscriminate trade liberalisation and an overvaluation of the local currency that reduced the demand for labour, cut state jobs and provoked the closing of less competitive firms. In any case, the impact of these developments on employment remained less noticeable during the expansive 1990-1994 period, but became an evident social problem as soon as

economic slowdown hit Argentine society from the mid-1990s.

In the course of the twentieth century, Argentina proved unable to modernise itself either by reaction, revolution or reform. To be sure, its past is filled with much doom and gloom, casting doubt on the nation's capacity for ongoing economic and political recovery. Argentina exhibits an incredible succession of crises throughout the twentieth century and an impressive inability for coping with adversity. Commenting on this historical legacy, Wynia points to character traits of the population:

> Argentina is not an atrophied society nearing its demise but a vigorous one composed of a contentious people, some of whom are too imperious and truculent for the nation's own good: military officers, labour leaders, industrialists, farmers, party politicians, and the like, all of them trying to prevail. What they lack is not energy or intelligence but an inability and an unwillingness to regulate their combative urges in the political arena. Argentinians are maximisers not optimisers, committed by habit to gaining everything they can when what they want becomes available and to protecting themselves tenaciously when it is not (1986: 194-95).

While the accuracy of the preceding psychological profile of the 'national character' is open to debate, Menem's decade in office revealed how much the country had been transformed in the last quarter-century. The 1976 coup proved a turning point which put Argentine history firmly into a neo-liberal paradigm. The challenges that have taken place since then, whose significance in some ways remained hidden during the first years of the democratic transition, were demonstrated clearly during the 1990s (Romero, 2002: 319).

Perhaps given this historical background, it was not surprising that Argentina would pass through one of the most drastic experiments of neo-liberal economic restructuring in recent times. What made Argentina's case even more interesting was that the neo-liberal experiment was conducted at a time when the country was also trying to consolidate its nascent political democratic order. Taking into consideration its

extreme nature and close conformity to IMF defined text-book principles, Argentina's experience is illuminating in terms of highlighting the potential and limits of neo-liberal restructuring in an era of open economic globalisation. Recent events have clearly exposed, in a rather dramatic manner, the inherent fragility of a development strategy based to an excessive degree on short-term capital flows and foreign borrowing due to the privatisation and trade liberalisation processes. In the end, however, 'success' evaporated and resulted in hundred of thousands unemployed people coming on to the streets having lost their jobs. This failure of neo-liberal structural adjustment gave birth to the unemployed movement. It is to an analysis of the unemployed movement struggle and fight to secure a better future that we now turn.

V

THE UNEMPLOYED MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Consciousness, as frequently used, simply has reference to the field of experience, but self-consciousness refers to the ability to call out in ourselves a set of definite responses which belong to the others of the group (Mead, 2003: 40).

Those who have become known as 'the excluded' – those excluded provisionally, temporarily, long term or for ever from the market-place of work – are almost always those who have no voice and who are excluded from collective action ('The Cause of the Unemployed' by Pierre Bourdieu, *Le Monde*, 17 January 1998).

The association of poverty with a more divided society has led to the broader concept of social exclusion, which refers not only to material deprivation, but to the inability of the poor to fully exercise their social, cultural and political rights as citizens (Powell 1995: 22-23).

Introduction

To understand the character of the unemployed movement in Argentina, 'social exclusion' provides a useful tool for analysis. Indeed, since the 1980s Argentine society has experienced a number of key trends that have increased 'social exclusion', such as the decline in formal employment allied to a more pervasive informalisation, the result of neo-liberal economic adjustments, rapid privatisation and labour reform, which accelerated unemployment rates.[122] In general terms, the concept of social exclusion is commonly understood to denote a set of factors and processes that accentuate material

---

122 Many observers have attempted to explain the origins of Argentina's unemployed movement (Auyero; 2001; Farinetti, 1999; Galafassi, 2003; Oviedo, 2001; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2005; Recalde, 2003; Svampa y Pereyra, 2003; Zibechi, 2003). They all argue that the movement emerged as a response to poverty, unemployment, inequality and limited democracy. Structural conditions and a desire for social justice motivated people to create/join the unemployed movement and organisations. They argue that 'the origin of the unemployed movement is a deterministic relation between grievances and demonstrations both across time and across provinces in Argentina' (quoted in Franceschelli and Ronconi, 2005: 3).

and social deprivation. However, the aim of this chapter is not to attempt to provide a single definition of social exclusion, or to undertake a detailed review of studies concerned with measuring 'exclusion' – which would merit a chapter in its own right. Rather, the objective is to explore the relevance of social exclusion and its impact on forging a collective identity among the Argentine unemployed, related to questions such as: What is the relationship between unemployed people and social exclusion? What kinds of exclusion are associated with the Argentine unemployed and their social movement? Finally, what is the connection between the unemployed and collective identity?

An exploration of these issues will allow a better understanding of the character of the unemployed within their particular socio-economic milieu. In this regard, Blumer argues that 'a given social condition or arrangement is recognised as grave by people who indeed attract attention to it by their agitation - this means that the problem will break through into the area of public consideration' (1971: 301). More specifically, Piven and Cloward focus on why the unemployed mobilised collectively to protest through social and political movements, arguing that 'once people realized that by being out of work they were just the same as people around them, demoralization could more easily turn to indignation' (1979: 49). Bearing this in mind, this chapter addresses the nature of Argentine social exclusion, which derives from a combination of unemployment, poverty and social inequality (Altimir and Beccaria, 1999; Cerruti, 2003).

Exploring social exclusion and 'unemployment'

Both at the research and policy making levels since the mid-1980s, the concept of

'social exclusion' has not only made its appearance in European Union (EU) documents,

it has also figured in academic discourse emanating from the so-called 'less-

industrialised' world (Rodgers et al., 1995: 53). To some degree, it remains an all-

embracing concept that describes a variety of current social problems, including poverty,

inequality and unemployment. 'Social exclusion' has also been employed as a label to

address more wider issues, including that of the 'underclass', a concept which

originated in the US, as well as that of 'marginalisation', which is seen as prevalent in

Latin America (Fassin, 1996: 38).[123] The concept became used ever more frequently

over the 1990s and has become a core concept in the EU when attempts are made to

designate 'categories' of excluded people. As a consequence of this trend, there are at

least fifteen kinds of 'exclusion' in the organisation's social policy texts.[124] These

include:

> Social marginalisation, new poverty, democratic legal/political exclusion, nonmaterial
> disadvantage, exclusion from the 'minimal acceptable way of life', cultural exclusion (including
> race and gender), exclusion from family and the community, exclusion from the welfare state,

123 The concepts of 'vulnerability' and 'marginalisation' were commonly used to debate Latin
American social problems in the 1960s and 1970s. More recently, they have been replaced by the
term 'social exclusion'. Elízaga noted the reasons for this shift: 'critical intellectuals have for
years recognized the phenomenon of exclusion, which can be defined as the condition which
adds to poverty, the impossibility of joining in social life and in the exercise of citizenship with
full rights ... the condition is not completely described by material shortcomings; it also involves
the inability to directly participate in the decisions made by those who wield power –
presumably for the benefit of society as a whole. From the standpoint of exclusion analysis, the
aim is not merely to determine an object – poverty – and its consequences in terms of the
difficulties it poses for achieving minimum levels of production and reproduction of human life.
The true aim is to recognize a condition that includes the activity of those who suffer from
shortcomings, as well as their demands, their organization and their vision of the world. Being
excluded does not stop with being poor ...' (2002: 93). Thus: 'a redefinition of the forms of social
presence of the excluded, to reflect their diversity, their contradictory expressions, their
demands and the exercise of their rights, is one of the great issues for contemporary social
science and for a style of politics that effectively affirms the right to collective wellbeing and
hope' (Elízaga, 2002: 96). On this issue, also see ECLAC (CEPAL, 2000).
124 A widely cited definition in early EU commentaries identified three dimensions to 'social
exclusion'. The 'economically excluded' comprise the unemployed, who are deprived of access to
assets such as property or credit. 'Social Exclusion' refers to the loss of an individuals' links to
mainstream society. 'Political exclusion' is a label applied to certain categories of the population
– such as women, ethnic and religious minorities, or migrants, who are deprived of part or all of
their political and human rights (Bessis, 1995).

long-term poverty, exclusion from mainstream political and economic life, poverty, state of deprivation, detachment from work relations, economic exclusion, and exclusion from the labour market (Peace, 1999: 397).

Given the broadness of the concept, contemporary studies on 'social exclusion' are much contested. Not only is the phrase used to refer to a wide range of social problems and processes related to poverty, it is also employed in relation to a wide range of categories of excluded people and places of exclusion. Bynner explained this process on the basis of 'relativity', 'agency' and 'dynamics':

> 'Relativity' resides in the fact that exclusion is defined by the standards and norms that are current at a particular point in time, especially in relation to consumption. Thus, access to telephones and transport, not to mention various kinds of insurance or, in the case of children, clothes and toys, may define individuals as excluded; 'agency' makes the point that individuals may act to exclude themselves from mainstream life or be excluded by others. Individual choices, however constrained by such structural imperatives as class, gender and ethnicity, are therefore always involved; 'dynamics' arise in the sense that social exclusion is a process that involves interacting circumstances and experiences across all the spheres of life over a period of time. Losing a job may not in itself be a manifestation of exclusion, but unemployment over an extended period, accompanied by poverty, poor health and low self-esteem, becomes exclusion (2002: 4).

In practice, the main cause of social exclusion is identified as financial, which results in poverty and its negative impact on a person's ability to participate in normal activities characteristic of capitalist society. Beyond this original form of 'from poverty to exclusion', however, the dominant view holds that the concept of social exclusion has more analytical purchase than straightforward notions of poverty and, therefore, incorporates a wider range of causal aspects (Anderson and Sim, 2000: 3).

The factors linked to social exclusion consequently range from macro-social processes through to racial harassment or the denial of basic citizenship rights and exclusion described in more particular terms. The latter includes lack of adequate education, poor health, homelessness, disability, unemployment, low income, non-

participation in the regular activities of society, resource poor social networks and a lack of access to informal contacts that provide links to jobs or appropriate role models. Other aspects are as diverse as the effects of poor social and physical environments. For instance, inadequately maintained housing, or lack of services, such as banks and credit facilities, may curtail participation in the exchange relations of society (Bowring, 2000: 310).

More specifically, in relation to contemporary unemployment issues, there is a consensus that 'unemployment is a form of social exclusion', which can be defined and described in two ways: first, it is used as a synonym for income poverty and refers specifically to either those people who are not attached to the paid labour market (exclusion from the paid workforce) or to those people in low-wage work. It is often employed alongside the concept of 'social cohesion', in the sense that a 'cohesive' society is one in which (political, social and economic) stability is maintained and controlled by participation in the paid workforce. Secondly, it can refer to much more than poverty, income inequality, deprivation or lack of employment. Thus, unemployment as social exclusion could be viewed as involving a lack of resources and/or the denial of social rights. The processes of exclusion have many different results, including the breaking of family ties and social integration, as well as the loss of identity and purpose (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1:

Unemployment as social exclusion within different social realms

Social Realm	How social exclusion manifests itself
Economic	Lack of access to labour markets: unemployment debars access to resources and activities readily available to others in society, particularly consumption and savings.
Social	Lack of citizenship rights: rights to minimum wage and access to education, health and other services.
Political / Legal	Lack of access to democratic decision-making in society: no involvement in community organisations; problems accessing structures and processes that enable and facilitate effective community participation.
Cultural	New notions of exclusion in contemporary society: decline in social capital and community (politics, family, organisational membership, trust, church, etc.). Community effects and network poverty, causing lack of access to role models and informal contacts providing useful pathways to jobs.

Source: modified from Byrne (1999), Arthurson (2002).

Generally speaking, these multi-faceted approaches go beyond previous research, which focused largely on structural explanations of 'poverty', drawing on economic conditions and income distribution issues. Today, the concept of 'social exclusion' when related to unemployment has more gravitas and focuses on the role that relational processes play in 'relative deprivation'. It is often noted that social inequality exists within different social realms of exclusion (Table 5.1), such as exclusion from basic survival, security and civil rights.[125] This has contributed to the current popularity of the notion of social exclusion, although not all theorists utilise the concept uncritically. Castel (1995) holds that in lieu of exclusion, it is better to refer to processes of social

---

125 In this regard, Portes classified 'types of labour standards' as follows: (i) as basic rights against the use of child labour, involuntary servitude and physical coercion; (ii) as survival rights to a living wage, accident compensation and a limited working week; (iii) as security rights against arbitrary dismissal, to retirement compensation and to survivor's compensation; and (iv) as civil rights to free association, to collective representation and to free expression of grievance (1994, quoted in Galli and Kucera, 2002: 17).

'unfiliation' – which he defines as the loss of status and devaluation of the individual caused by a rupturing of the links of societal filiation following a crisis in waged employment. Such processes express, through the loss of jobs, the growing precariousness of contractual relationships, an existence dominated by economic instability and the progressive inadequacy of social protection systems. The outcome, Castel posits, is the loss of a productive and social identity that isolates the individual, leading to the rupture of solidarity ties. In this formulation, 'relational processes' refer to societal links, social participation and interrelated issues (such as the disadvantages resultant from weak social networks), which can disrupt social bonds and lead to isolation or lack of integration.

From this viewpoint, exclusion flowing from unemployment not only comes in the shape of less income, but also involves a loss of relationships in the workplace; long-term non-participation from the labour market often precipitates exclusion in other societal spheres (Madanipour et al., 1998: 280). According to this approach, therefore, unemployed people or groups are seen to be in a disadvantaged situation beyond a narrow definition of poverty that focuses on low income or paucity of material possessions. The jobless may be socially isolated, lacking ties to the family, local community, voluntary associations, trade unions or even the nation. For this reason, the concept of 'social exclusion' is a useful tool for analysing market economy societies which have become incapable of integrating a large number of their members into the productive process and exhibit high levels of socio-economic inequality.[126]

---

126 In this regard, there is considerable agreement between social scientists that the second half of the twentieth century is characterised by a far-reaching, or even radical, change in the working sphere. On the level of the economic system, the replacement of 'organized' or 'Fordistic capitalism' by the 'post-Fordistic accumulation regime' of 'disorganised capitalism', has been diagnosed: its own internal tendencies away from 'organised' and towards 'disorganised' capitalism (Offe, 1985; Lash and Urry, 1987). This is a mixture of the old and the

Under/unemployment as new forms of social exclusion

The terms 'post-Fordism' or 'post-industrialism' are labels widely utilised to account for socio-economic fields in 'late' or mature capitalism, which is said to have undergone deindustrialisation as employment in manufacturing has given way to employment in service and white-collar occupations (Amin 1994; Dicken, 1992: 16; Harvey, 1989: 129-33). One side-effect of the new economic structure is that a sizeable minority see their incomes rise and enjoy a reasonable amount of security, while the majority struggle to keep incomes stable and many experience declining incomes along with greater labour insecurity. Commenting on these trends, Bessis notes that:

> Exclusion from organized labour markets is now one of the principle causes of poverty in the world. The growth of the informal sector, which is often viewed as an alternative to regular, salaried employment, offers to millions of people wishing to work little more than unstable, subsistence-level activities that are characterized by low productivity. The shrinking supply of real jobs has resulted in a heterogeneous labour market in which the number of irregular and poorly-paid jobs has increased dramatically. It is clear that these upheavals are among the principle causes of the rise of exclusion and pauperization in the world. Given the necessity of finding alternatives to the uncoupling of the relationship between labour and production, these upheavals represent one of the most important challenges facing decision-makers as the century draws to a close (Bessis, 1995: 14-15).[127]

According to this approach, people no longer live in the same universe of opportunity; there are a few winners and many losers, and the gains of the winners do not 'trickle down' to the losers. Widening income differentials result in a serious disjunction in the commitment of different groups to the values and institutions of

---

new. Theorists of capitalism have always been pulled between emphasising its organised, predictable calculating character and its unpredictable, chaotic aspect, and as 'Fordist' mass production gives way to more flexible 'post-Fordist' forms, this dualism returns in new forms. Some jobs, for example, become more specialised, skilled and professionalised; others are further down-graded, routinised and casualised into 'McJobs'.

127 Not all authors agreed about the utility of 'exclusion' as a concept for analysing the unemployment movement in Argentina. Carrera and Cotarelo argue that: 'even the term exclusion is too strongly debated in the theoretical arguments. It must be abandoned because the term in itself does not allow us to delimit who we are talking about. Instead, only the concept of working class can be utilised' (2003: 214).

society (Dahrendorf, 1995: 15). As Bourdieu argued in a famous article, 'job insecurity is everywhere now'.

The unemployed, primarily concerned with gaining their day-to-day subsistence, become demobilised, the outcome being that competition for work tends to degenerate into a struggle of all-against-all. Joblessness or job insecurity issues are, according to Bourdieu, 'the destructuring of existence, which is deprived of its temporal structures and the ensuing deterioration of the whole relationship to the world, time and space' (1998: 83). Thus, those who suffer unemployment may confront considerable uncertainty with respect to their future, which led Bessis and Bourdieu to strongly criticise: 'the essential role of the current neo-liberalism paradigm with job insecurity and even its globalisation process' (Bessis, 1995: 50; Bourdieu, 1998: 82).

According to this analysis, the onward march of labour flexibility has resulted in employees being hired on fixed-term contracts or on a temporary basis, a process that deepens with repeated corporate restructurings. Furthermore, within the firm, contemporary management practice has fomented competition among divisions, as well as among teams forced to perform multiple functions. In this way, a struggle of 'all-against-all' permeates every level of the company hierarchy, which encourages everyone to cling to their job under conditions of increasing insecurity, stress and management bullying. On this development, Bourdieu noted that:

> The practical establishment of this world of struggle would not succeed so completely without the complicity of all of the precarious arrangements that produce insecurity and of the existence of a reserve army of employees rendered docile by these social processes that make their situations precarious, as well as by the permanent threat of unemployment' (1998: 85).[128]

---

128 Along similar lines, Mauricio Rojas describes the threat of unemployment as 'the new terror of unemployment', brought about by 'the end of work' ('el fin del trabajo') in Latin America: 'Who can survive from the terror of unemployment? Who can be safe from the fear of being an unemployed with new technologies, or globalisation ... [there will] only remain low salaries with

This 'reserve army of labour' exists at all levels of the labour market. For Bourdieu, the ultimate foundation of the entire neo-liberal economic order, despite the ideological smokescreen of 'freedom', is in reality the 'structural violence' of unemployment, of insecure job tenure and the menace of layoff. Within this 'structural violence', unemployment comprises the most likely form of exclusion, one that accompanies the wider opportunities afforded by the new economic era. This uneven (but combined) dynamic, helped stimulate arguments regarding the emergence of an 'underclass':

> Significant numbers of people lose their hold on the labour market, then on the social and political participation in the community. An under-class emerges, consisting of people who live their separate lives often characterised by a combination of destitution, dependence on welfare payments and other benefits, occasional windfalls, petty or not petty crime and apathy (Dahrendorf, 1995: 15).

Byrne strongly supports these arguments, pointing to a concatenation of factors that promote social exclusion:

> Social exclusion emerges from a combination of low wages, insecure employment and dependence on the means tested benefit supplements to low incomes ... Insecurity and low wages are the basis for the reconstruction of the relationship between labour and capital on the global scale. Things have changed (been changed) for the worse but they can be changed again for the better (1999: 69).

Given the realities of industrial restructuring, technological change and globalisation, the causes of contemporary unemployment are complex. Joblessness might be a long-term phenomenon: technical unemployment happens when people's skills are made redundant. Some dismissals might be medium-term in character: cyclical unemployment happens because there is inadequate demand to keep production buoyant. Others are short-term: frictional unemployment happens because people

---

limited jobs. There are no vacations, bonuses, pensions, and even no compensation for retirement any more' (2004: 24-25).

change jobs or locations. Seasonal work, casual employment and under-employment are patterns of work which lead to people being employed only for short periods at a time. However, systematically and structurally recognised long-term unemployment is clearly one of the major social problems born out of the dynamic of modern capitalist development. Public opinion surveys, systematic studies in political sociology and even a cursory review of political debates, attest to the central place that unemployment occupies as a major social problem of the modern age.[129]

Unemployment, thus has a dire impact on the jobless and is also associated with 'tremendous social and economic costs for society as a whole' (Forstater, 2002: 3). It causes a permanent loss of productivity and is a direct and indirect cause of many social and economic problems. The unemployed are faced with financial insecurity, often resulting in poverty and indebtedness. The personal and social costs of unemployment might also include homelessness and housing stress, family breakdown, alienation, shame, increased social isolation, crime, an erosion of confidence and self-esteem, the atrophying of work skills and ill-health. Studies invariably find that most of these hardships increase with structural long-term unemployment. At a national level, it can also lead to political instability and heightened social conflict, as occurred in Europe during the 1930s and 1970s. Since the publication of Keynes' *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, policy makers have therefore dedicated significant attention to the problems of unemployment as a negative by-product of contemporary

---

129 As one of the major social problems, unemployment is linked 'both to the idea of full employment and to the modern concept of paid work that emerged in industrial societies. Consequently, its concept varies depending on the degree of industrialization and economic development. In addition, the concept of what unemployment is in a particular society will also depend on who the unemployed are, or in other terms, to what extent it affects those who are considered to have the responsibility of ensuring the protection and survival of their families' (Bayón, 2002: 16).

capitalism.[130] Many Post-War governments also recognised that unemployment represented 'the fundamental problem of modern society', which needed more interventionist policies in order to counter the 'boom' and 'bust' of the trade cycle.[131] Capturing the post-1945 political mood, Polanyi also argued strongly about the corrosive impact of unemployment:

> In disposing of a man's labour power the system would, incidentally, dispose of the physical, psychological, and moral entity "man" attached to that tag. Robbed of the protecting covering of cultural institutions, human beings would perish from the effects of social exposure; they would die as the victims of acute social dislocation through vice, perversion, crime, and starvation. No society could stand the effects of such a system of crudest fictions even for the shortest stretch of time unless its human and natural substance as well as its business organization was protected against the ravages of this satanic mill (1957: 73).

Since unemployment forms the root of diverse social problems and contributes markedly to human misery, the desirability of full employment and its impact have logically received considerable comment.[132]

One individuals' unemployed is her/his own personal problem. Resolving it involves a review of their current situation, reassessing skills, considering job

---

130 According to Pierre Bourdieu's book, 'The Weight of the World' (1993), the intensification of social inequality and the various effects of job insecurity, unemployment and the flexibilisation of labour, meant that for the first time since the War, a generation had emerged whose conditions of work were inferior to those of its parents.

131 Pereira notes that: 'the Great Depression of the 1930s came about from market failures. Keynes was the economist that better understood this fact with his theory of chronic insufficiency of demand. With the depression the Liberal State collapsed, giving way to the Social Bureaucratic State: "social" because the state assumed the role of guaranteeing social rights and full employment; and "bureaucratic", because it did that through the direct hiring of bureaucrats. Now besides judges, tax collectors, policemen and military, the state hired professors, doctors and even artists. The Welfare State then emerged in the developed countries, while in the developing countries the state assumed the form of the Developmentalist State, actively promoting industrialization through protectionist strategies which attempted to replace the market instead of complementing it' (1997: 4).

132 Forstater, for example, argues that: 'capitalist economies have problems for maintaining full employment, even if it could be attained, due to ongoing structural and technological change, such as changes in labour supply and the supply of natural resources, labour and capital-displacing technical change and changes in the composition of final demand. Thus, an economy running at full capacity and full employment would be unable to respond to such changes and sectoral imbalance. Here is added to aggregate imbalance as a further cause of unemployment. Bottlenecks and rigidities mean that full employment is likely to be inflationary' (2002: 4).

opportunities, and submitting job applications to employers. Once the individual attains a new job, her/his personal trouble is over.[133] However, what happens when a nation-wide problem of unemployment arises that affects tens of thousands or even millions? Personal trouble becomes transformed into a critical public issue. This arises not just because of the numbers of people it affects; it develops into a pressing concern because of the public values it threatens. Unemployment not only undermines an individual's sense of economic security, but can also challenge one's belief that hard work brings success. Unemployment equally raises questions about a society's obligation to help those without a job. As many observers have pointed out, current employment trends toward flexibility, fragmentation, precariousness and individualisation, were not the inevitable consequences of neo-liberal globalisation during the 1990s. They are, however, the likely outcome if no serious political attempts to rethink and replace labour market institutions occur.[134]

Under/unemployment as a long-term socioeconomic problem in Argentina

Within this wider panorama, the current Argentine experience encompasses an extension of unemployment and labour insecurity following of a decade of sharp economic deterioration. Fear of losing one's job has spread throughout the entire social structure, being particularly harsh in urban areas that used to be the most dynamic in terms of work opportunities. Moreover, from the late 1990s the structural crisis hit so

---

133 In this regard, especially in 'late' capitalism, the classical liberal anti-Keynesian economics in vogue since the 1970s, was 'founded on the doctrine of possessive individualism and the unemployment problem was likely to become a personal and voluntary choice' (Byrne, 1999: 18).
134 One comment on popular attitudes to unemployment in the Thatcher's era, noted that: 'Much of labour market reforms of the 1980s and 1990s seem to be a regression to the situation pre-1945, a revival of old perspectives and principles. The means testing of benefits, the rhetoric of the impossible growth in the cost of social services, the scare stories of abuse, the virtues of the market are repeated now as then' (Bayón, 2002: 20).

deep that future employment prospects did not appear promising for an overwhelming majority of the populace.

A central concern of this chapter is to analyse Argentina's socio-economic structure in relation to under/unemployment, poverty and social inequality. These related issues provide a necessary backdrop to an understanding of mobilisations by the unemployed. As has been highlighted by sociological studies across the globe, unemployment not only signifies losing participation in the process of economic production, it also exercises a negative impact on an individuals health, self-esteem and life chances. During most of the twentieth century, Argentina enjoyed high levels of employment. That landscape changed completely during the 1990s, with the appearance of massive unemployment, a situation that accentuated following the 2001 crises, when the national unemployment rate climbed to a historical record peak (reaching more than 20 per cent in 2002). Although in 2003 the unemployment rate decreased to 19.7 per cent, related to a GDP growth of 8.8 per cent, these numbers do not hide the size of long-term joblessness in the labour market, which had risen progressively over last decades (Figure 5.1), hand in hand with growing income inequality.

Figure 5.1:

Long-term unemployment rates, 1974-2003 (%)

During the economic collapse of 1998 - 2002 (which is regularly characterised as a 'lost half decade'), increasing pauperisation occurred, which particularly afflicted Argentina's traditionally very large middle class.[135] Commenting on this development, one informant opined that:

> Today, so many people are living without job … we are only surviving … there are more and
> more poor people … compared to the past, at least there was a middle-class, upper-class and the
> poor. Today the middle class has disappeared and there are only poor people, who do not have
> money to buy anything. That is, many more people who were middle class are now poor. There
> are far more unemployed people. There are no jobs left … there are only a lot of closed factories
> left (My translation. Interview with Mario in Cross et al., 2004.13).

---

135 According to Sanchez: 'the prolonged economic recession and the December 2001 economic implosion left in their wake a devastating socioeconomic landscape. Income per capital decreased by a staggering 20 per cent from 1995 to 2002. Poverty shot up from 29.4 per cent in 1995 to 53.3 per cent in 2002, while absolute poverty rose from 7.9 to 25.2 per cent over the same time span, the outcome being that Argentina which had long taken pride in the size of its middle class became a "typical Latin American nation in its poverty level, distribution of income and human development indicators"' (2005: 456-57).

Massive unemployment, bringing the forced uprooting of people and communities, had other perhaps equally traumatic effects, as it brought the loss of regulating activities, resources and relationships on which the structure of everyday life depends. It eroded the structures that bound people to existing social arrangements and shrunk their 'social capital' (Piven and Cloward, 1979: 11-12). The undermining of social networks produced social exclusion, as well as a lack of an adequate and regular income source within the 'informal economy'. The excluded were forced to earn their living in precarious occupations of a seasonal or semi-clandestine nature (e.g. street vendors, prostitutes, *cartoneros*). Many unemployed people also became reliant on the government's extremely basic social programme - the *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogares* (PJJH: a social programme for families without a job).[136] Commenting on the crisis, María Seoane described excluded people's lives and the collapse of state legitimacy in 2001 in the following terms:

> We witnessed our fellow countrymen fill the streets by night, laid out on garbage like an army in retreat. We witnessed women, children and men plunging to the very depths of the human condition. We witnessed how hunger afflicted the children, in this one of the world's bread baskets!! We witnessed our youth leave for other promised lands and our grandparents beg for a meager and overdue pension. We witnessed thousands banging their pans outside the very banks that had confiscated their savings, and thousands protesting in the most unlikely ways, demanding work. We witnessed presidents flee and leaders hide away from the popular anger. We witnessed Congress burn and those who were responsible for the crisis enraged by the half-

---

136 Post-1996 the 'Plan Trabajar' was replaced by the PJJH, which operated as the Argentine state's unemployment relief programmes aimed at ameliorating the critical situation of hunger and poverty within the unemployed population. It was set up in May 2002 by the government of President Duhalde. This plan was widened through support from a World Bank loan and an equivalent sum from the Argentine central government. The plan aimed to provide direct income support for families with dependents who had lost their main source of earnings. A cash transfer (using a social card) of 150 pesos (almost $50 in 2004) per month was provided for all eligible individuals. According to Galasso and Ravallion, this plan 'reduced aggregate unemployment, though it attracted as many people into the workforce from inactivity as it did people who would have otherwise been unemployed. While there was substantial leakage to formally ineligible families and incomplete coverage of those eligible, the programme did partially compensate many losers from the crisis and reduced extreme poverty' (2003: 1).

hearted efforts to investigate their corruption. We witnessed our judges administering impunity and our leaders give away the national assets. We know the indices of indigence and poverty with the terror of an individual who has lost all hope in the future, a future that is mixed with the present. And also the past, for we have already witnessed a bloodbath, deindustrialisation, easy money and a shameful war in the South Atlantic. We have suffered for 27 years from a predacious model called 'neo-liberal', which began under a dictatorship but was continued under democracy. We have lived through the paradox of the spendthrift fantasy that 'Now we belong to the First World'. This illusion, sold by Carlos Menem and Domingo Cavallo, was believed by millions of Argentines, but only enjoyed   by a few hundreds - the political elite and the holders of economic power, be they national or foreign (2003: 11. My translation).

As well as involvement in the informal labour market as producers, the dispossessed also inhabit informal settlements, where they participate in different informal consumption markets, access informal health assistance and similar underground services. Bayón argues that informalisation particularly affected unskilled workers who comprised the most 'flexible' in terms of the types of jobs they were willing to take.[137] As the crisis deepened, the majority of Argentine unemployed people bought and lived informally because they had no alternative. Even in Buenos Aires, the largest and richest city in Argentina, joblessness touched more than 20 per cent, with underemployment standing at 45 per cent (see Figure 5.2).[138]

---

[137] Bayón also notes that multiple factors appear to explain their frequent job changes: 'dismissals, resignations, better income, end of a temporary job, migration, work accidents due to unsafe conditions and mistreatment' (2002: 173).

[138] According to the INDEC, even through the rate of unemployment had been reduced to 15. 6 per cent compared with 21. 5 per cent in 2002, until May 2003, there were approximately 2,200.000 unemployed and 5,100.000 underemployed.

Figure 5.2:

Urban under/unemployment rates, 1990–2002 (%)
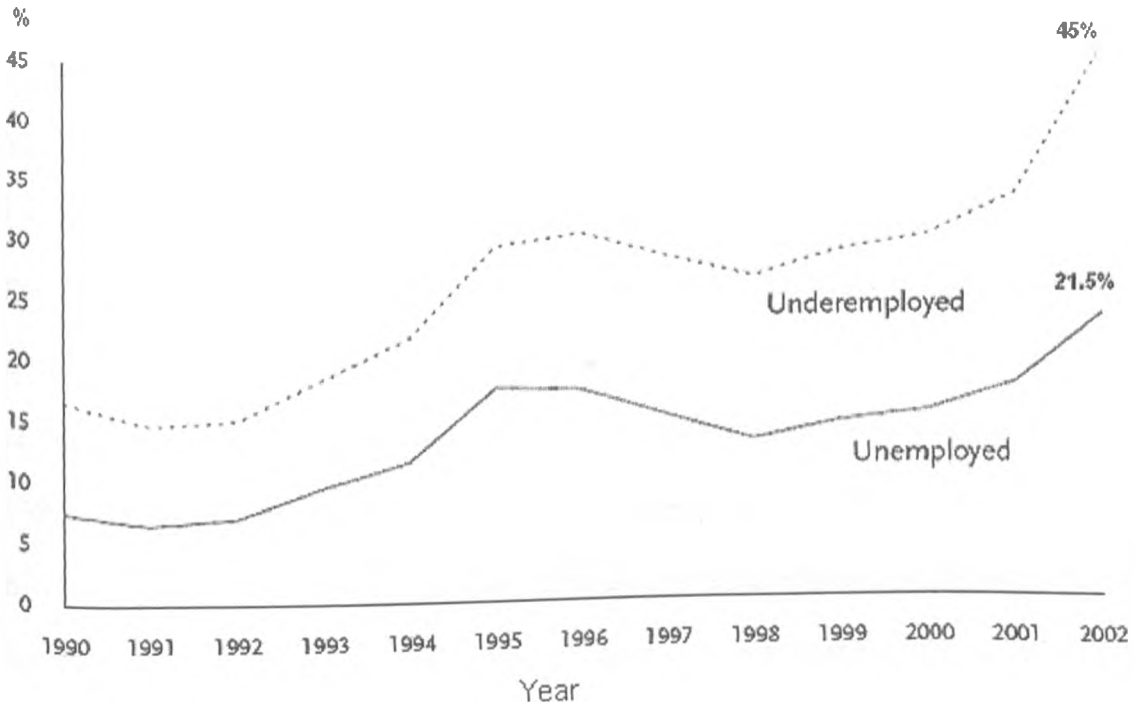
Source: INDEC, 2003.

Such an alarming economic decline led to a rapid expansion of the informal sector. This social trend took a double form: mass-unemployment causing the transfer of part of the formal working class into various forms of unprotected employment and a deterioration of real wages. This led to lower incomes and a fall in living standards, to an extent that most of the affected could not afford to send their children to school above primary level or use the health service because of the cost of medicines. Furthermore, other basic human needs became increasingly out of their reach, including an adequate diet, safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

What was the response to this collapse in living standards? In the following section we discuss the resultant increase in social consciousness and political discontent, as well as the wave of moral indignation that generated mass support for collective action aimed at reducing shared deprivation, leading to high levels of protest against

Argentina's business and political elites.

Under/unemployment with monopolistic neo-liberalism

The interpretation of Argentine history as a 'frustration of development', as discussed in Chapter IV, posits that the country has been affected by a series of interlocking crises for most of the twentieth century. Following the fall of Perón, the 1950s and 1960s saw a series of weak, corrupt oligarchic regimes, while the 1970s gave rise to a vicious military *junta* which fought a 'dirty war' against its own people. Redemocratisation in 1982-83 brought hyperinflation and economic chaos in the late 1980s, followed shortly by the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies that led to 'the end of hyper-inflation'. As elsewhere in Latin America, this was achieved at a great cost to the poor and lower-middle classes, who found themselves increasingly impoverished as inequalities rose. From the mid-1990s to 2001 economic collapse and hyper-unemployment impinged upon the poor and lower-middle classes as a consequence of Menem's neo-liberal economic restructuring. As far as more long-term results are concerned, Svampa and Pereyra argue that:

> This process of structural reforms signified the dismantling of the 'Fordist' wage model (labour rights, social security and job stability). The radicalism, and in many cases the pace of these transformations, found expression in a hitherto unheard of process of atomisation. In effect, during these harsh years an enormous contingent of workers were expelled from the formal labour market, while countless others suffered the consequences of job instability, or attempted to eke out a living in the informal sectors as survival strategy. Another significant group, comprised of youth from the popular and middle classes, did not even encounter a mechanism through which they could gain a foothold in the world of work. Finally, many women - driven by their children's hunger and the desperate circumstances of their husbands - took on the responsibility of going out in search of the means that would allow them to meet the minimum subsistence needs, whether through domestic or community labour. In sum, the Argentine state did not possess the security networks, education schemes and retraining programmes. Neither

did it attempt to put these in place with any urgency in the face of such a radical process of atomisation. Instead, it introduced crude labour flexibility measures and the widespread granting of business permits. Moreover, those unions affiliated to the formerly powerful CGT did not only fail to show solidarity with their members; rather, in almost all cases, they actively supported the programmes of structural reforms (2003: 12-13. My translation).

Regarding the relationship between hyper-unemployment and the retreat of trade unionism in Argentina, many scholars (see Portes, 1985; Roberts, 2002; Portes and Hoffman, 2003) argue that 'neo-liberal adjustment programmes concentrate fewer workers in stable relationships. Labor fragmentation has made it increasingly difficult for workers to engage in collective action in either the workplace or the partisan sphere, severely eroding the organisation dimension of class cleavages' (Portes and Hoffman, 2003: 76). Portes and Hoffman also note the weakening of traditional forms of social organisation:

> [These protests are] continuing the precedent established during the prior military dictatorships. The *favelas, villas miserias,* and other forms of squatter settlements, plus low-income areas in inner cities have been the key sites for mobilisation in protest against price rises, the removal of state subsidies, or the generalized deterioration of public services. These are the areas where the informal proletariat concentrates. Its atomized conditions of employment seldom provide the basis for the emergence of strong trade unions. While street vendors and other workers have sometimes been able to organize protective association, they are insufficient to ground viable class-based parties. Unlike the industrial proletariat during the import-substitution industrialization period, the informal proletariat under neoliberalism has no party that it can call its own (2003: 76).

Structural adjustment has not only removed a host of protections and benefits formerly enjoyed by the Argentine working class, the new ideology has preached individual initiative and self-reliance in a context of generalised poverty and increasing inequality. Most working people in Argentina, regardless of their job, receive wages that are insufficient to lift them out of poverty. Without access to employment and inadequate compensatory programmes operated by a bankrupt state, the unemployed

have been left to fend for themselves. Not surprisingly, then, popular mobilisations increasingly developed as a collective survival strategy. The IMF's victims also had to discover alternative communal forms of popular mobilisation.

Under/unemployment with privatisation

During his presidency, Carlos Menem privatised all of Argentina's state enterprises - including water, gas, energy, air and rail transportation - the outcome being that in the 1990s 'close to 150,000 workers lost their jobs as a direct consequence of the privatization process' (Auyero, 2003: 15).[139] Seven major privatisation transactions resulted in close to 40 per cent of employees losing their jobs during the first phase of privatisation implemented between 1991 and 1993 (see Table 5.2).[140]

---

[139] 'By the end of 1992, Menem had privatized 16.5 billion dollars worth of state corporations, resulting in job losses for 85,000 of the 246,000 workers employed in public enterprises. He also dismissed 217,000 civil servants - 110,000 from central government and 107,000 from provincial or municipal governments - reducing employment from 2.03 million in 1989 to 1.81 million in 1992' (World Bank, 1993; quoted in McGuire, 1996: 138).

[140] 'Between 1990 and 1993, over 85,000 employees lost their jobs due to the privatization of formerly state-owned industries and the downsizing of those industries in anticipation of their sales. Reductions in the size of the national state administration entailed 103, 000 layoffs and the transfer of 283, 000 employees to provincial employment' (Powers, 1995: 99).

Table 5.2:

Layoffs in the public sector following privatisation, 1991-1998 (%) (1985=100 %)

Enterprises	Date of Privatisation	1985	1991	1993	1998
Telephone	Nov-90	100	85.3	73.5	47.9
Post	Nov-97	100	77.7	60.7	39.9
Air Transport	Nov-90	100	91.0	59.0	45.5
Water	Dec-92	100	87.0	66.7	44.9
Energy	Jul-93	100	95.6	50.5	31.4
Rail Transport	Nov-91 to Nov-92	100	83.5	21.9	15.3
Gas	Dec-92	100	106.4	57.2	50.2
Total		100	85,3	45.9	31.1

Source: Área de Economía y Tecnología de la FLACSO, June 2002.

As Table 5.2 indicates, the layoffs ranged from 50 per cent in the telecommunications and gas sectors, to 70 per cent in the energy sector and more than 80 per cent in rail transport between 1990 and 1998.[141] Drastic cuts were also made in other sectors, including postal services, air transport and water, the ideological rationale for dismissals being that 'low productivity and interference by labour unions in management decisions had made the cost of keeping loss-making enterprises in the state sector so high that the government was willing to undertake the necessary employment reforms to facilitate privatisation' (Kikeri, 1998: 6). In consequence, the unemployment rate in Argentina grew at a steady rate during the 1980s, but according to some analysts did not constitute a massive social problem:

> Up until the late 1980s, it did not present the dramatic characteristics of today, most probably due to relatively low labor productivity, the existence of labor protection legislation, a high unionization rate, the existing capital / labor forces correlation and the pre-eminence of the

---

141 Commenting on this privatisation, Bayón noted that: 'Between 1990 and 1999 the amount of privatisation revenues reached 24 billion dollars, one of the highest in Latin America after Brazil and Mexico. In spite of these revenues, external indebtedness continued to grow during the whole decade' (2002:71).

import-substitution model of capitalist development' (Panigo et al., 2004: 3).

However, after the early 1990s increasing numbers of people found themselves laid off work and without job prospects in the formal economy or access to public assistance. With regard to the negative outcome, Petras argued that:

> The neo-liberal project and free market ideologues put in place policies that had predictable effects: public enterprises were sold, and the new owners fired thousands of workers; operations deemed unprofitable, including mineral and energy centers, were closed, creating virtual ghost towns in which all socioeconomic sectors were adversely affected; the wages and working conditions of public workers were lowered, and many were laid off. Thousands of public employees went months without being paid at all; labor unions were attacked, and union members sacked; social services were drastically cut, affecting pensioners and all who could not afford private schooling or health care (2004: 6).[142]

In effect, the era marked the end of 'Fordism', as workers lost adequate salaries, public job protection and social services (Svampa and Pereyra, 2003: 12). To compound matters, after 1989 the demand for labour declined further as GDP growth fell. Alongside neo-liberal structural reforms, the rates of unemployment and underemployment grew to reach record levels and remained at a high plateau. According to Panigo et al., this phenomenon afflicted most of Argentina's urban agglomerations. They also argue that: 'these problems have not been resolved but seem to be permanent' (2004: 4). In sum, economic transformation, particularly associated with rapid privatisation during the 1990s, has dramatically altered the structure of employment, affecting the lives of millions, moving them into long-term unemployment

---

142 'Privatization has played a key role in the change in state–union relations. As a part of the transformation of the state, privatization has deprived trade unionism of its principal areas of strength, where it had achieved most of its successes. The policy of privatizing state-owned companies does not basically pursue a search for efficiency, organizational improvements, or settling of bureaucratic scores, but is better explained as an initiative to destroy one of the key foundations for the support of trade unionism. Privatization, then, is more a political measure than a strictly economic one, as it is publicly described' (Zapata, 1993: 147, quoted in Iranzo and Patruyo, 2002: 59).

and below the poverty line.[143]

Labour market reform and the social welfare system

The state-led import substitution industrialisation model that had characterised

Argentina's economy since Perón's government entailed an active state presence in the

labour market, as well as in the provision of goods and services.[144] However, since the

late 1970s and early 1980s, most Argentine labour market and social welfare

arrangements showed signs of deterioration and even collapse. Additionally, the crisis of

the late of 1980s and 1990s put further pressure upon these faltering systems. As a

consequence, domestic elites and international financial agencies (IMF, World Bank),

demanded far-reaching transformations in the labour market and a scaling back of

welfare provision policies that have accelerated the emergence of a new underclass,

brought rising informality and spawned diverse forms of labour market insertion.[145]

---

143 Many debates exist about how neo-liberal economic policies relate to socially excluded groups and comprise a major factor in the emergence of popular movements in Latin America including Argentina. See José Seoane, 'The retreat of representative democracy as a consequence of applying neo-liberal policies' (2003: 11); and Raúl Zibechi, 'The answers to the social earthquake caused by the wave of neo liberalism in the 80's' (2003: 185). According to Margarita López: 'we are discovering the way in which the sectors whose expectations and living conditions have been most knocked about by the adjustment policies have begun to demand their rights' (1999: 6-8). For Manuel Antonio Garretón: 'the neo-liberal model has constituted a rupture and demonstrated its inherent failure to become a stable and self-sustaining development' (2001: 224).

144 On this issue, Alexander noted that: 'from 1946 to 1955, the following was accomplished: trade unions were formed in every industry; social security was made universal; education became free to all who qualified; vast low-income housing projects were created; paid vacations became standard; a working student was given one paid week before every major examination; all workers were guaranteed free medical care and received holiday pay and an expectant mother received three paid months off prior to and after giving birth; workers recreation centers were constructed over Argentina, including a vast resort in the lower Sierras that included eight hotels, scores of cabins, movies, swimming pools, and riding stables. This resort was available to workers for 15 days a year, at the cost of 15 cents per day, all services included' (1965: 75-83). Also see Godio, 'Historia del Movimiento Obrero Argentino' (2000: 891-892)

145 With regard to these developments, Suárez observed that: 'the agreement signed between the IMF and President Carlos Menem ordered a reduction of the budget of that year of $ 1,400 million (US$ 373 million). Of this amount, $ 1,000 million (US$ 266 million) corresponded to the areas of education, public works and social development. Months before the popular protest on 19-20 December 2001, which resulted in the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa, the

Many observers (such as McCabe, Cockcroft and Straub) have expressed criticism via

their websites:

> By the end of the military dictatorship, the country was completely transformed. The new civil
> government was completely dependent on the mandates of the IMF. During several years,
> workers took back their practices of struggle but without the effectiveness of the past. Their
> struggles were reactive, simply defending what existed. This is exemplified in the process of
> privatizing the companies of the state. The 'suggestions' of the international financial
> organizations were geared towards opening up the economy to foreign capital and reducing the
> state government, which translated into the complete 'foreignization' of the economy in the
> hands of the corporations and the sale at bottom prices of the public services (McCabe, 2002).[146]

> An extreme debilitation of the political system with its clientist labour-union structures, in part
> because the IMF-imposed privatization of state enterprises, government corruption, non-payment
> of taxes, and payments on the foreign debt, have left the government with little money for social
> programs (Cockcroft, 2003).[147]

> For decades the industrial working class was the group that maintained Peron's populist
> mentality. Traditionally, they were organized into large unions and despite their lack of
> independence and their subordination to Peron's Justicialist Party, the workers were relatively
> well-paid and well-organized. However, economy policy changes do to the government
> involvement with IMF, and the demands placed upon the Argentinean government by the
> international financial institutions led to enormous layoffs leaving what once was a well-paid
> and organized sector in shambles (Straub, 2004).[148]

These reforms also transformed the Argentine welfare system into a vacuum

without a strong framework of labour legislation or forms of social protection,

generating the conditions for precarious and unprotected work without recourse to

social security. Among these 'reforms', for example, following the economic crisis in

the 1980s, the traditional pay-as-you-go pension system was suffering from worsening

---

Law 25.453, better known as 'the zero deficit law' was passed in July 2001, as a main measure to
ensure foreign capital flows and regain investor's confidence' (2003: 21-2).
146 See, http://sf.indymedia.org/news/2002/12/1552517.php
147 See, http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article264
148 See, http://www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=5077&sectionID=40

deficits, leading to frequent delays or shortages in benefit payments. The shortage of contributions was compensated for by government expenditures. Given an increasing inability to cope with the expanding deficit, the scheme was converted into a more private pension system: 'From 1999, the employer's contribution was cut from 11 per cent to 5 per cent of the wage, and the weight of the state's contribution to the public pension system, including government debt for the transition cost to the private capitalisation system, increased from 39.1 per cent in 1994 to 69.9 per cent in 2000' (Usami, 2004: 227-28). Health insurance also changed. In December 2000, the alliance government of De la Rúa, implemented a reform to include private health insurance as a free option. The trade unions, including the GCT, fiercely resisted and launched a general strike (*La Nación*, 9 January 2001). This was a particularly bitter grievance, as an unemployment insurance system had been introduced in 1991 through the enactment of an Employment Law designed to promote the increased flexibility of industrial relations. Prior to this, Usami notes:

> Unemployment insurance only existed in special cases. With the revision of the Law of Labour Contract in 1991 and 1995, limited-term labour contracts, extensions of the period of experiment, and part-time labour contracts were admitted under the labour-management agreement. However, during the period of Menem's government, the decentralisation of labour-management negotiation was not achieved, the delegation of authority was not moved from central negotiations to negotiations by plant or company, due to trade union opposition (2004: 229).

In addition to large-scale dismissals, the conditions of workers were considerably worsened through 'reforms' aimed at reducing labour costs for those with temporary contracts. These reforms marked the denouement of the corporatist social contract implemented under the Peronist regime of the 1940s. Simultaneously, they signalled a shift towards the institutionalisation of temporary, low-wage, unprotected employment, hand-in-hand with substantial reductions in employers' contributions to the social

security system inside the formal economy (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3:

Labour law reforms and their implications, 1991-2000 (year)

Law or Decree, N/Y	Reforms and Implications
Ley Nacional Empleo 24013/1991	Created unemployment insurance; allowed some positions to be filled by temporary workers; set limits on termination payments; created some negotiating flexibility in working hours per day; and reduced some social costs to employers.
Ley de Accidentes de Trabajo 24028/1991	Created mandatory insurance to be managed by the private sector; created incentives for the improvement of health and safety conditions; reduced costs related to work injury claims; and provided better solutions for the settlement of worker's compensation.
Decree 1331/1991	Required that large increases in salaries, as a result of collective bargaining, be tied to increases in productivity.
Decree 470/1993	Established two levels for negotiating on salaries and working conditions: general collective union bargaining to negotiate basic salaries and working conditions, and specific negotiations within the firm over variable levels of salaries and working conditions.
Ley 24467/1995	Allowed for flexibility in hiring and termination and reduces social security costs for small and medium-sized firms. In part, this reform created a two-tier labour market, with some workers hiring under the old conditions and others under the newer, more flexible conditions.
Ley de Formento del Empleo 24463/1995	Created some additional flexibility regardig the rules of termination; allowed for an initial period of three months in worker's contracts in which there was no cost of termination; created some temporary contracts in which there was a 50 per cent reduction in social security contributions and no termination costs for up to two years; and also created a trainee contract for young persons, aged 15 to 25 years, for maximum of three years, that has no termination costs.
Nueva Ley de Empleo 25250/2000 Decree 568/2000	Promoted the creation of steady employment; the hiring of workers aged 45 years and more; and modified some aspects of the collective bargaining of wages and salaries.

Source: Modified from Hopenhayn (2001); and Galiani (2002: 29-33).

Labour market reforms post-1991 also enabled employers to hire workers on six-to twenty-four month contracts with no provision for benefits or severance pay (Powers, 2001: 223). Additionally, unemployment insurance was not universal, covering 'only 10 per cent of the unemployed population' (Adamo, 2002: 25).[149] As a consequence of the main pieces of labour legislation enacted between 1991 and 2000, there has been an increase in precarious employment conditions, which not only has not reduced unemployment, but has actually expanded flexible, limited-term contracts and insecure employment in general. By late 1997, for example, 17 per cent of wage earners did not possess permanent contracts, an increase of 7 percentage points in just one year (ECLAC, 1998). This resulted in new forms of 'atypical' employment – precarisation – which has had a negative impact on people's livelihoods, as Olmedo and Murray argue:

> First, the flexibilization of labor rather generates a process of precarization of labor, causing situations of social exclusion and poverty. Second, this precarization is no longer an exclusive phenomenon of the informal market. Nowadays, the very state promotes precariousness and contributes to undermine workers' rights. This reality contradicts the deregulatory and anti-state intervention discourses upon which neo-liberal doctrine depends. Third, state promotion and regulation of precarious employment challenges the division 'formal-regulated versus informal-unregulated' in Argentine labour market (2002: 435).

---

149 Compared to the Argentine situation, many European countries provide unemployment insurance for the unemployed based on the European welfare state model. Gallie and Paugam (2000) have proposed a typology with the aim of studying the impact of the welfare state on the experience of unemployment in European countries. They pinpoint three factors that influence the experience of unemployment: the degree of coverage, the level of financial compensation, and the importance of active measures to get people back into employment. Based on these three factors, they distinguish between four welfare systems: the 'sub-protecting regime' (examples: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain) provides the unemployed with protection below the substance level. The 'liberal/minimal regime' (examples: United Kingdom, Ireland) offers a higher level of protection, but does not cover all the unemployed and the level of compensation is weak. The 'employment-centered regime' (examples: France, Germany, Netherlands, Belgium) offers a much higher level of protection, but the coverage remains incomplete because of the eligibility principles for compensation. Finally, the 'universalist regime' (examples: Denmark, Sweden) is characterised by the breath of the coverage, a much higher compensation level, and more developed active measures' (quoted in Giugni and Statham, 2005: 12-13). Also worthy of note is Dain's categorisation of social protection between the 'Bismarckian' (funded by contributions and with entitlement based on employment status) and the 'Beveridge' model (funded by taxes with entitlement based on citizenship or residence status (2003: 3-4).

As noted, in the 1990s Argentine labour law and changes to the welfare system introduced a market mechanism into the social security system. The unemployed became a problem that was less amenable to an individual-level coping solution. Different to the European or developed countries experience, where social insurance remains a core principle in helping the unemployed, in Argentina there was a growth in the population beyond the reach of social insurance coverage (e.g. unemployment insurance). This was clearly due to an increase in unemployment and unstable employment. The outcome was an acceleration in the growth of the informal sector, characterised by the prevalence of precarious jobs and more social inequality, social atomisation, growing anomie, together with attendant urban problems and social conflicts.

The formalisation of informal sectors: 'changalisación'

It is important to recognise the contribution of Argentine labour studies to an understanding of the connection between, on the one hand, poverty, exclusion and deprivation and, on the other, employment scarcity, job productivity, lack of protection, instability and vulnerability, particularly regarding expanding urban informal forms of work.[150] Recent studies emphasise the growing 'vulnerability' of ever wider segments

---

[150] The major contribution of Argentine labour research to the analysis of poverty and social exclusion is in the area of employment and labour market studies. At the core of the theoretical frameworks is a concern with how individuals, households, social groups and regions participate in the prevailing social division of labour as a determinant of their life chances. The unemployment question has, therefore, been central to the understanding of poverty and social exclusion over decades. From the late 1950s until the early 1970s, when the population was growing, urbanisation rates were skyrocketing, with deep changes occurring in rural and urban productive structures, Argentine scholars turned their attention to the capacity of modern industrial activities to provide adequate employment to an increasingly urban labour force. A large amount of work revolved around the concept of 'urban marginality', which stressed a supposed deepening process of dualism in Argentine labour markets, with expanding informality in employment patterns. Studies of labour politics concentrated on the unions strategic power relations within the state, on conflict among social groups and the forms in

159

within the job market (even in some modern urban-industrial sectors), the growing 'precariousness' of work, as well as an increasing dualisation or 'formalisation of informal labour'. Since the mid-1990s, the impact of neo-liberal policies, the impoverishment of lower-middle and upper-lower income groups (sometimes called the 'new poor' or *'changa'*), became the object of research that paid great attention to poor people in connection to their long-term social experience.[151] Powers, for example, already recognised the 'changalisation' of urban informal labour markets in the mid-1990s:

> Unemployment climbed to the historically unprecedented level of 18.4 percent in May 1995, at which point most people, jobless or not, recognized it as one of the country's major problems. With high levels of unemployment, poverty levels began to increase again. The way a person or household copes with joblessness or poverty depends on the national unemployment context. As unemployment levels soar, competition for extra and part-time *changas* increases. Thus, as unemployment in Argentina grew, it undermined the effectiveness of coping measures, such as taking a second job, or making one's spouse or child work, routinely used by the poor and near-poor in early time period (2001: 222-23).[152]

These 'intermittent workers' rapidly increased in the urban labour market during and after the economic crisis of 2001 (see Table 5.4, particularly on the informal sector).

---

which these struggles shaped life chances.

151 *'Changa'* is defined as an informal job held for a limited period of time, without any legally binding contract. For example, undertaking small-scale house repairs that do not require an architect.

152 Bayón also identified this growing trend in an interview with an informal sector participant: 'A *changa*, say, you are going to take this *changa*, cutting the grass and you are charging them 10 pesos (almost 3 dollars) for that. No, then comes someone else who will cut the whole field for 2 pesos. So, no, they knock you down that way. Do you understand? Besides, watch it, if you go and look around you'll see that there are people thumping each other for 2 pesos, to mow the lawn at somebody's house. Me too, I have a gasoline lawnmower, but no, it doesn't pay. Before, last year, I used to mow the lawn regularly for several customers, not now though. There's nothing right here, at family homes and now I have lost out. I don't know how this year is going to turn out. There are too many people mowing lawns. You see there's no work to do. Maybe you can go to the Capital, working for cleaning firms. I approached several of them, but you may retire, you may die and they won't call you up' (2002: 172).

Table 5.4:

Increased intermittent workers in informal labour sector, May 2002 (%)

Sectors	Unemployment Rate
Public Sector	5.2
Formal Private Sector	13.9
Formal private wage earners	15.7
Formal non-wage-earning workers	9.8
Informal Sector	30.5
Stable un-reported wage earners	20.5
Intermittent worker	**37.6**
Domestic workers	26.8
Average	21.4

Source: Based on the Permanent Household Survey (INDEC), May 2002.

'Changalisation', is how long-term unemployment reveals itself when social insurance is restricted to formal employment. Here it is worth recalling that in Argentina, less than 10 per cent of employed workers have access to unemployment insurance (Kritz, 2002: 5). To compound matters, due to the intensity of change within the labour market, intermittent work displaced stable jobs for formal workers. This tendency toward informality and intermittence in turn had significant social implications. Apart from a loss of income and a rise in the risk of unemployment, it implies exclusion from social security. The latter is highly dependant upon holding a formal job. When formal employment is lost, health fund coverage, the right to retirement contributions, family allowance, unemployment insurance, severance pay and the like, are lost. Consequently, 'workers and their families need to rely on state assistance. In poor households, with a strong incidence of informality and intermittence, and very high unemployment, only 25 per cent has at least one member with social security coverage; in indigent households, just 9 per cent does' (Kritz, 2002:7).

Long-term poverty

Poverty, defined as lack of access to a certain level of income, has traditionally received far more attention in the academic literature than the ability to command other assets. The two main ways of assessing deprivation regarding income have been the so-called 'poverty line' approach and the studies on income distribution (ECLAC, 1985; World Bank, 1993). These emphasise that 'poverty is not a marginal or incidental phenomenon, but is structurally related to the way economic and social systems function' (ILLS, 1993: 1).

Figure 5.3:
Long-term urban poverty rates, 1974-2005 (%)
(Poverty rate of metropolitan Buenos Aires)
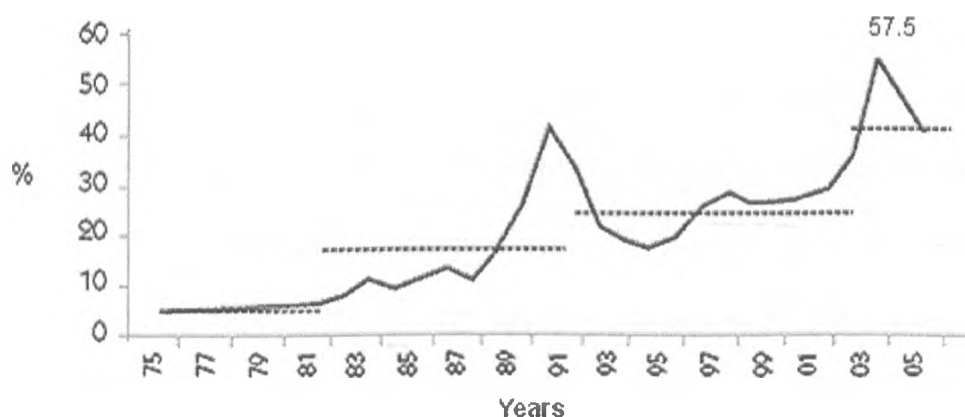
Source: INDEC, 2005.

According to Figure 5.3, poverty has ratcheted up with each crisis (e.g. 1989 and 2001). However, between 1998 and 2002, there was a higher increase in the poverty rate compared to the 1989 crisis level. The poverty rate rose from more than 20 per cent of the population in 1998 to over 50 per cent by 2002-03, as the economy stagnated and the economic crisis gradually worsened. Likewise, unemployment rose from 13 per cent

to 21 per cent. The collapse of the convertibility plan, major exchange rate devaluation and default on external debts in January 2002, produced a sharp and sudden increase in the poverty rate. Simultaneously, extreme poverty, defined as those without sufficient incomes to buy a basic basket of food, expanded to 27.5 per cent in October 2002 (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5:

Poverty and indigence rates, May 2001-October 2003 (%)

Year	Poverty	Indigence(extreme poverty)
May 2001	35.9	11.6
October 2001	38.3	13.6
May 2002	53.0	24.8
October 2002	57.5	27.5
May 2003	54.7	26.3
October 2003	54.0	27.7

Source: INDEC, 2004

As mentioned, during the 1990s Argentina experienced a significant transformation of its economic and social structure. Economic reforms created some GDP growth and also produced a modicum of economic modernisation, but it also led to the unprecedented crisis in 2001. Poverty rates rose to almost 58 per cent in October 2002 (Table 5.5), with the 'new poor' accounting for some 7 million people, or one-fifth of the population.[153] The World Bank estimated in 1996 that 30 per cent of the population classified as poor used to enjoy a middle class life-style, a group now referred to as the 'new poor' (Powell, 2002: 6). This trend sharply increased with the 2001 crisis, accelerating social polarisation.

---

153 Regarding the 2001 debacle, Powell observed that the Argentine economy was once again undergoing an alarming rise in unemployment and poverty 'with 70 per cent of the population enduring employment difficulties. 85 percent of Argentines are technically poor by national standards, some 4 million people live below the poverty line in Greater Buenos Aires, an increase of 500,000 people in the previous six months alone' (2002: 5).

Long-term income inequality

Waisgrais argues that Argentina, which until the mid-1970s had been one of the Latin American countries where inequality was moderate and relatively stable, became a high-inequality country from the early of 1990s (2003: 4).[154] After the mid-1990s, he argues, worsening distribution could no longer be regarded merely as a cyclical episode, 'but is the product of structural processes, with particular emphasis being given to a steep decline in the average wage, changes in the framework for determining pay and restrictions on wage negotiation' (2003: 4).

Arguing along similar lines, Leonardo (2003) identified two interrelated factors that shaped income distribution in contemporary Argentina: (i) the macroeconomic crises of 1988-89 and 2001-02; and (ii) the periods of increased integration into the world economy (commencing in the late 1970s and accelerating throughout the 1990s). The negative distributional impacts of the macroeconomic crises were stronger, although of shorter duration. Periods of economic openness are associated with changes in the economic structure, which strongly undermined unskilled labour-intensive sectors, while favouring skilled biased and technologically advanced areas of the economy. Both phenomena worked to reduce the relative demand for unskilled labour, decreasing employment and wages among this group, which has translated into higher inequality and spread poverty (2003: 2). Adding another dimension to this argument, Marshall (1995) pointed out that government intervention also played a dominant part in increased inequality through the policy of wage control. This was particularly apparent during the period 1976-82, but equally helps explain the negative distribution occurring

---

154 On these trends, a NACLA editorial held that in Argentina 'financial in security replaced social security; social inequality grew; income was redistributed upward; and the working poor, to lower the costs of doing business, were deliberately deprived of options and social mobility' (2005: 13).

in 1985-87 and 1991-93. In consequence, from 1974 to 1999, the richest 10 per cent saw their income rise by almost 35 per cent, the poorest 30 per cent witnessed their wage income steadily decline (see Table 5.6).

Table 5.6:

Wage distribution in the employed population in GBA, 1974-99 (%)

Year	Poorest 30	Middle 60	Richest 10
1974	12.6	60.5	26.9
1980	11.5	57.1	31.4
1986	10.9	56.4	32.7
1991	11.0	55.8	33.2
1994	10.9	56.2	32.9
1997	9.9	56.7	33.4
1999	8.6	56.8	34.6

Source: Based on EPH-INDEC, 2000.

However, following the 2001 crisis inequality widened considerably. In Greater Buenos Aires, for example, the richest 10 per cent of homeholds improved their income share from 38.8 per cent to 44.6 per cent of GDP. Associated with this rise in income inequality, poverty in Argentina climbed steeply from 3 per cent the 1970s to register a peak of 57.5 per cent in October 2002, when the level of indigence reached a devastating 27.5 per cent.

Table 5.7:

Real incomes in GBA, October 2000-October 2002 (%)

(October 2000 = 100)

Sectors	Oct 2000	Oct 2001	May 2002	Oct 2002
Public sector	100	99.5	78.2	67.6
Formal Private sector	100	102.6	79.7	73.4
Private wage earners	100	102.2	79.6	73.3
Non-wage-earning workers	100	103.3	79.8	73.7
Informal Sector	100	101.5	81.5	65.4
Stable wage earners	100	95.1	74.2	66.6
Intermittent workers	100	112.2	91.4	68.2
Domestic workers	100	91.1	70.6	57.5
Beneficiaries of public programmes (the PJJH)	100	51.1	44.1	29.1
Total	100	99.7	77.1	66.7

Source: Based on the EPH-INDEC, 2003.

According to Table 5.7, real incomes kept falling. Adjusted by inflation, on average earnings decreased 13.5 per cent over the five-month span between May 2002 and October 2002. Compared to October 2000, the fall was 33.3 per cent; almost all of it took place after October 2001. The drop was particularly serious for the informal sector, whose nominal incomes are well below the average. Evidence of this trend is seen in the decline in nominal wages of informal workers. Subsidies paid through state-administrated employment programmes (and the PJJH) also lost over 70 per cent of their value after October 2000. The fall was particularly intense between 2000 and 2001 (when subsidies paid by the federal government were cut while several better paying

provincial programmes were discontinued), but it was also significant during 2002. To a degree, this trend explains why, in spite of the huge allocation of subsidies, poverty grew substantially between May and October 2002.

Accelerating social inequality

Prior to the onset of the present crisis, the aforementioned trends were already in evidence. During the most recent period of military government (1976-83) a reduction in the wage bill was perceived as a condition for growth, resulting in a strict control of wages, which fell by a substantial 30 per cent between 1975 and 1976. To compound the situation, it was not only the low-waged sectors that saw a decline in their relative share of the national cake: steadily deteriorating economic conditions also had a significant impact on the middle class and other industrial sectors (see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8:

New income structure after devaluation, December 2001-March 2002 (US$)

Type of Income	Central Buenos Aires		Suburbs		Greater Buenos Aires	
	Dec. 2001	Mar. 2002	Dec. 2001	Mar. 2002	Dec. 2001	Mar. 2002
Average overall income	909	364	506	202	626	251
Self-employed	881	353	392	157	522	209
Bank worker	1081	432	735	294	848	339
Informal worker	643	257	334	134	395	158
Public employee	1144	458	624	250	810	324
Private employee	904	362	550	220	648	259
Pensioner	437	175	320	128	361	144

Source: Published in *La Nación,* 17 March 2002.

As seen in Table 5.8, while impoverishment and income inequalities increased in 1998, a precipitous fall in living standards for the middle class took place with the onset of the depression of 2001-02, which accelerated with the confiscation/freeze of bank accounts in December 2001 (the *corrarito*) and subsequent devaluation and inflation (*Clarín*, 20 April 2002). On these developments, Petras and Veltmeyer observed that:

> The current income as of April 2002 of the former middle class does not cover their basic necessities of rent, food, transport, school and health expenses, hence the necessity for multiple employment - which is near impossible - for all household members in 2002. Pensioners who depend mainly on their pensions are impoverished in all geographical sectors, as are all unemployed people living in the suburbs and greater Buenos Aires. Even if some unemployed people were working in the informal sector, almost all were near or below the line of indigence. The massive growth of unemployment, over 20 per cent nationally, its precipitous decline in income and living standards - are reminiscent of the worst years of the great Depression of the 1930s (2002).[155]

Income distribution inequality worsened even more as the economic crisis deepened, affecting both individuals and families (see Figure 5.4).

---

155 See, http://www.rebelion.org/petras/english/argentina200602.htm

Figure 5.4:

Average income performance, December 2004 (*pesos*)

Monthly, Per Family

Daily, Per Person

10% Richest
5,077 Pesos

10% Richest
52 Pesos

20% Upper Middle
Class
1,710 Pesos

20% Upper Middle Class
18 Pesos

30% Lower
Middle Class
915 Pesos

30% Lower Middle
Class
8 Pesos

40% Poorer
445 Pesos

40% Poorer
3.70 Pesos
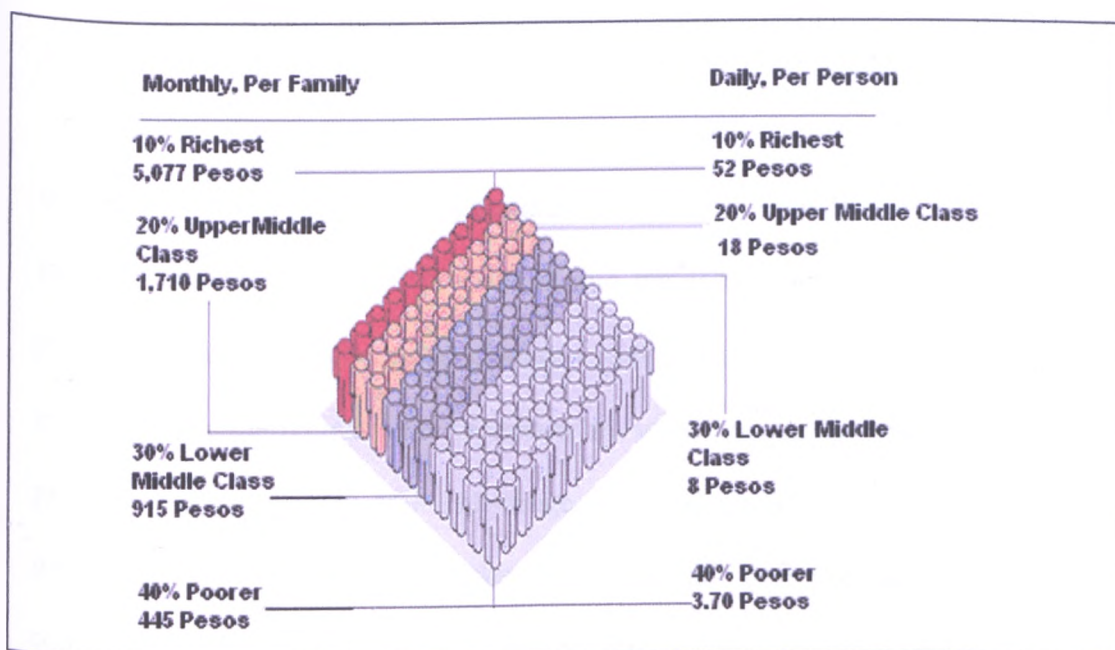
Source: Modified from *Clarin*, 3 December 2004.

As indicated in Figure 5.4, trends in the distribution of personal income have shown a growing wealth concentration among the upper strata, a continuous decline in the middle sectors and an expansion in the numbers of those classified as poor, particularly the newly impoverished.[156] The erosion in the real value of pensions, particularly the minimum pension, contributed to an increase in the number of older citizens living below the poverty line and unable to satisfy their basic needs. Income distribution inequalities have also remained considerable, as many of the poor living in the interior were affected negatively by the reduction in federal transfers and tax sharing, the elimination of industrial promotion programmes, the privatisation of state enterprises, as well as cuts in the number of federal and provincial state employees.

---

156 In 1974, the richest 20 per cent of the population had an income 7.8 times higher than of the poorest 20 per cent of the population. In 2002, it was calculated that the richest 10 per cent earned 34 times as much as the poorest 10 per cent of the population (*Página 12*, 1 December 2002).

Fiscal constraints and inefficiencies in the distribution of public social expenditure have led to further deterioration in educational and health services, contributing to declining levels of nutrition among the poorer sectors (Bebczuk and Gasparini, 2001: 25).

In sum, long-term social inequality was reinforced by the IMF imposing neo-liberal structural adjustment programmes. The policies brought a modicum of economic stability, periods of revived investment and increased output. Nevertheless, they also produced - and in some cases accelerated - 'adverse effects' in the form of an expansion in informal employment and increases in wage inequality. Although designed to promote stable growth and encourage a more open and competitive economy, implementing the changes simultaneously on all fronts produced adverse social consequences owing to the fact that poverty alleviation programmes were wholly inadequate. 'Official' interpretations of the problems caused by the move to a more 'open' economy centred on a combination of low competitiveness and high labour costs, which in turn created a political climate that would guarantee a favourable hearing for companies' demands for employment reform (from 1995 onwards), specifically those related to reducing wages and non-wage costs. The outcome of 'reform' and adjustment was, therefore, a degree of economic stability, but with a related high social cost, demonstrated by a significant increase in inequality.

Unemployed people launch the unemployed movement

At the outset, it is important to note that there has been a long tradition of protest in Argentina surrounding unemployment. A similar phenomenon has been in evidence in other societies. For example, Piven and Cloward analysed the causes of 'the uprisings of the unemployed' in the US during the Depression (1929-31), focusing upon how

mobilisation stemmed from a change in consciousness:

> Most of the people who were thrown out of work suffered quietly, especially at the start of the
> Depression, when official denials helped to confuse the unemployed and to make them ashamed
> of their plight. But as the depression worsened, as the work forces of entire factories were laid
> off, as whole neighborhoods in industrial towns were devastated, and as at least some political
> leaders began to acknowledge that a disaster had occurred, attitudes toward what had happened
> and why, and who was to blame, began to change among some of the unemployed. They began
> to define their personal hardship not just as their own individual misfortune but as misfortune
> they shared with many of their own kind. And if so many people were in the same trouble, then
> maybe it wasn't they who were to blame, but 'the system' (1979: 48-9).

For his part, Robert Castel also mentioned the development of the unemployed movement in France in 1995, whereby: 'the unemployed and their protests were motivated not so much by the demand for 'always more' as the fear of 'always less'', i.e. he saw it as a defensive response rather than a call for a fundamental restructuring of society (1995: 493). In common with the situation encountered in other countries, many public opinion polls undertaken in Argentina noted the social consciousness of the unemployed. This motivated them to mobilise against what they saw as a 'system problem'. Their radicalisation, moreover, was not solely due to immediate economic difficulties, but also deepened as a result of wider social and political discontent with the status quo. Issues here included the perceived frivolity of the political class and corruption (see Tables 5.9 and 5.10).

Table 5.9:

Perceived main social problems, December 2003 (%)

Social Problems	%
Unemployment	60.5
Insecurity	51.5
Economic Recess	29.3
Education	22.5
Poverty	14.7
Corruption	12.3
Health	11.6
Political class	9.6
The Unemployed movement	6.8
Pension	4.8
Social Justice	4.9
Low Salary	3.1

Source: Elaborated from *La Nación*, 21 December 2003

Table 5.10:

Evolution of major social problems in GBA, 1993-2003 (%)

Problems	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Unemployment	12	17	46	47	37	43	46	68	35	40	56
Social crime	6	7	4	4	8	10	9	8	8	10	6
Corruption	19	17	13	15	15	13	12	10	11	13	13
Hunger	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	5
Education	18	19	10	8	8	8	6	4	17	7	11
Justice	0	1	1	5	7	5	6	1	8	3	2
Debts	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	2	1
Health	9	8	3	2	4	2	3	3	4	2	2
Inflation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low income	25	23	12	13	12	10	11	2	2	1	1
Military	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others*	19	5	10	2	8	9	7	4	10	13	4

*Others: drugs, pension, human rights and political class

Source: Elaborated from *Centro de Estudios Nueva Mayoría*, 15 August 2003.

According to these two investigations, including a long-term research project concerning the 'evolution of major social problems in Argentina', by a local newspaper and a research institution, the 'unemployment problem' was the most dominant social issue in contemporary Argentine society. The following responses taken from interview data also highlight some of the results noted in Table 5.9 and 5.10. When replying to the question: 'What does it feel like to be a member of the unemployed movement (*piqueteros*)?', a variety of opinions were noted, ranging from anger to the need to retain 'dignity' by standing up for one's rights.[157]

---

157 One important thing to bear in mind about these random street interviews with unemployed people is that they do not only lose their income with their jobs, they also lose a part of their identity and their ability to 'strike', which is traditionally undertaken by trade unions and their formal members. A knowledge of the consequences of these forms of exclusion is a strong motivator behind the protests that shook Buenos Aires. Interviews were conducted with members of the unemployed movement in GBA: the 'Barrios de Pie', a group belonging to the MTD Aníbal Verón, the CCC, MUP20, the BPN, PO, MIJD and MTR, etc.

My husband had a small security firm which went bust. He's had no work for four months - we had to sell off clothes, furniture. We had a house, a car, the typical middle class Argentine family, with 20 days holidays a year to go to the beach, to the mountains. All that disappeared two years ago. Now we're in a 4m x 4m room, sharing a kitchen and bathroom with other families.[158]

We are people who can't pay. We're all in this struggle together. What we're constantly up against is this wretched individualism and egotism. Who knows where it came from, but now we know it's got to go. Individually we can't do anything. So this is our family, where we share *maté*, food and conversation.[159]

There is no future for me, but I want a future for my son and for that, we have to have fight and work.[160]

Up until two years ago, we had hope. Now we see shortages, hunger. Making and selling food and clothes helps us get by, but competition is growing and people can't pay very much.[161]

We are not in Bolivia. This country feeds half the cows and pigs of the world, and yet people are going hungry.[162]

Here what exists is persecution of those who are involved in social movements, against those of us who publicised the needs of the people, who proclaim that we need food, housing, health and education. All of this exists in our Argentina. Before 1997 there weren't social movements in Buenos Aires. It was terrible for the authorities that we showed the hidden side of Buenos Aires, which to them was a happy, tourist city. We showed them something that had been very hidden.[163]

We were the most forgotten. Neo-liberal politics created this mobilisation. We don't have production value in the face of hegemony. For this we are the untouchables, the most marginalised of all. In the face of this we go into the streets as road blockers, this is how we made them take notice of us, with our face covered.[164]

Being a picketer is synonymous with dignity. Of trying to defend what they stole from us. Being

---

158 Interview: Silvia (a member of PO), 3 September 2003.
159 Interview: Angélica (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 8 October 2003.
160 Interview: Ricardo (*Cartonero*, a cardboard collector in the streets), 2 November 2003.
161 Interview: Verónica (a member of PO), 20 November 2003.
162 Interview: Luis (from Bolivia and a member of MIJD), 7 October 2003.
163 Interview: Emilio (a member of CCC), 6 February 2004.
164 Interview: Carlos (a combat cell of MIJD), 11 February 2004

on a road facing up to the system this way gives us dignity. They try to exclude us as working people. I feel proud to defend my roots and show society we are decent, even when we cover our faces, or when they say we are black and dirty. We feel dignity and pride.[165]

[We march] ... to defend workers rights, the poor's rights as an excluded class. And will resist here until our request is satisfied.[166]

I fight for work, for integrity. Above all, [we protest] ... for the family, for our kids because they are hungry.[167]

There are a lot of people willing to defend workers rights. It would be good if we would all be here if something happens. Many are ready to sacrifice their life in order to defend their rights. It is not about the material loss, but about dignity.[168]

I think that the movement blasted away our sense of helplessness, but in a new way. We shook the country out of the lethargic dream that Menem and his politics were selling, like a bolt of bright new light. For us the movement became the only way in which we could talk with the rest of the country, our way of telling them that there were other methods of struggle, other ways to fire-up our lives with dignity.[169]

Not always we will get everything. We will get part of it, but we will get it with effort and willpower and sometimes with a little of this, not for violence but to intimate.[170]

Today we are struggling to be no longer oppressed. Maybe we won't change the world, but we are going to tackle it. I am very proud of being a picketer. I think my life has been a succession of nice experiences and this is one of them. I am very proud and happy. Here there are a lot of people I want to be with.[171]

We gather together because of a lot of things: misery, the lack of work, lack of education, medical assistance. There is nothing. We are all excluded. We are excluded from practically all

165 Interview: Migúel (a member of Barrios de Pie), 12 February 2004.
166 Interview: Raúl (a member of MIJD), 8 March 2004.
167 Interview: Calú (a member of PO), 8 March 2004.
168 Interview: Fredy (a member of PO), 8 March 2004.
169 Interview: Elísa (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 8 March 2004.
170 Interview: Delia (a member of CCC), 15 March 2004.
171 Interview: Alberto (a member of MIJD), 16 March 2004.

this society.[172]

They are the face of dignity, the face of the people who say no more of this government of exclusion that only benefits the rich class and impoverishes the poor. This is the face of dignity, people saying 'no más' ['no more'] and cutting the road until they get an answer.[173]

In the past there was no situation like the one we experience today. We took the streets, blocked it and went around with a can collecting money in order to have something to eat. We went into the barrios and the people there helped us out a lot. We drove in the van, from house to house, and asked people for food, which we then shared it. We distributed leaflets in the streets and collected money. I had never been a unionist or anything like it. I have always been a normal worker, but I thought that these activities were right, so I joined them.[174]

December 2001 was a major turning point. Before that, many people believed Menem's talk of Argentina joining the First World. The middle classes thought their four-wheel drives and country clubs were here forever. Ordinary working class people felt part of the system - they expected to send their kids to school, and one day to be able to buy a house. Now that certainty has gone.[175]

One of the most important things that we worked towards in the movement was dignity. I believe in what some of the compañeros say: if dignity means life then we were like the dead looking for life. If dignity means peace that we were looking for peace. If dignity means struggle then we took out sticks and slingshots and then we block the road and fight. If dignity means death, which is what we just saw on 26 December 2002, then we are willing to face it. We move forward and struggle for our dignity.[176]

At the beginning it was difficult to take to the streets, somehow embarrassing, it felt funny. But finally it was about our rights, our dignity. At the beginning we were only a few who wanted to pick up the struggle. I thought that the right moment had come, but I was alone in my department. The old union guys who you never saw in the streets, they did nothing.[177]

---

172 Interview: López (a member of CCC), 13 April 2004.
173 Interview: Noelia (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), Puente Pueyrredón, 26 March 2004.
174 Interview: Rolando (a member of CCC) in Retiro, 6 May 2004.
175 Interview: Alicia (a member of BPN), 10 May 2004.
176 Interview: Raqúel (a member of BPN), 10 May 2004.
177 Interview: Rosa (a member of MTR), 13 May 2004.

It is hard to exaggerate the psychological and political significance of the 'explosion' (*'estallido'*) of the unemployed movement, as the mass social protests since 1996 and more historical explosion in 2001 are known. The protests toppled several governments (five presidents came and went in the space of two weeks) and changed peoples' perception both of themselves and of their country. These interviews reveal the extent of unemployed people's consciousness as 'excluded' members of contemporary society. Observation of their marches also highlights that they protested with dignity and to show their anger towards the political and economic elites, who they describe as 'enemies'. Movement participants were acutely aware that it was 'the system' that was wrong and not them. In this regard, Harman also observed an earlier phase of protest by excluded people through 'spontaneous riots against hunger' in a number of localities around the country:

> In 1989 the people in the Patagonia province of Chubut mobilised for a week to get rid of a governor. Later, in June of that year, thousands of people in Buenos Aires and Rosario rioted, sacking supermarkets and grocery stores. Over the next two years neighbours in different cities and towns took to the streets several times. By 1993 the riots had turned more violent, with people attacking (and burning down) the government house in north western Santiago del Estero province, as well as in Jujuy, La Rioja, Chaco, Tucumán, and Corrientes. The main characteristic of these riots was the unexpectedness, the fact that they happened quickly, lasting rarely more than a day, and left no visible forms of organisation. In a sense, they were more a catharsis for accumulated anger and frustration that a new form of struggle. Though violent and pervasive, they were relatively easy to control. In all cases the government attempted to ignore the upheaval, hoping it would die down, and when it didn't its response included repression by security forces (2002: 30-31).

The deep socio-economic change and structural transformation which took place during the 1990s encouraged a growing number of people to demand their rights. This claiming of rights from the state converged with the emergence of new political actors, new sources of grievance and new forms of protest. The most outstanding examples of

this were a series of 'spontaneous riots' and the growing number of road blocks initiated by the unemployed movement (Auyero, 2003a: 64). The latter comprised a new way of protesting that arose as an answer to the growth of unemployment and to the dismantling of the social security system post-1990. It was used as a form of pressure to get jobs, welfare subsidizes and an increase of social expenditure on food, health and education. Thus, the typical demonstrations mounted by the big trade union organisations were replaced by new forms of protest created by the most deprived sectors, victims of unemployment and recession.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the significant transformation that Argentine society has experienced in the decades since the abandonment of the Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) model of growth and the adoption of a new model of development based on the opening and de-regulation of the economy. The neo-liberal strategy adopted in the 1990s was characterised by an aggressive combination of stabilisation, deregulation and structural reform policies. A currency board system, privatisation of public enterprises, deregulation of markets for goods, capital and labour and fiscal reform were the main features of these policies. Significant institutional factors accompanied these measures, in particular a decrease in state intervention in the economy. These policies had a considerable negative impact on the socio-economic structure and in particular on labour markets. The unemployment rate rocketed and the proportion of precarious jobs, which used to concentrate on a marginal portion of the workforce, grew considerably. However, the social cost of this transformation was not the same for all social groups. Popular and lower middle class groups suffered

disproportionately, particularly those with minimal educational qualifications working in those sectors of the informal economy that were 'restructured'. At the same time, 'a small portion of the population became wealthier, particularly those integrated to financial and modern services as well as high-ranked public bureaucrats' (Cerruti, 2003: 49). This drastic transformation of the socio-economic structure was soon confronted by various social protests from the excluded sector, stimulated by a combination of factors, including the highest recorded rate of unemployment in long-term poverty and deepened social inequality.

In conclusion, Menem's structural adjustment programmes affected all areas of social life. It led to a steep reduction in health budgets, with similar cuts in expenditure on education and other 'non-essential' services. These policies were implemented in a drive to reduce state spending to achieve fiscal equilibrium. An appreciation of the effects of structural adjustment in all areas of social life is fundamental for an understanding of the Argentine situation. The continuation and deepening of these policies came with the two Menem presidencies starting in 1989. National companies were sold to foreign capital, national industries were devastated and the state drew back from its task of regulating prices and providing credits to small producers. Hand-in-hand with these measures, tariffs were slashed, resulting in an influx of foreign goods with almost no restrictions, bringing the ruin of many small local producers, who were not given a period of grace to allow them to become 'efficient' in order to improve their chances of survival within the 'new rules of the game'.

Based on the need for an 'entrepreneurial' state with small bureaucratic costs, the new measures privileged those who had more economic power and abandoned those small regional producers that could not 'compete' in the new conditions. As one

observer noted: 'The state was there for a few privileged and absent for those who needed it most' (Rofman 2000: 6). The structural adjustment policies accompanied by flexibilisation through labour law reforms, had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable groups of society. In this context, the newly unemployed from the restructured oil company, plus those laid-off from other privatised companies, together with those rendered jobless due to the restructuring of the state and the contraction of national production, resulted in a huge mass of unemployed workers that were 'kicked out' of 'the system'. Referring to the prolonged socio-economic crisis of the 1980s and 1990s, Mecle Armiñana remarks conclusively that the bulk of the population suffered from a 'disappearance of citizenship rights' (2002: 43). Deepening economic problems created a dangerous level of unemployment, poverty and income inequality from the mid-1990s, a trend that would worsen in the run up to the economic crisis of 2001. Argentine governments followed enthusiastically policies that would accelerate unemployment, poverty and social inequality. Advancing informalisation signified that a much wider swathe of the populace than in past decades had to defend themselves against the state through engaging in grassroots offensive collective actions outside of established trade union structures. When attempting to voice their grievances, they developed a mass resistance movement. The whole economy and political system collapsed, the unemployed people did not trust any of the parties, leaders, or union bureaucracies. So they simply gathered with other people like themselves and asked each other: 'Do you have any idea of what's going on here?' and 'What do we have to do to protect our lives?' Gathering in the streets, they held 'pickets' and, almost spontaneously, founded unemployed organisations. Simultaneously they forged a new political identity, which forms the theme of the following chapter.

THE UNEMPLOYED MOVEMENT AND POLITICAL IDENTITY

The structure that consciousness-raising groups provide for the interpretation of feelings and behavior is overtly political; it should be immediately obvious that one is presented with a particular way of making sense of one's experience, a way intimately linked with certain controversial political views. Consciousness-raising groups are not, however, unique in this respect. What they are is unusually honest: the political framework is explicit (though often vague) and openly argued for. The alternative is not 'a clear space in which to get your head together' but a hidden political framework that pretends not to be one (Scheman, 1980: 186).

The first victory of the movement of unemployed is the movement itself. The unemployed movement is at the same time the blue-print of a collective organization and a chain reaction of which it is the product and which it in itself contributes to producing: from isolation, depression, shame, personal resentment, revenge on scapegoats, to collective mobilization; from resignation, passivity, individualization and silence to gaining the right to speak; from depression to revolt, from the individual unemployed person to the collectivity of the unemployed, from misery to anger (Bourdieu, 1998: 2).

Introduction

Many scholars have devoted much time and effort to study the causes of the Argentine unemployment problem. They sought a historical dimension using a macro-level approach that gave emphasis to the many frustrations inherent in the development strategies of successive regimes, including the recent neo-liberal government's blinded choices and performances with respect to rapid labour market reforms, which were wholly in favour of capital. Argentina's long-standing internal conflict has also been viewed as a barrier to social integration (Chapter IV). Others have focused on socio-economic structures and the longstanding phenomenon of social exclusion vis-à-vis the labour market. Privatisation led to the rapid opening-up of the economy, which when

allied with economic meltdown, brought massive deindustrialisation, recession, deflation and historic high rates of unemployment (hyper-unemployment) as long-term phenomena.[178] As a result, unemployment, poverty and levels of social inequality have deteriorated profoundly since the mid-1990s and the growth of unemployed movements has been directly correlated to mushrooming deprivation. The following pattern emerged: 'unemployment + poverty = movements'. Material grievances and relative deprivation afflicted an ever-wider range of the working population, including the middle class, who were prepared to mobilise (Chapter V). However, these socio-economic factors are not sufficient to explain the mobilisation of the disadvantaged, who took to the streets and utilised a variety of forms of social protest.

Thus, in order to provide a greater understanding of the unemployed movement, this chapter focuses on the political aspects of their activities and the mobilisation process in relation to related Unemployed Movement Organisations (UMOs).[179] The chapter proposes to study the political context behind their emergence. In particular, it focuses on the Resource Mobilisation (RM) capabilities and Political Opportunities

---

178 From 1988 to 1998, Argentina's industrial heartland (the Conurbano Bonaerence) lost 5,508 industrial plants and industrial jobs decreased from 1,381,805 in 1985 to 1,082,600 in 1994 (a 22 per cent loss in manufacturing jobs over nine years). Argentina's record unemployment rate was 19.5 per cent (INDEC, 2002). At the beginning of the 1990s there were 1.6 million unemployed, at the end of the 2000 there were 4 million; 2.18 million urban people remained unemployed until June in 2004 (Auyero, 2003: 323; La Nación, 18 June 2004). Until the end of 2004, 'the unemployed movement has represented almost 3 million unemployed people and the trade unions 5 million formal workers. However, one of the unsolved questions related with the Argentine labour market is who represents the 6 millions of informal workers?' (La Nueva Mayoría, 22 December 2004).

179 Three additional movements arose to prominence that were related to the unemployed movement: (i) 'the barter markets', involving people who had lost their jobs and where unable to get any money at all, but who could still exchange their talents and capacities with other people in a similar situation by using their own 'currency', called 'credits' (Pearson, 2003; 217); (ii) 'the neighbour's assemblies', established in the main cities, whereby neighbours started to gather in street corners spontaneously to discuss their own problems, the causes of the crisis of 2001, and possible ways out (Caram, 2002; Sartelli, 2003); and finally (iii) 'the occupied factories movement', consisting of (ex)workers from bankrupt factories who refused to become unemployed. When the factory owners announced the closure of the plant, they refused to leave, occupied the factory and started to run it themselves. See the cases of Zanon (Davis, 2005) and Brukman (Spieczny, 2004).

(POs) available to the Social Movement Organisations (SMOs) for political

mobilisation by the unemployed themselves (see Chapter II). US theorists (both from a

RM and PO perspective) utilise concepts such as tactics, political opportunity structures

and organisational resources, which are all viewed as necessary conditions to launch

collective actions. RM explains the levels of individual participation in terms of rational

decision and it analyses the success of movements in terms of resource availability,

strategies and networking with other groups. The PO approach explains success or

failure with reference to the political background and the interaction between movement

and state. These approaches allow for an explanation of the unemployed movement in

its socio-political context.[180] These perspectives contrast with the position held by

many observers, who have explained the origins as a response to poverty,

unemployment, inequality and as an opposition to social exclusion, which motivates

people to create or join social protests and organisations. In this regard, Wilson argues

that 'social movements are not a simple knee-jerk response to social conditions' (1973:

90). Arguing along similar lines, Tilly also criticises the explanation for an increase in

protest as being found in the identification of existing grievances. He believes that

grievances are not sufficient to trigger collective action; they operate within a matrix of

political relationships, prior collective struggles and state responses to those struggles.

Hence, 'contention' tends everywhere to 'flow out of a population's central political

---

180 Following a PO position, Aguilar explained the motivations of the unemployed movement
through the 'cultural frame processes' concept. He argued that: 'a shared perception that came
to view government leadership and economic policy as the responsible agent of socioeconomic
problems. The growing success of the unemployed movement and its leaders to organize and to
induce concessions from the state worked to both attract supporters and to solidify the
objectives of the movement; extremely unstable, degrading political climate, which produced
openings for the emergence of new forces clearly present by December 2001; the unemployed
movement's history of protest, bargaining capabilities and ability to induce negotiations and
procure concessions by pressuring the government with increased roadblocks exemplifies this
final principle' (2005: 9).

processes, instead of expressing diffuse strains and discontents within the population' (1997: 27).

Following these arguments, this chapter moves beyond a simple deterministic relationship between grievances and the formation of the unemployed movement in Argentina. It focuses on the various UMOs as having politically excluded identities which alienated them from Argentine traditional trade unions and political parties on the issue of unemployment.[181] Thus, they had to mobilise to defend their interests without any organised labour or political backing to help or protect them. The collapse or functional crisis of those Argentine political entities and institutions which helped implement the neo-liberal economic programmes (the political and economic elites, trade unions and political parties) who would normally have played an important role in channelling discontent, forced under/unemployed people to organise autonomously. Cockcroft captured the atomising impact of the crisis:

> Argentina is a perfect example of how imperialism's neo-liberal economic programes have dismantled or debilitated the nation state, drying up the spaces for so-called 'progressivism' or 'nationalism'. The failure of the De la Rúa center-left Alliance, 1999-2001, reflected that. In Argentina, traditional class structures are nowhere to be found. The working class are fractured by different levels of unionization and wages (lower each year), rising unemployment, and the flexibilization and precariousness of work. Most of the middle classes are racing toward the poverty line or already have fallen below it. Peasants are often proletarians, immigrant labour is widespread, slavery is being reintroduced, sex trade in women and children is booming, and

---

181 Studies of collective actions and SMOs among the unemployed and poor people in Latin America have focused primarily on individual-level participation in associations and group activities (Dietz 1998); poor people's survival networks (Auyero, 2001); tactics of confrontation and protest, like those used by the unemployed movement in Argentina (e.g. Epstein 2003); or social movements focused on specific issues, such as the Brazilian MST (*Movimiento Sin Tierra*; Landless Workers' Movement, Wright and Wolford, 2003). These studies show how the unemployed and poor people in certain situations have succeeded in mobilising and pressing their demands, but they mostly take the form of broader movements that are not structured in the same way as everyday membership based organisations. Thus, studies of the actual organisational structure among the unemployed and the poor in Latin America remain scarce. More common studies are the community based organisations which mobilise around the delivery of social services. See, for example, Juan Carlos Navarro's study, 'Community Organizations in Latin America' (1994).

most people, facing poverty, unemployment, or unavailability of jobs, work long days and nights in the informal economy (2003).[182]

Given this degree of undermining of 'traditional class structures' and associated 'fracture', the unemployed out of necessity became political opportunists and mobilised themselves into an organised collective response.[183] These are also important factors which are likely to be more pivotal beyond a direct response from individuals' consciousness of grievances or relative deprivation. These refer to consistent signals to organise a movement politically and become political actors, which encourage them to search for various protest methods, strategies and resources to resist the severe conditions of the status quo. Organisational capability also depends on the political environment (such as a weakness of political repression), that may provide incentives for a collective action by affecting people's expectations for success or failure, emphasising the mobilisation of internal and external resources (e.g. economic resources, political opportunities, influential allies) to an organised group (Tarrow, 1998: 54, 77).

The UMOs and Political Opportunities (POs).

The process of transgressive political agitation that started in 1996 constituted a change in the traditional Argentine 'repertoire of contention': new forms of resistance displaced the usual means of labour and social protest. The hitherto commonplace strikes and

---

182 In a website, http://marxsite.com/argentina_february_2003.htm
183 Different arguments exist about the unemployed people's relative inability to form organisations or influence the policy-making process. One common perspective is that the unemployed and informal workers are often socially atomised and consequently lack the physical and social infrastructure to form strong organisations (Jenkins and Leicht, 1997; Roberts, 1995). Another position holds that the very nature of informal work creates intense competition among members, so that organisation can only take place when all informal workers are threatened equally. More broadly, 'poor people rarely have the sort of resources – most importantly, time and money – that often make political participation possible' (Verba, Schlozman and Brady, 1995: 38).

185

mobilisations, which were mostly organised by unions and political parties, counting on unionised workers and political partisans as their main participants, lost their dominance with the emergence of alternative means of protest, involving a different array of organisations and participants. A growing mass of disadvantaged people without traditional institutional protection or representation created alternative forms of collective actions. *'Puebladas'* or *'estallidos sociales'* ('town revolts' or 'social explosions'), *'cortes de ruta'* or *'piquetes'* ('roadblocks' or 'pickets'), *'cacerolazos'* ('pot-banging'), *escraches* ('graffiti protests'), *asambleas vecinales* ('neighbourhood assemblies') and *clubes de trueque* ('barter clubs'), *ahorristas* ('saving account holders'), *'fábricas recuperadas'* ('occupied factories') became widespread. The participants frequently included people with no history of political or 'movement' activity. In this chapter, the new forms of protest and their dynamic are examined.

Since the mid-1990s, a new political actor entered the Argentine political arena: the UMOs. These attracted growing attention by blocking highways throughout the country (*La Nueva Mayoría*, 2005). Following the neo-liberal reforms of President Menem and the side-effects of the dollar peg, under/unemployment rates reached historic heights (discussed in Chapter V). Indicators of poverty and social inequality equally deteriorated from the second half of the 1990s. Coming out of this rapidly accelerating wave of deprivation, the *'piquetero'* movement emerged, a term coined by the mass media and the state:

> We never branded ourselves *'piqueteros'*. It started being used by the media ... that is the state, in a disrespectful and pejorative way, to imply that we were criminals, subversive elements. When we began to get organised there was still a middle class, which doesn't exist today any more. Its members were really hopeful, waiting to see what capitalism and neo-liberalism had to offer. So when we began to blockade roads and occupy public buildings ... to them it was a very shocking thing. Since then, the social and political situation in the country has affected wider

sections of the population. They have deeply felt the consequences and awakened from the golden dream of capitalism, the dream of progress for some through wage labour, the exploitation of the rest; comfort, consumerism.[184]

Following the first local blockades in 1996, the activities of UMOs quickly expanded and since economic meltdown in 2001, became a daily occurrence.[185] Quickly following their appearance, the UMOs became politically influential, despite the absence of a unifying umbrella organisation, and in later year came to play a vital role in the landscape of social protest, a trend that consolidated with the appearance of multiple different sectors within the movement.[186] The unemployed movement from the mid-1990s followed logical expectations. Deteriorating socio-economic conditions, leading to economic collapse in 2001, brought about socio-political protests, which quickly spread throughout the country. Popular resistance opened up a new phase in social struggle that carried the possibility, for the first time in decades, to transform a defensive mobilisation, first into one of equilibrium and then into one of an offensive nature.

---

184 Interview: Neka (a leader of MTD Solano) in Plaza de Mayo, 3 September 2003.
185 In Buenos Aires, 'the first *piquetero* protest occurred by an united group - *las Coodinadoras de la Matanza y Berazategui* - including other organisations of unemployed and, indeed, various apparatus of political parties in *La Matanza* and *San Justo* in July 1996. Since then, they have recognized as themselves based on the unemployment issue. It was a potential mass with a capability for obtaining desirable social change' (Mansilla and Conti, 2003: 48).
186 Regarding the dynamics and process of development of UMOs, Villalón (2002) identified four different phases: Initially, picketer organisations were created in some towns (1993-1996). The level of unrest was high in those cities that registered protests, but the mobilisation was still sporadic and confined to a few areas and groups. In the following phase, decentralised roadblocks occurred with greater frequently (1997-mid 2001), with a proliferation of picketer organisations throughout the country, raising the level of unrest and number of participants. By the end of this phase, every province of Argentina witnessed the occurrence of at least a few roadblock protests. In the third phase, that of national pickets (July-November 2001), the level of social unrest became higher and constant. This stage's distinction was that certain picketer organisations became dominant at the regional and national level and organised coordinated pickets across the entire country through national meetings of picketers' groups, which changed the decentralised character of the movement, but did not create homogenisation or total verticalisation. Finally, the fourth phase, witnessed national-level actors (December 2001-June 2002), the emergence of co-ordinating with other sectors of the population to the process of political contention. With this process, '*Cacerolazos, Asambleas Vecinales, Clubes de Trueque* and *Escraches* combined with Piquetes and multi-sector mobilisations, generating a very high level of social unrest across the entire country' (Villalón, 2002: 109-110).

Originally the UMOs originated in two cities in the interior. Many observers agree that the UMOs emerged in 1996 with small groups of unemployed people after the closure of several YPF plants: Cutral-Co in the province of Neuquén, southern Patagonia and the town of Tartagal in the north-western province of Salta. YPF, the national oil company, was first privatised and later sold to the Spanish conglomerate Repsol.[187] Both Cutral-Co and Tartagal had, effectively, sprang up around the oil industries, therefore the closure of the plants in the search for cost reductions and economic efficiency, meant the loss of the main income generating activity for the inhabitants, leaving thousands of families unemployed. Many reports published in local newspapers (*Clarín, La Nación, Página 12,* etc.), noted that the issues of unemployment and privatisation were the main stimuli for the emergence of UMOs.[188] The UMOs form of protest soon spread to the impoverished neighbourhoods and deindustrialised towns of Greater Buenos Aires (Massetti, 2004; Petras and Veltmeyer, 2003). Initially, a few unemployed people began mobilising in protest against job cuts and plant shutdowns resulting from the privatisation process. These actions soon attracted hundreds and thousands of additional participants, to spread all over the capital.

The privatisation of YPF was passed by Congress on 24 September 1992, with

---

187 According to Auyero: 'both Plaza Huincul and Cutral-Co were born of, and developed through, oil activity. Since their inception in 1918 and 1933 respectively, both towns grew with the rhythm of (and became highly dependent on) the benefits provided by oil production and by the activities of the state oil company, YPF (the first government company founded in 1922). With the discovery of petroleum in the area came its territorial occupation and settlement carried out under the aegis of state action. The rapid population growth of both towns reflects the expansion of YPF's activities. From 1947 to 1990, the total population increased from 6,452 to 44,711, an impressive demographic growth by all accounts. The cradle-to-grave enterprise welfare provision of YPF benefited its workers with higher than average salaries, modern housing serviced by the very same company personnel, access to a very good hospital, health plan and paid vacations. YPF's welfare extended well beyond the confines of the company: the whole social and economic life of the region was boosted by its presence. YPF built entire neighborhoods, provided others with sewers and lighting, erected a local high-quality hospital, a movie theater, a sports center, and provided school buses for most of the population' (2003: 6).
188 Many analysts also agree that the main cause of the UMOs is 'from privatization policy in the periods of Menem government' (Villalón, 2002: 3).

devastating effects being felt in the regions where the company operated. YPF not only cut back its personnel from 4,200 employees to 600 in less than a year, it also ceased to be the welfare enterprise around which the life of both towns evolved (Giarracca, 2003: 199). The company even moved its headquarters out of Plaza Huincul and became an enclave industry functioning under strict capitalist guidelines, i.e. profitability and profit remission (Auyero, 2003: 7). To this backdrop, Cutral-Co was the scene of the first 'cortes de ruta' ('roadblocks') in 1996, the actual events being recorded by one of the participants (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1:

Description of the first roadblock in Neuquén Province, 1996

<u>Source:</u> 'Laula's diary' in Cutral-Co (quoted in Auyero, 2004: 420).

As shown in 'Laula's diary' (Figure 6.1), Camarero et al., identified a series of struggles in Neuquén Province in Patagonia, were symptomatic of the new trend in 1996:

Cutral-Co and Plaza Huincul are two townships in the upper Patagonian Neuquén province, with some 55,000 inhabitants ... built and developed around the petroleum industry ... YPF was privatized, with over 80 percent of its employees being laid off as a result. By 1996 the townships had a 35.7 percent unemployment rate, and 23,500 persons were below the poverty line, by the June 1996, the local governor had failed to sign an agreement with a Canadian corporation to establish a fertilizer plant in the area, and the local population took to the streets. Local shopkeepers closed their doors, and all over the two towns barricades were set up manned by some 5,000 residents. Those people manning the barricades became known as *'piqueteros'* ['the unemployed movement']. Security forces besieged the entrenched townspeople (1998: 62).

Privatisation, when allied to the reform of the provincial government, resulted in a steep increase in unemployment and reduction in welfare protection, launching a type of protest that would eventually become the most popular utilised by the unemployed movement. Already by 1997 there were a total of 140 roadblock protests and their popularity grew steadily, to the extent that in 2000 the number had risen to more than 500 (Figure 6.2).[189]

Figure 6.2:

Numbers of roadblocks carried out by the UMOs, 1997-2002 (number)
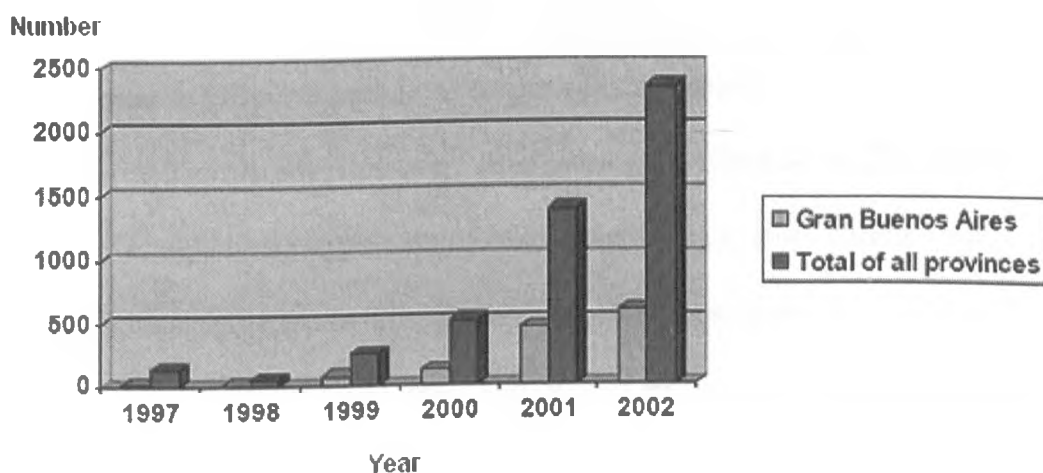
Source: Adopted from *'La Nueva Mayoría'*, 12 February 2003.

---

189 For more information about the chronological development of the unemployed movement in Argentina, see OSAL-Observatorio Social de América Latina, Nº 4 (June 2001); Nº 7 (June 2002); Nº 11 (May-August 2003); Nº 12 (September-December 2003); and Nº 13 (January-April 2004).

Tactics: blockades, occupations and marches to occupy public spheres

Piven and Cloward argue strongly that 'most important, institutional roles determine the strategic opportunities for defiance, for it is typically by rebelling against the rules and authorities associated with their everyday activities that people protest' (1979: 21). From this premise, they hold that:

> Workers protest by striking. They are able to do so because they are drawn together in the factory setting, and their protests consist mainly in defying the rules and authorities associated with the workplace. The unemployed do not and cannot strike, even when they perceive that those who own the factories and businesses are to blame for their troubles. Instead, they riot in the streets where they are forced to linger, or storm the relief centers, and it is difficult to imagine them doing otherwise' (1979: 21-22).

However, this institutionalised determinant model does not explain adequately the case of the Argentine unemployed movement. Even though the unemployed movement has utilised road blockades as a main tactic, they have also developed different methods of protest. The primary tactics employed by the UMOs were not new, for the picket was a barrier traditionally put up by striking labourers at the entrances of factories. It intended to prevent other workers from entering the workplace when a strike was taking place. Much UMOs activity, however, rapidly became relocated on the streets, where direct action established a multitude of road blockades on main national roads or on important highways that sometimes lasted for days. The unemployed groups set up barricades made of burning tyres, nails and broken bottles, reinforced by thousands of unemployed men and women sitting on the road, so preventing traffic from passing. Only emergency vehicles would be allowed through. The protesters cook, eat, sleep and dance the tango there. This form of 'symbolic action' proved highly effective in giving visibility to a group of people that were rendered invisible, outcasts who were divorced from 'the system' by the system itself.

The action of blocking the flow of commodities was seen as the key way to disrupt economic activity; as they were unemployed, the option to strike was no longer available to them, but by blocking roads they could still have a significant impact on the economic and political system. A number of the participants explained their actions in relation to this point in the following terms:

> This methodology is the key to how factions with distinct identities and diverse political origins ... can achieve such a high degree of political homogeneity. The methodology employed by the diverse organisations - the road blockade, a means of protest that directly interferes with the movement of goods throughout the country - is a paradigmatic way of reminding us that they - the unemployed - have been expelled from the productive circuit.[190]

> We see that the way capitalism operates is through the circulation of goods. Obstructing the highways is the way to hurt the capitalist the most. Therefore, we who have nothing - our way to make them pay the costs and show that we will not give up and die for their ambitions, is to create difficulties by obstructing the large routes of distribution.[191]

> We block the streets. We make that part of the streets ours. We use wood, tyres, and petrol to burn ... these are one of the symbols of our movement.[192]

> We do it like this because it is the only way they acknowledge us. If we stood protesting on the sidewalk, they would trample all over us.[193]

> We used the same methods as had already been used in the North (of Argentina) – the road-cuts are more concrete. This is the only way the government will listen.[194]

> The *piquetero* has changed a lot. At first, in the first blockades, we kept our faces completely uncovered. We did have some rocks, kept hidden, but we did not reveal them because we did not want to frighten people. It was a process. We suffered escalating repression and we started to

---

[190] Interview: Tognetti, a journalist, 26 January 2004.
[191] Interview: Velaztiqui (a member of MIJD), 7 February 2004.
[192] Interview: Alejandro (a member of CCC), 15 March 2004. From that day, the CCC announced a week of national struggle as long-term roadblock strategies in the streets.
[193] Interview: Juana (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 16 March 2004.
[194] Interview: Teresa (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón) in the roadblock of *Puente Pueyrredón*, Avellaneda, 26 March 2004

cover our faces, so that we could not be identified. We only used violence as self- defense. We did not start to throw sticks and stones in order to attack, but to defend ourselves. It is also essential to point out that the piquetero and the plans are just another factor in our struggle; they are not fundamental.[195]

As the interviews indicate, the protesters chose to use roadblocks to pressure the government because other methods were less effective. These tactics proved extraordinarily successful. Whole families took part in the blockades, setting up collective kitchens and tents in the middle of the street. Many of the participants were young and over 60 per cent were women. Over the years this loosely federated autonomous movement has managed to secure thousands of temporary minimum wage jobs, food allowances and other concessions from the state. The police were often unable to clear the roadblocks because of the popular support they received. The highways frequently run beside shantytowns on the edges of the cities, so there was always a threat that any repression would bring thousands more people streaming out of these areas onto the road in support, provoking much more serious confrontations with the authorities.

The UMOs and political activities

The rapidly increasing numbers of street actions (mainly roadblocks) in urban Argentina provides a barometer of the level of social unrest. The emergence of roadblocks, during the period 1997-2000, was characterised by new methods of protest, mostly organised by groups of ex-employees and displaced workers, unemployed and underemployed low-income people who comprised the informal sector. During this period, the first UMOs were created in some local towns. The level of unrest was, understandably high

---

[195] Interview: Santiago (a member of MTR), 12 May 2004. That day are estimated 120 roadblocks occurred at a national level.

in those cities that registered protests, but the mobilisation was still sporadic and confined to a few areas and groups. However, soon there was a proliferation of UMOs throughout the country, rasing the level of unrest and with it number of participants. Based on the political process (PP, POs), during this period, the activity of UMOs and the prevalence of roadblocks as a means of protest became increasingly regular and popular in labour conflicts. By the end of this period every province of Argentina witnessed the occurrence of at least a few roadblock protests by UMOs (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.3:

The evolution of roadblocks, 1997-2005 (number)
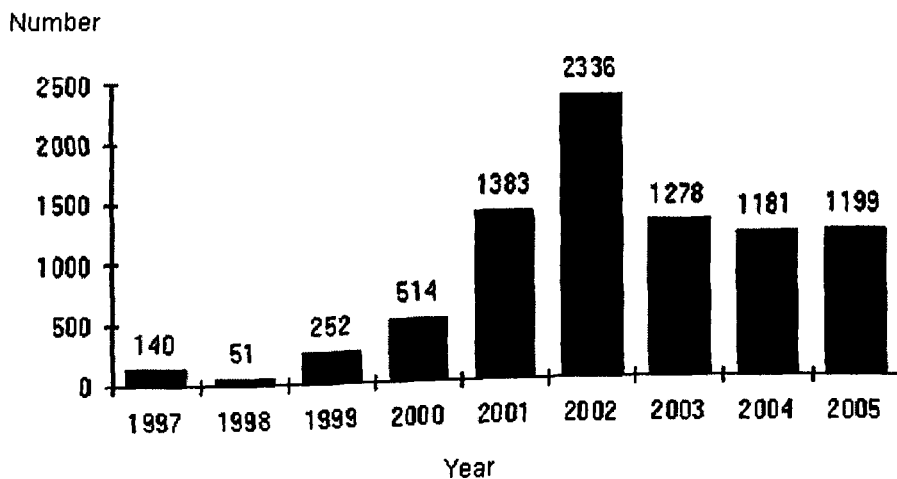
Source: Adopted from 'La Nueva Mayoría', 13 January 2006.

What is more, following the 2001 crisis, UMO street activity became a national phenomenon, with mobilisation occurring on a daily basis. The level of social unrest was definitely higher.[196] What was distinctive about this period was that certain UMOs

---

196 The UMOs continued to grow from May to August 2001, during which period two national conferences of Piquetero organisations were held and 300 major highways were shut down by tens of thousands of pickets. Clashes with the police killed five pickets (*Página 12*, 1 June 2001). Harman commented on this national level protest: 'the new forces and new forms of struggle, then, were already showing that they could shake society to its roots - and this at a time when the ruling class was increasingly split over what to do about the acute financial crisis of both Argentinian industry and the state. That is why those on the Marxist left who spoke then about the development of a potentially revolutionary (or 'pre-revolutionary') situation were correct'

became dominant, both regionally and countrywide through national meetings of UMOs' groups. The whole movement assumed a more centralised character. A report from *La Nueva Mayoría* ('The New Majority', 2003), observed that the movement undertook 2,336 street actions in 2002 and continued with more than a thousand between 2003 and 2005. Their capacity to force Argentine governments to backtrack was an expression of the enormity of the political collapse created by economic bankruptcy. The potential for mobilisation, as manifest in roadblocks and mobilisations, is indicated by the regular participation of 'almost 200,000 unemployed people'.[197] Broadly speaking, the shift to a market-led economic policy, the shrinking of the state and a massive dissatisfaction consequent upon the economic crisis of 2001, brought forth the voice of disadvantaged groups hopeful of regaining political empowerment through participation in the UMOs. For this reason, the movement became a mechanism through which a plethora of excluded social sectors could express their discontent with the status quo and the desire for a 'new', more just, Argentina.

UMOs, the crisis of legitimacy, and the political class

As mentioned (in Chapters II and III), social movement theorists have long recognised that the roles of Social Movement Organisations (SMOs) are crucial for understanding movements' collective actions and thus forming their collective identity in the context of 'organised politics'. According to McAdam and others, attitudinal affinity may create a 'push' towards participation in a movement, yet recruitment rarely occurs without a 'pull' from existing social networks, i.e. social relationships established through group

---

(2002: 33).
197 According to local newspaper studies (*Clarín, La Nación*), UMO membership was estimated at more than 172,000. As the number of the unemployed reached 2 million, almost a tenth of unemployed people participated in the street protests (*La Nación*, 28 July 2004).

membership and identification (Gould, 1995:13-23; Friedman and McAdam, 1992: 157; McAdam and Roberto, 1990: 1-33; McAdam and Paulsen, 1993: 640-7). POs theorists identify the rupture of political elites as a key element determining the success of mobilsing. McAdam et al., for example, define this concept as 'a sustained process by which significant elements of a previously stable ruling coalition align with the action programs of revolutionary or other opposition groups' (2001: 113, 196). Argentine UMOs have benefited from this rupture of political elites and formed strong opposition groups that according to one analyst comprise 'critical auxiliary forces' for a revolution:

> Transferring to the unemployed the character of the subject of revolution is as bad a theory as you can get. The subject of revolution remains the working class, the layers of society directly linked to the means of production, with the power of collective action over those means of production, of taking over and running them on behalf of society as a whole, of breaking the back of bourgeois order. The unemployed are a necessary ally, a fundamental pillar of the revolutionary movement, not the subject of revolution, but a critical auxiliary force.[198]

The POs' approach is useful to explain the impact of UMOs in the crisis of Argentine politics, which witnessed a fraction of the political class separate from the ruling coalition and join with the opposition in their goal to bring the government down.[199] Commenting on this kind of scenario, Piven and Cloward argue:

> Clearly, the vested interest of the ruling class is usually in preserving the status quo, and in preserving the docility of the lower orders within the status quo. But rapid institutional change and upheaval may affect elite groups differently, undermining the power of some segments, so that elites divide among themselves. This dissonance may erode their authority, and erode the

---

198 Interview with Carlos Petroni (a member of Argentina's leftist intelligensia) in answer to the question: The *piqueteros*: a new subject of revolution or a fundamental ally of the working class? See, http://www. leftparty. org. ar
199 From these perspectives, the movements' mobilisation potential is shaped by the strength and density of social networks, which in turn is influenced by factors such as the political circumstances for political opportunity. Moreover, these SMOs provide movements with material incentives, 'movement entrepreneurs' and communication channels to solve the 'free rider' collective action problem. By looking at the interaction between movement entrepreneurs and organisation members, one can study 'how SMOs link specific frames into broader cognitive schemata that are shared by the majority of movement participants' (McCarthy and Zald, 1977: 1212-41).

authority of institutional norms they uphold. If in the ensuring competition for dominance, some among the elite seek to enlist the support of the impoverished by naming their grievances as just, then the hopes of the lower classes for change will be nourished and the legitimacy of the institutions which oppress them further weakened (1979: 13).

According to the POs perspective, collective actions arise when conditions to mobilise become favourable. Tarrow also confirms that 'when institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines, challengers find opportunities to advance their claims' (1998: 71). The conditions, or 'correct timings', mentioned by Tarrow are external factors to the group, which can exploit them to start to form an organisation and mobilise. This scenario unfolded in Argentina. The depth of the crisis created new political opportunities for various UMOs and for the raising of popular demands to change existing political structures in favour of disadvantaged segments of the population. The extent of the crisis brought two mutually reinforcing processes into operation: a schism within the political elite and intense popular mobilisation from below. These two developments led to a legitimacy crisis from above (i.e. the fall of governments - De la Rúa and his successors), and the legitimisation of popular uprisings from below (Petras and Veltmeyer, 2005: 29).[200]

UMO opportunity in the crisis of ruling class politics

The debacle of 2000-2001 represented a moment 'when people bypassed politics as

---

[200] The modern problem of legitimacy is a problem of political representation and consent. The term 'legitimation crisis' is employed by Habermas, who argues that: 'all social systems have to have some mechanism that gives them legitimacy. Modern capitalist societies require extensive state planning of the economic system. This state intervention is given legitimacy by parliamentary democracy which, for Habermas, boils down to periodic and occasional voting by citizens who are otherwise politically inert. This inertia, or civil privatism, is necessary for the survival of the system. However, civil privatism is undermined by the very process of state intervention and planning, which systematically interferes in citizens' privates lives, thus generating a potential crisis of legitimacy' (quoted in Abercrombie et al., 2000: 198).

usual (Levy, 2004:.10), because a 'politics of informality' rose to the fore that 'undermined the working of the state as a set of formalized institutional procedures' for representing political voice (Tedesco, 2002: 478). Commenting on this situation, Dinerstein argues that in the wake of this 'crisis of representation', Argentina became a 'political laboratory', as an unprecedented groundswell of bottom-up mobilisation led to a range of 'alternative' forms of political participation aiming to transform the nature of Argentinean political culture and society (2003a: 187). Furthermore, most political scientists concurred that the proliferation of UMOs was triggered by at least one of the following factors: the social impact of economic collapse; the role played by poor decision makers (including IMF technocrats) and the economic policies implemented by Menem and continued by Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001). Stagnation post-1998 developed into crisis in 2001, provoking an unprecedented level of social turbulence and political implosion (Armony and Armony, 2005: 29).[201]

In this context, the crisis of ruling class politics became more acute when the IMF refused to release more funds in December 2001 and the banking system threatened to grind to halt. The two mainstream political parties, the Radicals and the Peronists, were increasingly fragmented internally, with the various local Peronist political bosses intent on pursuing measures to bolster their individual positions, showing little concern for the interests of the ruling class as a whole. No political figure was powerful enough to impose macroeconomic policies (dollarisation or devaluation) sufficiently robust to control falling economic indicators: 'There was drift without any policy except more

---

201 Ollier presents a broader range of factors that help explain the events of December 2001: 'the nature of the relation between the president and the ruling parties, between the executive and the legislative, between president and provincial governors, and between the political parties within the Alianza, are all considered as crucial in the attempt to understand the political components of the crisis ... the combination of weaknesses in the domestic political regime and economic dependency unleashed an unprecedented institutional crisis' (quoted in Tedesco, 2003: 166-67).

budget cuts until the shortage of dollars compelled the government to freeze bank assets with the *corralito* and seal its own fate' (Harman, 2002: 39). The uprisings of UMOs onto the political scene also increased the level of party fragmentation. Rival politicians had to respond not just to the promptings of the warring sections of the ruling class, but also to growing pressure from below.

In spite of its obvious economic roots, the UMOs appearance was also political. This perspective focuses on the question of legitimacy for governance, taking into account factors such as the role played by a corrupt, unresponsive and undisciplined political class, as well as the pre-eminence of informal rules in the realm of policymaking. Consequently, political opportunities for the UMOs flowed from three interlocking developments: in the crisis of legitimacy affecting the Argentine political class through the rupture of the party system (PJ, UCR); economic crisis, producing a higher unemployment rate; and the rupture of the traditional dominant labour union (CGT).

Although Argentina had two large established political parties, the Partido Justicionalista (PJ) and the Unión Cívica Radical (UCR), both of them remained unwilling to reform or to adapt to already changed socio-economic realities during the 1990s.[202] As Rofman argues:

> The corporative structure of the society is a replica from the old Argentina that has no representative capacity. The clientelist system causes a rupture with the role of the Argentine political parties as channels of representation and the actors of change within the local context and transforms them into promoters of particular interests' (2001: 48, quoted in Cramér and Sjöström, 2003: 27).

Along the same lines, Armony and Armony argue that an understanding of the

---

202 Studying the relationship between political parties and democracy, Levitsky showed in the case of the Peronist party in Argentina, leaders and members of an organisation can routinely ignore the formal rules that are meant to govern its internal operation (1998).

representative crisis vis-à-vis the political parties is fundamental for explaining the strength of UMO mobilisation post-2001:

> The atomization of political groups helped to shape a landscape of political competition marked by bitter animosity, lack of cooperation, and inability to cater to the demands of the electorate. This level of fragmentation also affected the internal politics of the ruling coalition. The weakness of the Alianza was manifest in its inability to evolve from a purely electoral coalition to an organization responsible for managing the state apparatus, its fragile power at the federal level, and its lack of a cohesive and supportive congressional wing. Attention is also given to the unending conflict between the president, his own party, and the rest of the ruling coalition; his dissociation from political society in general ... while the coalition that brought De La Rúa to office demonstrated a weak capacity to rule, the excessive rapaciousness of the Peronist opposition intensified political instability. Both the Alianza and the Peronists are viewed as decisive forces in the making of the crisis (2005: 30).

Despite the adoption of a new model of democracy since the early of 1980s then, effective political representation was lacking, caudillo-style practices from the traditional political system continued unchanged. Increasing levels of corruption, discretionary politics, abuses of power and clientelism, not only fostered popular resistance, but also became objects of protest.[203] As Petras noted, the Peronists' political behaviour during the Menem (1990-1998) and Duhalde (2002-03) administrations were characterised by:

> The 'centralization' of legislative and executive powers in the presidency - in his very person - and the dictatorial methods Menem used to legislate (most industries and banks were privatized via Presidential decrees), facilitated rapid and extensive liberalization. The concentration and centralization of Argentine capital was both cause and consequence of liberalization and grew in tandem with the centralization of executive power ... The Duhalde regime's unwillingness to develop an alternative plan, as dissident Argentine economists demand, is based on long-term,

---

203 Many scholars (O' Donnell, 1994; Peruzzontti, Mocca, Corrales, 2002; Tedesco, Levitsky and Murillo, 2003) have strongly criticised the 'Menemismo' way of doing politics: it 'entailed a set of political practices that simultaneously called for reform of the country's economy, constitution, and institutions and bolstered subnational authoritarianism and all-encompassing nepotism, corruption, and frivolity. This type of presidential rule was marked by a strong reliance on executive decrees, an autocratic style of policymaking, and general disregard for Congress, the judiciary, and civil society. To practice Menemismo became synonymous with a drive to monopolize power at any cost' (quoted in Armony and Armony, 2005: 30-31).

large-scale structural links between the regime and the ruling class. Given the total discredit of that ruling class and its disastrous policies for the 80% of the Argentine population and the disintegration of the nation, and massive active opposition, his political authority is virtually null and his decision-making power is narrowly circumscribed (2002).[204]

Indeed, one of the central demands of the new protesters was to bring an end to the political practices that repressed them. In the eyes of the protesters, both formal institutional protection and informal political favours were no longer helpful in overcoming their increasingly deteriorated socio-economic conditions. Jordan and Whitney interpreted the mass voices of the *cacerolazo* as popular movements from inside the middle class in December 2001 against this traditional political system:

> People were standing on their balconies banging saucepans, were coming out onto the sidewalks banging pots; like a virulent virus of hope, the *cacerolazo,* which began as a response to the state of emergency, had infected the entire city. Before the president's televised announcement that the state of emergency was over, people were in the streets disobeying it. Over a million people took part in Buenos Aires alone, banging their pots and pans and demanding an end to neoliberal policies and corrupt governments. That night the Finance Minister resigned, and over the next 24 hours of street protest, plainclothes policemen killed seven demonstrators in the city, while 15 more were killed in the provinces. The president resigned shortly thereafter, and was evacuated from the presidential palace by helicopter (2002: 7)

A number of studies also focused on the widespread mistrust of political leaders and elected officials, who were viewed as corrupt and incompetent. The already weak constitutional mechanisms for accountability and citizen scrutiny of government, became eroded by a notorious lack of civic organisations which could act as alternatives to the traditional political parties. Thus, the customary practice of representative democracy, which 'entrusts' elected officials to behave in a reasonably honourable and honest fashion, was replaced by the:

> ... widespread use of decision mechanisms (decrees, emergency laws, judicial per saltum, bribes, police pressures, abuse of 'reserved funds') that were exceptional and non-institutional, tarnished

---

204 See, http://www.rebelion.org/petras/english/argentina200602.htm

by an unconcealed mixture of public and private interests, dismantlement of most mechanisms for control of political power, and discretional use of the judicial system, the state's police and other security forces as forms of political leverage (Echegaray 2002:132; quoted in Briones and Mendoza, 2003: 4)

As Briones and Mendoza noted, the *cacerolazos* of 19-20 December 2001 demanded '¡*Que Se Vayan Todos!*, *¡Que No Quede Ni Uno Solo!*' Almost immediately, middle class protesters adopted this popular slogan:

They all must go, not a single one of them should stay! Protesters' ideas about who 'they all' are included: 'All elective offices' ... above all, those public officials accountable not only for this year's disaster but, say, the last twenty or thirty years, specially those embodying the Argentine political model of caudillo. It referred to 'charismatic' politicians, particularly those who have the skill to organise and maintain networks of political clientele, or else 'any and all political leaders' as part of the ruling class (2003: 14).

From a similar list of political grievances, the UMOs also mobilised against political leaders and their old-style practices. They clashed with an unresponsive political class, abandoning them without waiting to remove them at the next election. This changed attitude comes through strongly in the statements recorded below:

It's pretty chaotic ... the useless governments, completely dependent on the International Monetary Fund. There's no work. Children have been dying of hunger for a long time, though this has only recently been reported in the newspapers. The political quarrels, the Peronists, the Radicals - most people are no longer interested in that kind of politics.[205]

If we don't go out to struggle for what belongs to us, nothing is never going to change. Those on top are always going to do what they want. I think that needs to change. I don't know how. But it would be good to kill all of them.[206]

We used all the legal methods at our disposal and then waited for the government officials to give us an answer. They did not give us any solution. We are tired of promises. We have been abandoned, nobody takes care of us. We can only help ourselves. We had to go out and fight. We are going to continue blocking roads to say that we want work, even if the police or anybody

---

205 Interview with Hebe de Bonafini (a leader of the human rights group, the *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*), in www. madres. org
206 Interview: Lorena (a member of BPN), 6 May 2004.

else tries to kick us out of here. *Such inequality should not exist!* [207]

I think there was a very important break with traditional politics and ... political issues. It is precisely related to all this. We've been through a lot of different organisational practices, lots of experiences ... and what we've finally learnt is that we can build up better projects without leaders. We do not need anyone speaking on our behalf ... we can all be voices and express every single thing. They're our problems and it's our decisions that will solve them. The fact that we have education, popular education, as a central axis of our project, allowed us to open space for discussion and thought, to start building up new social relations, to deeply know each other, so we could feel we are all part of everything we are building. Getting back our dignity depends only on ourselves and not on a boss or anyone else imposing a way to live on us.[208]

We all know whò our enemy is and ... who defends them: the police, the army ... the paid tough guys. Now our people also have to defend against them. Now we are defending ourselves ... people come to fight for their dignity. We don't have their guns or their money, but we have got something more valuable: our dignity. The best reward is to see people happy, because they don't have to wait for solutions from *the top* ... we build our own solutions, we build change ... not guys from the top ... those guys always take advantage ...[209]

The people have lost all hope because of this whole situation. I saw what happened on the 19 and 20 of December [when huge protests in the *Plaza de Mayo* brought down the president] and wanted to be with my friends in the streets. I felt so impotent not being able to be out there with them. Because I *felt impotent,* I'm here to roadblock and he [ex-President Carlos Menem] and the others who put the country in this situation are free. I'm in *the street all day for asking for a* bit of food. That's social justice in Argentina.[210]

A variety of sentiments and political discontents were noted, ranging from general anger against the traditional political and economic elites and more focused opposition against the terrible memories of human rights violence from the state:

Dario was 21 years old and he was assassinated by the police. At Pueyrredon Bridge, where they took the lives of the young *piqueteros,* a wild repression was lived out ... The images are heart-breaking, almost of a civil war; men and women defended themselves as they could, against

---

207 'Picketers declarations', in Grupo Documental 1° de Mayo, at www.3Puntos.com (8 September 2001).
208 Interview: Verón (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 23 June 2004.
209 Interview: Chiqui (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 23 June 2004.
210 Interview: Joaquina (a member of MIJD), 10 June 2004.

weapons, bullets and gasses ... It was charged by the civilian police. Any moves to criminalise the unemployed movement must be rejected and be exposed as an attempt to legitimise the new regime ... However, we saw what they did. They acted like when there was the dictatorship: sacking, striking, murdering, kidnapping. The entire world is going to know it; the entire world is going to find out that a new regime in Argentina has been born out of this extreme hunger and repression.[211]

We need to make sure that the *compañeros* didn't die in vain, to leave the enemy with the victory. When we attain social change or social justice, that's when the deaths of our *compañeros* won't be in vain (Grupo Alavio, 2003).[212]

As of today, in each of our own mobilisations, each area, each assembly, in a shared gesture, the name and faces of Dario and Maximiliano will be with us. Our friends Dario Santillán and Maximilian Kosteki are present, now and always.[213]

The unemployed movement is often portrayed as violent, but we are not. We have been violated. We are simply trying to create the space that any citizen should have in this benighted country. We don't just denounce things. We're a broad movement that creates things all the time. We have recovered from dictatorship. Now we aim to recover democracy with completely guaranteed human rights.[214]

We were violent because we go with covered faces to block a bridge, Yeah, how violent we are ! We have relentlessly sent letters to politicians, but they don't care. Our demands don't interest them. They showed that they don't give a damn about us, because the answer they gave us was real bullets, lead bullets. They kill us for asking what belongs to us; they kill us for asking for dignity. They killed two brave *compañeros*.[215]

There were some hard moments in the first blockades. We had strong disagreements about whether to keep our faces covered or not. It took time for people to understand that we needed some kind of self-defense, that for security, *compañeros* could not show their faces to the police. We took that to the assembly and the assembly decided that we might as well abandon the

211 Interview: an indymedia activist at Pueyrredon Bridge, Avellaneda, 26 January 2004.
212 Interview: Trigona, in http://www.zmag.org/Sustainers/Content/2003-07/13trigona.cfm
213 From memorial speeches in the second ceremony about the victims of two young *Piquetero* members in Avellaneda station (26 June 2004).
214 Interview: Sánchez (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 26 January 2004.
215 Interview: González (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 26 January 2004.

piquete if we were forced to go unmasked. The system considers the blockades as crimes. They are illegal, but to us they are entirely legitimate.[216]

> It's important to make it clear that from the beginning all of the left, including the progressives, accused us of shameless begging, self-help, 'reformism', and did not see what our central demands entail: work, dignity, social change. At first, at the first blockades, we kept our faces completely uncovered. We did have some rocks, kept hidden, and we did not reveal them because we did not want to frighten people. It was a process; we suffered escalating repression and we started to cover our faces, so that we could not be identified. We only used violence as self-defense. We did not start to throw sticks and stones in order to attack, but to defend ourselves, our human rights.[217]

As shown in the above interviews and a memorial speech, there has been serious human rights violations as a result of government repression, as well as an attempt to criminalise the unemployed movement.[218] Thus, the participants addressed the human rights issues generated by state violence and the demands they put forward were non-negotiable; their consciousness reflected a principled stand on this question and they were unwilling to compromise. Such an attitude commanded respect among a considerable swathe of the wider population, allowing the movement to retain legitimacy by rising against the state violence and repression. It has also resurrected terrible memories of forced disappearance, population displacement, systematic torture and massacre. In this respect, Elizabeth Jelin has powerfully argued that democratic regimes face difficulty when they try to differentiate the new regime from past acts of state terror (2001; 2003: 487-88). The movement tended to see the government as being a rehashed version of the military regime, practising the same, though more refined, harsh measures against dissent. The movement's reaction on this issue was also attuned

---

216 Interview: Lucía (a member of MTR), 13 May 2004.
217 Interview: Julio (a member of MIJD), 8 March 2004.
218 For evidence and investigations about the issues of human rights violation and 'criminalisation of the unemployed movement' in Argentina, see *La Criminalización de la Protesta Social* (HIJOS, 2003).

with ongoing claims of the human rights movement since the 1980s - especially the 'Madres de la Plaza de Mayo' ('Mothers of Plaza de Mayo'), who for long held the only real legitimating collective identity in Argentina – through successfully bringing internal and international attention to the state violation of human rights. Their actions helped spread awareness of this question throughout all sector of Argentine civil society.[219]

These wide-ranging discontents gave the UMOs a strong pool of grassroots support for mobilising collective actions. In sum, the crisis of the traditional ruling class and their political parties is fundamental for understanding the impressive mobilisation capacity of the UMOs. The political authorities failed to respond to a key dimension of the 'democratic contract': the accountability of public officials and the political class. In this sense, the links that traditionally legitimated the connection between civil society and political society were severed, which triggered a political crisis.

The UMOs opportunities with hyper- unemployment rates

Changes in the socio-economic structure during the 1990s also influenced the political system in Argentina. The crisis of political elites and the accompanying collapse of legitimacy, has not only arisen from the ability of the hardest hit sectors of the excluded to rationalise critically the experience of the last 20 years. Consciousness necessarily became sharpened upon the economic collapse of 2001; neo-liberalism, globalisation,

---

219 The issues related to human rights have probably been the most visible during the transition to elected regimes in Argentina. Jelin argues that: 'the discourse on human rights has penetrated official governmental attitudes, yet with ongoing disagreement and conflict regarding specific policies vis-à-vis past violations. Also, the human rights discourse was adopted by large sectors of society and is no longer limited to a small group of militants and activists. This diffusion of views and ideas comes hand-in-hand with a relative weakening of the organizations and movements that were so active and important for the democratic transition' (2001: 93).

unemployment and exclusion all become interconnected in the minds of many citizens:

> Being a picketer is synonymous with being unemployed. Everyone in the picket, plus the people behind us, is real unemployed people with a trade and no place to work. There are union delegates who are blacked and can't work in the few factories that remain. They slowly marginalise us, thanks to globalisation and all that it means. We are the last link and we should be the first one, because we can save this country.[220]

During this time, successive neo-liberal regimes, whether authoritarian or democratic, have plunged the middle and working-class into the most miserable situation and pauperised Argentine society. As noted in Chapter III, 'the programmes of orthodox reforms opened rapidly up the economy and reduced government intervention' (Treisman 2003: 95), with one of the most obvious consequences of privatisation being heightened unemployment, which was over 18 per cent when Menem was re-elected in 1995 and more than 20 per cent in 2001 (Tedesco, 2002: 477; 2003: 165). Not only had privatisation led to unemployment, it also 'drastically reduced the power of the trade unions, not least because union membership had declined' (Mcquire, 1997: 223). To this backdrop, unemployment rapidly became a social ill that spread to an ever-widening proportion of the population, bringing with it a growing realisation of the need for autonomous action outside the 'normal' political channels:

> Unemployment exists everywhere. I feel close to many social and political movements all over the world. And I think that it's time for us to unite, because the capitalist financial system has shown that its project doesn't work - and not just here in Argentina, but all over. A project for a few is actually no good for anyone. It's time that we organised politically on that basis. The struggle is political - it goes well beyond asking for a little bit of food and it is time that we started to define the way forward, that we started to decide our destiny. Who better to decide our destiny? We're the ones who are living this misery and insecurity.[221]

The above interview reflects the beginning of what Tedesco calls 'the politics of informality' (2002: 479). In other words, 'a self-serving democratic political class' lost

---

220 Interview: Fanchiotti (a member of PO), 8 March 2004.
221 Interview: Marísa (a member of CCC) in Retiro, 6 May 2004.

its legitimacy and control over increasing excluded sectors. The political elite was slow to recognise that deepening economic problems were giving legitimacy to the UMOs protests, which all broadened the cycle of contentious mobilisation.[222] Hyper-unemployment compelled many unemployed people to seek new outlets for collective political action, a trend facilitated by widespread hostility towards politicians and state institutions. The UMOs consequently were a product of, and helped deepen, a crisis of legitimacy that led to a profound questioning of the efficacy and usefulness of conventional channels of representation. Established politicians and their organisations became 'marginalised' as a result of a wave of 'political contention'.

The rupture of the CGT, schism within the PJ and political opportunity

In the bleak atmosphere of the unemployment crisis and legitimised violence on the part of the political elite, the channeling of social demands through organs based on mediation and conciliation became increasingly difficult. This scenario allowed the UMOs to emerge as the focal point of direct action by the excluded, at the expense of the organised power of illegitimate labour institutions (primarily the CGT). Throughout Buenos Aires, activists in the UMOs, who had previously participated in labour unions and political parties, consciously adopted aspects of the organisational format of trade unions when organising the unemployed. For example, dues would be collected and 'union' duties, such as picketing and street protesting, allocated. However, they adopted an explicitly non-party position in order to maintain unity and widen participation. For

---

222 In this context, Armony and Armony argue that a number of factors lay behind the creation of the UMOs: (i) the upsurge of popular protest constituted a reaction to social exclusion and a defensive behaviour in a context of severe economic crisis caused by the neo-liberal economic reforms of the 1990s; (ii) secondly, they focused on the general decline in trust in political institutions and a growing frustration with politics among the population; and (iii) finally, the crisis of December 2001 is a climax in a broader cycle of contentious mobilisation. See their article, 'Social Roots of the Crisis and Explanations' (2005: 31-35).

their part, the traditional trade unions remained aloof from the new movements, though support was forthcoming from newer, independent labour unions, such as the Central de Trabajadores Argentinos (CTA), which broke away from the traditional Peronist union, the Central General de Trabajadores (CGT) in 1992 (Villalón, 2002).

Over the course of the 1990s, growing numbers of the unemployed and working population became dissatisfied with the old-style politics of the PJ and its CGT affiliate, in the process becoming more disposed to participate in alternative organisations and movements. The traditionally populist Peronist Party (PJ) lost some of its pro-labour base when its leaders championed economic neo-liberalism (Sidicaro, 2002: 42). Many members left and joined smaller, more worker-focused, leftist political parties and UMOs that emphasised the need for autonomous grassroots organisation and public assistance for unemployed workers.

Institutionally, the application of neo-liberal policies significantly weakened the capacity of organised labour to promote its traditional redistributionist and full employment goals, as well as its ability to exercise political influence.[223] Socio-economic structural changes fostered by the Menem administration, including the decline in the numbers of industrial and public sector workers, the rise in self-employment, and the growing 'unemployed reserve army', reduced organised labour's traditional base of support, whilst raising fear of dismissal among those workers that remained employed.

Moreover, the fact that these policies were implemented by a Peronist

---

223 The Argentine labour movement has been called: 'the most important syndicalist movement of the New World' (Galiani and Gerchunoff, 2003: 133). It has undergone many important transformations, but perhaps the most lasting has been the establishment of a relationship with the Peronist Party, which began to establish itself as a labour-based populist party with Juan Domingo Perón at its head in the 1940s.

administration, created a dilemma for an organised labour movement that had since the

1940s had been considered the 'backbone' of the Peronism movement. Many labour

leaders supported Menem and others refused to oppose him openly. Those who did

voice criticism were isolated by the administration, and denounced it as 'inept' and

corrupt. [224] Organised labour consequently became ineffective in resisting the

application of neo-liberal policies and, even after 1995, when rising unemployment and

declining real wages led to growing workers' discontent, the lack of labour organisation,

leadership and strength made it impossible to promote any realistic alternative to

government impositons. In this fashion, the CGT and mainstream political parties were

no longer useful institutions for channeling the protesters' demands or for advancing

solutions to their problems. In a critical situation, those who recognised that 'something

had to be done' to alter the highly adverse state of affairs, created new mechanisms of

collective action:

> It's a very important change. Before they would beat us, or complain about us to the police.
> That's changed. But more importantly, the people have said no to the old way of doing politics,
> the politics of people who sold all of our Argentina and created all this unemployment and
> misery. The people said no to all that, and when you see them now they don't believe it. The
> politicians, who had fooled the people and made promises of jobs, food, education, and not
> delivering it. There were 30,000 disappeared in this country. And the people decided that they
> don't want that any more. No more 'Peronistas', and no more 'Radicals' either. This is the
> important thing. The people realised too that the banks have benefited from the whole system,

---

224 Scholars summed up the major problems of the CGT during the post-Peron years, by
focusing on union fragmentation and leadership corruption: 'The fall of Peron divided unionized
labor and the CGT became polarized between 62 Perionist and 32 anti-Peronist Organisations'
(Lewis, 1990: 390). Further splits in the national union confederation followed different lines
under various forms of governance. However, 'Peron returned to power in 1973 and
strengthened national collective bargaining agreements that allowed for negotiation by entire
industries that displaced subordinate factory agreements' (Cieza, 1998: 22). On the question of
corruption, it was noted that: 'The leadership that formed within the strong national unions
became typified as a corrupt and unrepresentative bureaucracy. The centralized process of
collective bargaining, wage differentiation between different levels of union leadership, and the
management of large union funds further contributed to the corruption and alienation of union
bureaucrats' (Lewis, 1990: 403-410).

screwing over the poorest and enriching the wealthiest.[225]

The sentiment 'no more Peronists and no more Radicals either', voiced in the above interview, reflects the deep crisis affecting traditional political institutions. It was an important contributing factor to the emergence and development of the wave of UMOs, and later became an object of contention as well. The behaviour of tradition labour syndicates in turn generated another fundamental demand of the UMOs: to recover the social *raison d'etre* of those organisations, for if they only served the interests of the powerful, new institutions needed to be created to defend the interests of the unemployed. Finally, the intuitive desire to build new organisations to represent and fight for their needs, was also based on a preexisting rich 'repertoire' of social movements, political participation and collective activism. That is to say, the new means of collective action were not born out of nothing, but built upon organisational elements of previous experiences. On this point Zibechi argues that:

> Among the novelties of 2004 was the appearance of a new relationship between social politics and party politics. Without doubt, the movements showed a better dynamism than the parties of the left, something that was unmistakable in the days of December 2001 in Argentina. A clear awareness of the limits of the parties is emerging and, at the same time, the idea that the movements are something more than a social phenomenon ... possibly one of the most noticeable new things is the growing self-esteem of the movements, which now feel capable of drawing their own courses and establishing their own programs without waiting for political parties to take on work that only organized civil society can carry out. In this way, the Argentine unemployed movement was preparing more extensive and substantial offensives.[226]

With the failure of a traditional CGT and its affiliated political party (PJ) to devise any realistic alternative to labour flexibility and job losses, the victims of neo-liberal policies had to transform themselves into new political actors.[227]

---

225 Interview: Raúl Castells (a leader of MIJD) at Puente Pueyrredón, 13 May 2004.
226 See, http://www.americaspolicy.org (14 June 2005).
227 These problems confronting organised labour have a long history. Beccaria and Orsatti argue that: 'since the 1940s organised labour has been a major political actor and sections of the

212

A critical split occurring in the 1990s concerned that between the PJ and CGT. The Peronist has traditionally been a 'workers party' and, as such, closely linked to unions that represented the workers interests. However, rising unemployment during the 1990s left countless ex-workers in the informal sector outside the union remit and unrepresented at a moment of acute vulnerability. In the process, the unemployed also became excluded politically from the traditionally powerful PJ. To compound matters, a considerable weakening of the trade unions and the neo-liberal policies of the PJ under Menem, split the CGT into separate factions.[228] According to McGuire and Godio, during the period 1989-2001, 'nuclear fission' occurred inside the CGT between the dominant leaders and has still endured until today. One sector supported and negotiated with the Peronist government, another, lead by Saúl Ubaldini, pretended to preserve the orthodox 'national industrialist' model without breaking from the PJ.[229] The third

---

labour movement constituted the most effective element of the Peronist Party from the 1940s to the 1990s. But, organised labour was not a monolithic bloc and rarely able to advance a clear, consistent project. Post-1955 regimes could not ignore labour but divisions within the movement facilitated phases of co-option and marginalisation. Macroeconomic changes since the 1970s have further weakened the power of labour and intensified inter-union feuds. And, as ever, there is the distinction between organised and non-organised labour. In relative, and perhaps absolute, terms trade unions membership probably peaked in the early 1950s, following a massive recruitment drive during the first Perón administration' (2000: 143). Many scholars argue that: 'Yet it is doubtful if union members ever represented 60 percent of the workforce' (Rock, 1987: 254; also see Lewis, 1990: 388-9; Peralta Ramos, 1992: 31). For much of the last quarter of the twentieth century, however, the relative importance of organised labour has slipped, in part due to repression. But changes in the labour market triggered by de-industrialisation in the 1970s and de-statisation in the 1990s have had an even greater impact on trade union membership. It has been noted that: 'this is corroborated by the expansion of the informal sector. The growth of informality has reduced the power of organised labour and the influence of union bosses while at the same time intensifying conflict amongst bodies of workers' (Beccaria and Orsatti, 2000: 143-50).
228 The CGT divided into supportive and oppositional camps in 1989, then 'reunited in 1992 and lost numbers to the newly formed Argentine Congress of Labour (CTA), which has remained antagonistic towards the government. Other unions chose to pursue strategies autonomous of the government, working within the new context of privatisation and a smaller state' (Murillo, 1997: 82-83).
229 A key figure in the CGT split was Saúl Ubaldidni, who had been blocking neo-liberal reforms since the early 1990s (McGuire, 1997: 228). However, according to Levitsky, other leaders were more amenable and 'the unions were offered shares in the newly privatised company' (2003: 224). For this reason, Levitsky considers that 'political consensus was unprecedented in modern Argentina and helped to consolidate the Menem programme of

sector is the CTA, which leans toward the 'modern' left, based on a social Catholic and social democratic ideology. From the mid-1990s these divisions consolidated into three separated sectors: the official CGT, the Movimiento de los Trabajadores Argentinos (MTA, today dissident-CGT) and the CTA. On the split in the labour movement over the issue of how to react to the Menem government, Dinerstein argues that:

> Whereas the traditional CGT played a significant role in legitimising the destabilisation of workers' lives and the flexibilisation of labour relations and working conditions, its leaders being successful in making business out of privatisation, the marketisation of pensions and occupational accidents insurance, and the deregulation of the health system, the CTA created in 1992 by state workers among others, aimed to recover combativeness against neo-liberal policies and to create a broader opposition movement. The CTA took on board the issue of unemployment and initially organised the unemployed within the Central Confederation (2002: 4).

Faced with a neo-liberal onslaught orchestrated by a supposedly labour-friendly administration, some union activities joined the heterogeneous UMOs, as in the case of CTA, whilst others abandoned them, as in the case of CGT.[230] In the process of CGT rupture, during 1992 the CTA united with the victimised groups affected by the structural adjustments reforms, rejecting the CGT, which it regarded as no longer being a representative organisation of the working class. CTA membership, consisting of both employed and unemployed, became a syndicalist stronghold in which several UMOs functioned. As opposed to the CGT, the newer CTA possessed a direct membership and claimed to be politically independent. The importance of this union within the unemployed movement has been manifest over recent years, as it has often played a leading role in political actions (Svampa and Pereyra, 2003: 21-2).

---

reforms' (2003: 225).
230 Luis D'Elía (a leader of FTV-CTA) bitterly argued that: 'During the periods of Menem, the Mafia CGT played a crucial role in handing over our national heritage to the big economic groups and foreigners. Thus, the CGT saved syndicalism instead of the Argentine working class' (Almeyra, 2004: 149. My translation).

Following the POs perspective on social movements, the early generation of UMOs activists perceived that the moment to organise was opportune: the Argentine traditional political classes, including those in government, parties and unions, were weakened severely by a crisis of legitimacy. People experienced the prejudicial consequences of neo-liberal policies, and this impact was reflected in the decreasing level of popularity of politicians. Within this overall panorama, however, it is important to realise that politically the opportunities for mobilisation around the country were not the same. UMOs from Buenos Aires and adjacent areas managed to construct a stronger organisation because population density is higher than in the rest of the country. It was in the capital and surrounding areas that, numerically at least, job losses had their greatest impact, and as the number of unemployed people grew, they started becoming an influential movement whose 'repertoire' of protest was to block important roads and highways. In the process, they demonstrated how powerful movements can be when they form to challenge the state. Nevertheless, in spite of a common identity - built around unemployment and exclusion - the unemployed soon split into different factions. Disagreements arose about the political agenda to pursue. As with many other mass movements, the UMOs divided into different groups on issues of strategy and the opportunities presented in their own political struggles (*Clarín*, 2002, Mazzeo 2004; Massetti 2004; Schneider Mansilla et al., 2004).

Multiple POs with heterogeneous UMOs

At first the unemployed were essentially organised politically by districts or provinces and their demands remained restricted to very particular and short-term needs directed at local governments, such as job creation, or the provision of food and medicine

supplies. At the beginning, the protests were seen as an anachronism, as nothing more than a malfunction of the structure. But as the effects of neo-liberal policies started to percolate into every crack in society, the UMOs rapidly moved from the periphery to the core of political discourse and action. They became the political icons that developed into legitimate representatives of the unemployed. As Oviedo pointed out, these largely spontaneous grassroots organisations: 'stepped from a purely claiming movement, demanding relief policies, to the formulation of political programmes that demanded the social transformation of Argentina' (Oviedo, 2002: 3).

As protests spread throughout the country, the unemployed began to develop into more organised groupings; simultaneously, the different organisations grew in terms of internal coherence. As UMOs continued to multiply they broke new ground in their use of non-hierarchical grassroots forms of organising. The spirit of political autonomy, which existed in the urban neighbourhood assemblies, was practised by the UMOs as they shared a similar distrust of all executive power. These organisations use an internal process of decision-making based on an assembly association model. This form of internal politics, with its variants, encourages horizontal participation and new forms of building leadership. Each municipality also had its own organisation centred on the neighbourhood (*barrio*) and all decisions on policy and strategy were decided at UMOs assemblies (see Chapter VII). Despite a common mode of internal democracy, however, the UMOs proved diverse in terms of the political strategies they pursued. They developed diverse agendas in the struggle for social change pursued in the early 2000s. Observers have commonly classified UMOs in the GBA area into three groups:[231]

---

231 (Ovido, 2001: 133-34; Di Marco et al., 2003: 169-180, Svampa and Pereyra, 2003: 154; Levy, 2004: 81; Petras, 2005: 44). In particular, Petras categorised the unemployed workers movements (MTDs) into three groups depending on the level of affinity they exhibited with the Kirchner government: 'those supporting Kirchner, those giving him 'critical support' and those

(i) Those UMOs based on new union alliances, which existed previously in localised

spaces and which expanded their social struggles into a broader political arena by

joining other larger organisations.[232] The *Federación Tierra y Vivienda* (FTV, 'Land

and Housing Federation'), based on the *La Matanza* area, became an example of this

type of organisation when it joined the new union struggles of the CTA. The notion of

collective rights developed within the FTV, as well as a representative model based on

principles of equality among all members allowed the organisation to be integrated into

the CTA without abandoning its strategic goals or social demands. Under the slogan

'the new factory is the territory', the FTV-CTA alliance highlighted the break from state

practices and from traditional Peronist political ground and emphasised the political

unification of different social sectors - yet not all organisations in the UMOs have

successfully achieved such influence. Nevertheless, positive examples, like the FTV-

CTA, show that the unemployed and informal workers can successfully represent

demands to policy makers and deliver benefits to their members, including the group

'Barrios de Pie' (Almeyra, 2004: 135, 145-146; Mansilla and Conti, 2003: 45-65;

Delamata, 2004: 13; Mazzeo, 2004: 113);

---

opposed. The pro-Kirchner sectors of the MTDs (both variants) are accompanied by the three major trade union confederations (the CTA, the CGT and the transport workers), sectors of the worker-run factories (fabricas recuperadas) and the major human rights groups (including the two Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, and the Grandmothers' movement). The anti-Kirchner MTD is in turn divided into various coalitions which have frequently acted independently of each other. Sectors of the worker-occupied factories, led by the Zanon ceramic factory, are in opposition but remain largely isolated, as many of their former allies have turned to class collaborationist politics' (2004: 44).
232 In this regard, an interesting concept to explore in relation to the UMOs is the importance of neighbourhood and sense of community. According to Adamo and Vásquez, 'there were cases of popular organization that founded the neighborhoods and these neighborhoods had as a consequence a strong identity. The dramatic crisis suffered by Argentina at the end of 2001 fueled the creation of neighborhood organizations at the level of "barrios" of the big cities, the "comités barriales" ... There were a number of processes that seemed to undermine the social fabric of neighborhoods, among them poverty, unemployment and violence, which build pressures on civil society. This relates to the idea of the neighborhood as a space of organization and defense but also of demands' (2002: 30-32).

(ii) Those UMOs initially mobilised by political activists seeking a radical agenda of economic and political independence: CCC, the members of MTD, including MTD Aníbal Verón, MTD de Solano, etc., are examples of organisations in this cluster. Through the separation of a social role concerned with everyday politics from a political role involved in strategic politics, participants in these organisations have been able to solve the tension between the leaders, with their ideological emphasis on radical social change, and the masses, perceived as interested in more immediate material conditions. For unemployed workers, the use of the assembly model has allowed them to exercise pressure from below, which also provides the rank-and-file with a voice and has given them experience in decision-making (MTD Aníbal Verón, 2003; Ferrara, 2003: 125-126; Mazzeo, 2004: 121; Zibechi, 2003: 132-34); and

(iii) Those UMOs linked to small leftist political parties or that operate as a wing of the party. The Polo Obrero (Workers' Pole) created by the Trotskyist, Partido Obrero (Worker's Party) and MIJD, illustrates this type of organisation. Despite the fact that the assembly in this case is organised around the respective party, many observers proposed that the pedagogical aspect characteristic of leftist parties also gave unemployed workers tools to struggle for rights 'from below' independently from the party's proposals, and gave them a sense of uniqueness in their 'desire to fight', including the group MTR (Ovido, 2001: 85; Delamanta, 2004: 14).

Another way to categorise UMOs is with regard to their position towards the government. On the one side are the reformists, such as the FTV and *Barrios de Pie*, who are pro-government. On the other are the radicals: the BPN (*Bloque Piquetero Nacional*), the MIJD, the MTD Aníbal Verón, the CCC and the PO, all of whom are strongly anti-government organisations. Essential discrepancies also arose around their

political objectives: the former proved willing to seek changes from within the political system, the latter continued their resistance from outside and below, demanding fundamental shifts in government policies. Divisions also arose around more specific issues, especially the legitimacy of using state subsidies for job creation and mechanisms employed for allocating subsidies.

The UMOs and Resource Mobilisation (RM)

Some RM theorists contend that in every society most people who are unhappy with the status quo are ignored and mistreated by the government and as a result suffer economic injustices. Despite widespread grievances, people rarely form or join movements, partly because they often lack experience in politics and confidence about political matters, and partly because they can not call upon adequate material and organisational resources with which to do battle against vested interests. Given these obstacles, RM theorists hold that 'a movement for and by an aggrieved population usually appears only after alliances are forged between an aggrieved constituency and a group or person who has the appropriate political experience, vision and/or resources to help that constituency' (Zirakzadeh, 1997: 12).[233]

From this perspective, what Roever labels the 'material foundation' of organisations, is by definition very weak vis-à-vis the unemployed – who lack an adequate and stable income and most likely spend the lion's share of their money on basic necessities (2005: 2). Furthermore, the unemployed, being outside the work environment, would tend to have weaker social relationships. For these reasons,

---

[233] Following McCarthy and Zald's arguments (1977), Zirakzadeh argues that: 'a researcher therefore should study the process by which a movement initially attracts outside resources, which often requires that one or more persons assume the role of an "issue entrepreneur" and creatively bring in resources from third parties' (1997: 12).

unemployment would be said to lead to a 'resource deficit'.[234] The dominant RM view

holds that increasing resources expand participation options, which in turn, raises the

likelihood of participating in protests and joining organisations as a group member. For

example, in such a situation, a high unemployment rate as well as personal

unemployment is not regarded as personal failure and only increases political and

collective discontent, moral indignation and social support for action to reduce the

shared grievances. It is thus claimed that a high 'resource deficit' will instigate a high

collective action by increasing the incentives to join social protest groups.

The driving forces behind the UMOs were primarily the need to obtain work and

social security payments to meet basic subsistence needs.[235] Interestingly, these issues

were not the prime concern of formal workers in the 1970s. By the mid-1990s, however,

they increasingly affected both the formal sector and the unemployed, placing income

support programmes at the centre of social movement demands:

> The shift away from the state-led development model towards a more market-oriented model
> might have increased economic insecurity. Trade liberalization and the deregulation or
> privatization of public utilities, all have led to substantial job losses among formal sector
> workers. The real exchange rate fluctuations associated with increased capital mobility have

---

234 In this context, Coleman defines 'resources' as 'goods a person has control of, such as skills, knowledge, time, social contacts or the social position. In the social movement literature, the resources are often regarded as properties of groups' (1990: 33-34).
235 De Ferranti et al. identified the five types of income support programmes in contemporary Latin American countries: (i) 'public works', provide low-pay jobs to all those who are willing to take them, usually involving the construction of local public goods (e.g. pavements, irrigation ditches, etc.), jobs that can be physically demanding and typically last for a few months only; (ii) 'training programmes' that have some similarities with public works programmes, although being enrolled in a training programme is usually incompatible with having a job; (iii) 'severance pay', where the labour code mandates employers to pay an end-of-service sum to workers they fire without a 'justified' cause (i. e. for non-disciplinary reasons), although employers are usually not mandated to set any resources aside for them; (iv) 'unemployment insurance', modeled on the developed countries, where benefits are paid for as long as the worker remains unemployed up to a maximum of several months or years. However, monitoring that beneficiaries do not take a job in the informal sector is practically impossible, so that some of the programmes do not even attempt to make the payment of benefits conditional on being actually unemployed. Finally, 'individual accounts', where workers pay a percentage of their salary into a scheme on a regular basis. Recently, several countries have tried to replace their severance pay programmes by fully funded individual accounts of this sort (2000: 90-91).

affected workers in the informal sector as well. Massive job losses among formal sector workers have fostered opposition to those reforms. Hence the interest of income support programs that could mitigate the effects of economic insecurity in general, and of job loss in particular (De Ferranti et al., 2000: 89).

The emergence of strong UMOs challenged Argentina's social security system and the policies that had 'developed historically around traditional trade unions', rather than universal citizenship rights in a context of scarcity and 'the deep transformation of labour, social and employment policies which became in most cases insufficient' (Dinestein, 2002: 4). Without universalised unemployment benefits and given the reliance on social programmes which were sometimes used by governors to favour political allies before elections or to co-opt trade unions, the jobless had to organise for themselves. This meant either breaking with traditional practices or using existing political mechanisms. Political targeting in the distributional system during the Menem and De la Rúa administrations paradoxically brought political opportunities that allowed UMOs to strengthen their collective action. This was seen in the operation of the *Plan Trabajar* (PT, initiated in 1997) and *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar* (PJJH, started in 2001), funded by the national government and the World Bank, while being administered by local municipalities (Figure 6.4).[236] Scholars (Auyero, 2001; Delamata, 2004) have discussed how, paradoxically, demands around these same social assistance plans allowed local organisations to develop independently from traditional unions and

---

236 The PT targeted unemployed people who did not collect social security or some kind of unemployed benefit, by offering a temporary job for a maximum of six months and a salary of $150-200 per month. It was co-funded by the Argentine government, World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank. In addition, 'in 2002, the Government of Argentina spent about US$500 million on the PJJH and about a quarter of that was financed through a World Bank loan. For 2003, the estimate is US$600 million, of which the Bank loan will probably cover about 50%. The loan and counterpart funds cover mainly the payments to beneficiaries. Most costs for materials, supplies, etc. for the workfare projects are covered by the local governments or NGOs sponsoring the projects' (Galasso and Ravallion, 2004: 367). For additional information about this plan's objectives and other forms of social assistance programmes in Argentina, see Bombal, Garay and Potenza in CEDES (2003).

Peronist structures, which created the political space to adopt alternative practices, such as the creation of collective work projects, along with an increased politicisation at the grassroots.[237]

As needs and consciousness grew, beginning in 1997 the UMOs began protesting for access to employment programmes and for more government subsidised employment plans (such as the PT). They opted for the new tactics of blocking roads and picketing as the most visible mechanism for raising their demands beyond the local arena into the broader political scene:

> When the pickets and road blockades began to achieve results, the 'enemy' or the 'system', in an attempt to put out the fire, threw us the Planes [Trabajar]. But immediately, the people used them as a tool for constructing the movement, and, later, came back to the streets. It is a vicious circle that the system, as planned, has not changed since 1995 to the present. But ... the only thing that happens is that the people reassess it and transform the programme into a tool of struggle.[238]

First, struggles over state-sponsored assistance programmes (mainly the PT), gave UMOs' autonomy from local mayors and appointed Peronist representatives - called *punteros,* or local brokers (Auyero, 2001: 153). Access and control of the distribution of PT resources were seen as a 'right' gained through political struggle. This allowed the participants to transform their identity from 'clients' of the state and Peronist networks, to that of an autonomously organised unemployed movement (Delamata, 2004: 7).[239]

---

237 Concerning the creation of collective work projects by the early 1990s: 'the intervention of Peronist party in the neighborhoods helps the survival strategies of the impoverished people who suffered from both unemployment and state abandonment. Peronist network provided the poor with financial aid and food resources in the absence of other organizational resources and bargaining arenas' (Auyero, 2001: 20). 'At the national level, reformers dismantled traditional mechanisms of union participation in the party. At the local level, Peronist politicians used their access to public offices to build patronage-based support networks, at the margins of the unions' (Levitsky, 2003: 57). That is, 'the Peronist party had transformed itself from a labour-based party, in which unions were the dominant partner, into an increasingly clientelistic party, in which its union-based mass linkages had been replaced by patron-based territorial organizations located in poor areas' (Delamata, 2004: 6).
238 An interview with Delameta (cited in Delameta, 2004: 9).
239 According to Auyero and Delamata, Peronist strategies to construct clientage networks were demonstrated during the Eduardo Duhalde government (and when he was governor of the Buenos Aires during 1991-1999). Duhalde distributed material goods and public jobs in return

Though ultimately dependent upon the state, collective struggles over these resources allowed for larger personal mobility and more leeway to discuss strategies within the UMOs. Lodola, for example, notes the parallel development of instituionalised social programmes and a growing political engagement on the part of the unemployed from the mid-1990s:

> In effect, neoliberal reforms were pushed through without any substantial targeted social emergency and anti-poverty program ... only in 1996, once comprehensive institutional changes had already been enacted, did the national government launch an ambitious emergency employment program (the *Plan Trabajar*; Work Plan) to tackle increasing unemployment and incipient social turmoil. Since then, the country has witnessed an escalation of popular protests led by unemployed and informal workers, the consolidation of their organizations, and the institutionalization of political influence (2003: 1).

However, under the De la Rúa government (1999-2001), the PT was modified significantly due to political motives. For the Alianza government, in order to avoid the influence of Peronist party brokers and limit the clientelistic use of federal funds by the main opposition organisation, the central government determined that the scheme could only be administrated by local mayors and authorised NGOs. Following this policy switch, many UMOs reacted by constituting their own NGOs and gaining a formal position in the areas of negotiating around the scale of resources and their distribution (Lodola, 2003: 9). As disruption continued to be key tool for the UMOs to retain political or institutional spaces of power and obtain fresh monetary resources for their members, the level of protest did not decrease, but grew steadily. This conflictive scenario pressed the Duhalde government to institute the PJJH (Figure 6.4).

---

for political support, the regular practice of provincial Peronist caciques: 'These networks were accompanied by building alliances and co-opting the vast majority of local leaders and Peronist activists, the so called *punteros*, throughout patronage based financial schemes' (Delamata, 2004: 7). On '*puntero*' politics, see Mazzeo, '*Punteros y piqueteros*' (2004: 75-96) and Auyero (2001: 152-181).

Participation in the Jefes y Jefas de Hogar Programme, 1999-2003 (number of householder)
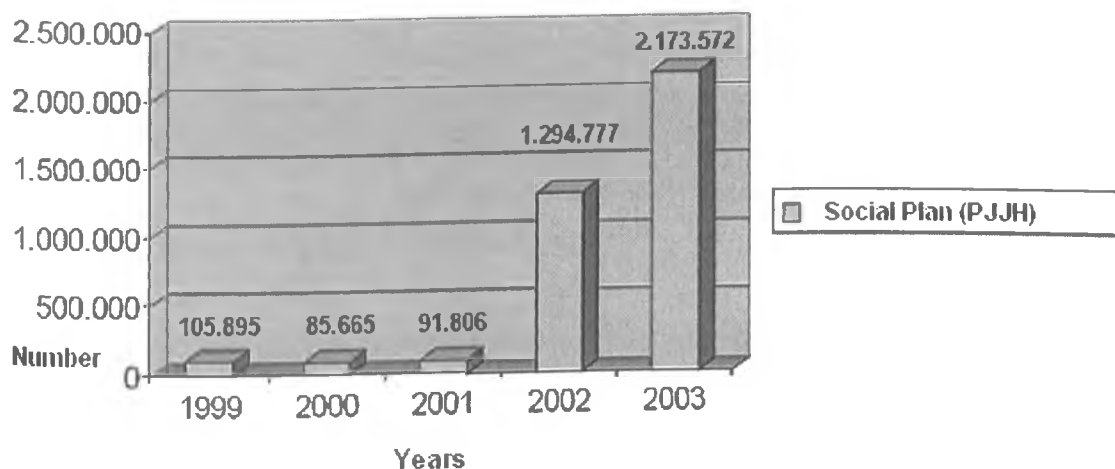
Under the PJJH programme since 2001, more than two million aid packages were distributed, of which the UMOs administer some 162,000 to their members (see Figure 6.5). As the municipalities did not have the capacity to provide all the workfare needed, some payments were distributed through the UMOs, who decide who is eligible, what community services must be undertaken and what share of the money they should hand over to the group that included them on its roster of beneficiaries. Interviewees analysed their involvement in the following manner:

I go because I have to, because I need that money. I would prefer find a job as a cook, but this is all I have. If I do not take part in the roadblocks, I'll lose my subsidy and would have to go out and beg.[240]

The only money we have comes from the assistance plan after fighting with the government. With that 150 *pesos* we must survive and pay the monthly quota of 5 *pesos* for the general costs of the organisation, including the mobile phones of the leaders and buying food for the *'comedores'* [community kitchen]. Participating in the main centre of roadblock actions, from Monday to Friday, four hours per day, is an obligation. There, we also devise social plans. The

---

240 Interview: Soledad (a member of Barrios de Pie), 10 November 2003.

mechanism is always the same: roadblock, work out a social plan and share our miserable conditions.[241]

The majority of the *compañeros* that join the movement – more than 80 per cent – start out only because they have concrete necessities. They need something to eat, they don't have groceries, they don't have work; they have nothing. At first they come for the money, but once they get involved there is a real progress. Things change. They begin to feel the excitement and the need to get organised. But yes, some *compañeros* only go because the assembly voted that those failing to attend the blockade don't get any help.[242]

The movement seems happy with the unemployment subsidies the government is giving - those plans that were won with *piquetero* blood and the activity of the working class. Before, with the transitory government of Duhalde, the schemes were given to tide over the *piqueteros*. Now the movement thinks that Kirchner shows good will in continuing the plans. As Kirchner said, 'we shouldn't be made nervous by the demands of these *compañeros*; we need to listen to them and make [their demands] reality in order to create a different sort of country'. There is no more talk of genuine work or boycotting companies. Many know that if they push for that, they will appear as radical and the government will repress them.[243]

Many UMOS members have participated in protest activities or assemblies based on local communities. Usually social plans operated through 'cash transfer' - by giving 150 *pesos* (approximately US$50 in 2004) per month and supporting their community kitchens, day care centres, housing cooperatives, small-scale enterprises, including factories taken over by their own workers, as well as a small payments to cover UMOs running costs (Robert and Portes, 2005: 12-14).

---

241 Interview: Silvina (a member of CCC), 15 March 2004.
242 An interview recorded within 'Colectivo Situaciones' (December 2003), in a web, http://www.situaciones.org
243 *Buenos Aires Herald*, 13 May, 2004, 1-3.

Figure 6.5:

The UMOs: Leaders, Members and Allocation of Social Plans, 2004 (groups)

| BLANDOS U OFICIALISTAS | | SEMIBLANDOS O CRITICOS | | DUROS U OPOSITORES | | ULTRADUROS |

Source: Modified from *La Nación*, 28 July 2004.

The targeted nature of many social policies in Argentina created, however, new, direct relationships between the state, unemployed and the poor.[244] Formerly, neighbourhoods around Buenos Aires became important sites for the development and strengthening of clientelistic ties to the Peronist Party. As noted, for example, Eduardo Duhalde, Governor of the Province of Buenos Aires (1991-99) built a strong patronage network by co-opting local leaders and delivering social assistance plans (*manzaneras*) that, in the absence of other institutional assistance, became a main source of material support and of new collective identities.[245] However, among UMO members, an identity based on the appeal to the 'basic needs' of 'clients' replaced the 'old' Peronist

---

244 The Ministery of Labour operated another cash assistance scheme, the Community Employment Plans (PECs), which were channeled through the UMOs to an additional 300.000 people. The Ministry of Social Development, meanwhile, created the Families Plan, which since February 2004 provided payments to 240,000 mothers (150 *pesos* a month for families with up to three children, 175 for families with four and 200 *pesos* for those with five children or more).

245 Szwarcberg defines *manzaneras* as: 'the name given to a social movement organized by the Peronist government, which placed local political figures – women – in charge of distributing clientelistic goods' (2003: 33). The *manzaneras* became social actors through their involvement in clientelistic programmes implemented in the province of Buenos Aires from 1994.

identity of 'workers' endowed with a set of acquired collective rights, although Cerrutti

and Grimson insist that old practices continued:

> A state that was capable of distributing two million anti-poverty packages after a decade of application of the neo-liberal model was hardly 'absent'. However, this emergent presence of the state was not proactive, but reactive to unusually harsh conditions brought about by the implosion of neo-liberal policies. It did not represent a 'new' and 'more advanced' stage of state-society relations, but a response to conditions much worse than those in the past. For this reason, it was unclear how these relations would evolve once the economy and employment situation return to normality (2004).[246]

Grassroots resource demands usually involved the creation of some temporary

state-funded jobs. Once these were secured, the UMOs decided collectively who got

these jobs, based on need and the time an individual had spent manning blockades. If

there were not enough funds to go around, they rotated the jobs and shared the wages.

The UMOs: organisational structures

The ability of UMOs to mobilise thousands of unemployed people in securing

concessions from successive administrations, helped expand the movement from the

local to the national level. In this regard, the UMOs were achieving their goals.

Successful representation of the unemployed by the UMOs depended partly on decision

making processes that reflect members' needs and aspirations. Among the UMOs,

members depend on their leaders to channel their demands and influence government

policies, such as when new regulations threatened to prevent unemployed and informal

workers from earning a minimal daily income. However, disagreement between

'leaders' and 'led' often arose over the issue of internal funding. The UMOs

organisation was based on obligatory community work financed by government welfare

---

246 See, http://cmd.princeton.edu/papers/wp0506.pdf

programmes and the monthly payments that the UMOs distributed to their members. In turn members paid a monthly quota to finance their organisation's expenses. While necessary, these payments were not always popular among the rank-and-file:[247]

> I get my subsidy through the FTV. Simultaneously I pay 30 *pesos* because otherwise they would take me off the PJJH list. It makes me mad, because 150 *pesos* is already far too little to live on, and that's even more true if it shrinks to 120.[248]

> If you don't fork out the money in the Thursday meeting, they come and ask you for it. But it doesn't go towards buying food or other basic goods, even though sometimes we don't have enough meat or soap in the soup kitchen and they say that money can't be touched - it's for the buses that take us to the roadblocks.[249]

> There are organisations that have a captive population, administer the welfare payment plans, and use the poor for political ends.[250]

Although occasionally unpopular, these financial resources were vital in allowing activists to dedicate the time to organisational matters in order to make protests effective (Webb, 2006: 36). Finally, the central demand coming from the rank-and-file is always the same, e.g. public jobs, social plans and increased assistance from government. In sum, RM suggests that the UMOs at the time of their emergence were powerful in mobilising people, this was because people represented the only important resource 'owned' by the UMOs. Consequently, the work plans and the different benefits, allowed the state to exercise a certain level of social and political control over the unemployed through the UMOs, be they Peronists, extreme leftists, communists or trade unionists affiliated to the CTA. These UMOs then began to spread out throughout the

---

247 Different organisations charged a different levy. For example, the Land and Housing Federation (FTV) took 30 pesos out of the 150 pesos it distributed. The left CCC took 5 pesos from its members. Barrio de Pie took 10 pesos every month. See Valente's report (April 2005), 'Piquetero groups take chunk out of social assistance payment', in http://www.ipsnews.net.
248 Interview: Pablo (a member of FTV), 4 November 2003.
249 Interview: Marcial (a member of CCC), 18 December 2003.
250 Interview: Cristina (a journalist), 22 December 2003.

hardest hit working class districts. The rapid proliferation of the structures was above all carried out with resources (money) originating from the state. In reality, the grassroots organisations demanded only two things of the unemployed in order to be able to receive benefits and food parcels: to mobilise behind the flags of the particular organisation; and take part in political actions (meetings, demonstrations and voting for the official positions).

Conclusion

This chapter plotted the development of UMO activity from its inception until 2005, placing the movement's expansion within the wider Argentine socio-political context. In addition to pressing economic demands as a consequence of the crisis, the movement also voiced a strong desire for greater political participation for the excluded, as well as fundamental reforms in the system of government and behaviour of the political class. Hand-in-hand with the spread of disgust at the corruption and incompetence of the nation's politicians, went a rejection of political parties – including the Peronist PJ – and organisations that had long been regarded as the 'natural' representatives of the Argentine working class, the CGT union syndicate. Three trends occurred throughout the country, leading to a mushrooming of unemployed organisations that were based at the neighbourhood (*barrio*) level and staffed by activists from the ranks of the jobless, i.e. they enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy from the established structures of representation. Government responses to the emergence of strong UMOs ranged from attempts to provide (inadequate) public assistance and work programmes, to outright repression. None of these measures proved successful. Often, rather than offering solutions to the social conflict, they exacerbated it. To this backdrop, the UMOs not

only expanded in numerical terms, they also began to engage in a wider 'repertoire' of protests, which in turn brought concrete, but limited, concessions from the state. These produced some benefit to the ranks of the organised unemployed, while simultaneously encouraged their activism.

Despite a political dynamic post-2000 that appeared favourable to the unemployed movement, by 2005 it was uncertain that their mobilisations would usher in significant changes within prevailing economic and political power structures. In 2005, neither the government, nor the UMOs seemed to have clear ideas on how to provide a solution to the problem of mass unemployment and poverty. Official social policy-making proved unimaginative and inadequate given the scale of the problems the government encountered. For their part, although UMOs were able to unite to mobilise in favour of a number of specific issues, overall the movement has been weakened by the inevitable political division, i.e. on whether to negotiate with the state bureaucracy and politicians, and if so, what level of contact should be developed. Disagreement over these questions has also been deepened by longstanding political rivalries between Peronists and the alphabet soup of leftist groups that are active within the unemployed organisations. Fragmentation has at times undermined the ability to present common demands and co-ordination between different grassroots movements.

In consequence, it is necessary to eschew a romantic view of the unemployed movement and its prospects for forcing significant political and economic change. Despite the proclamations of certain leftist groups and publications, extremely high levels of popular mobilisation post-2000 did not mean that a 'revolutionary situation' was developing. Different groups tended to struggle for their own interests, limiting their impact on society as a whole. In this regard, it is also necessary to note that the

members involved in grassroots UMO activity in 2003-2004 only constituted around ten per cent of participants in social movement activity.

While the unemployed movement could engage in mobilisations that created substantial disruption and provoked a large amount of media attention, it lacked the unity and organisational strength to intervene decisively in the policy-making process or gain an institutionalised voice. One problem here was that leaders came under conflicting pressures. On the one hand, they had to 'look outwards' and attempt to engage constructively with national and local office-holders in order to try and secure additional resources for the members. On the other hand, their energies had to be diverted 'inwards' as they strove to strengthen internal organisation and enhance co-ordination between different *barrio*-centred movements. This, the leaders anticipated, would enhance their credibility and influence over policy-makers, in the process reducing the incentives for rank-and-file members to exit the movement. Continued divisions between different elements of the unemployed movement, however, complicated these endeavours, causing the movement as a whole to waste political opportunities and lessening its potential impact. It is to the ideological conflicts and different representations of cultural identity within grassroots unemployed organisations that we now turn.

VII

THE UNEMPLOYED MOVEMENT AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Men [sic] are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc., that is, real, active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these (Marx and Engels, 1976: 42)

Our emotions provide evidence of the extent to which even our deepest personal experiences are socially constructed, mediated by visions and values that are 'political' in nature, that refer outward to the world beyond the individual (Mohanty, 2003: 394).

Movements are highly precarious constructs which are composed of different groups with widely different beliefs and different strategies for action, and these groups coalesce around salient issues and demands (Foweraker and Landman, 1997: 39).

Introduction

US-based social movement analyses developed in the 1970s and 1980s concentrated on core concerns - access to resources with RM, PP with POs, SMOs – that have proved valuable when examining the origins and growth of the Argentine unemployed movement and the collective actions it launched post-1996 (Chapter VI). US theorists viewed movement participation as a 'rational' decision calculated to obtain specific goals, such as economic resources, by utilising political opportunities that could be maximised through participation in UMOs. However, this approach downplayed the role of other factors, such as culture, ideology and 'frames', in social movements.[251]

Zald explains these in the following terms:

Culture is shared beliefs and understandings, mediated by and constituted by symbols and

---

[251] In this chapter, 'ideology' is defined as one of the socio-cultural factors which help form collective identity. It is sometimes empowered within individuals or groups in a given political arena. Ideology can also serve 'to buttress the status quo, map a revolution, or delineate a utopia ... including the relevant cognitive and affective dimensions' (Kirkpatrick, 1971: 195).

language, of a group or society; ideology is the set of beliefs that are used to justify or challenge a given socio-political order and are used to interpret the political world; frames are the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action. Although it has been common to see culture as a long-enduring set of symbols and beliefs, it is also possible to treat the emergence and creation of culture (1996: 262).

According to Zald, culture, ideology and framing are also linked because 'they are the topics that deal with the content and the processes by which meaning is attached to objects and actions' (1996: 262). Without considering these cultural factors and their linkage, scholars only asked 'who did what', rather than 'why' and 'what for' (Freeman and Johnson, 1999: 4). More critically, mainstream RM and PO models missed the 'normative and symbolic dimensions' of social activity, failing to analyse 'why', or the meanings behind the collective action in which people choose to engage. This, in turn, limits their explanation of the 'how', since they do not explain how identity can transform individuals into a cohesive social group (Canel, 1997: 220).

Since the 1980s and 1990s, in consequence, scholars have pointed to the need to integrate the POs derived 'how' question, that emphasises the general characteristics of a political system, and popular belief systems linked to collective conceptions (for example, notions of citizenship and conceptions of 'right' and 'wrong', 'just' or 'unjust' in relation to the unemployed). The changing contours of 'political culture' also determine what is viewed as 'sensible', which constructions of reality are considered 'realistic', and which actors and claims are considered legitimate within a given polity. In other words, while POs determine a collective actor's chances of 'gaining access to the political system and new advantages' in its interactions with power holders, as well as the likelihood of repression, the nature of political cultural identity can influence the

capacity to mobilise and the nature of collective action (Gamson, 1975: 28-29).[252] Cultural meanings determine which ideologies, symbolic values and claims are more likely to gain visibility in the public sphere, to resonate with the claims of other collective actors, and 'to achieve legitimacy in the public discourse' (Koopmans and Statham, 1999: 203). 'Cultural identity' is thus a necessary concept for identifying 'the collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action' (McAdam et al., 1996: 2). Based on these integrated perspectives, scholars recognised that it was necessary to analyse a social movement through not only 'how' political opportunities or access to resources led to collective action, but an examination of cultural aspects is also necessary to explain how cultural meanings were translated into action. Movement 'culture' then became an important area of study; the construction of meaning and the manipulation of symbols became crucial to explaining mobilisation and assessing movement success or decline.

'Culture' has been defined as a historically transmitted pattern of 'meaning which people use to manage their daily world on the basis of social and political identity which affects how people line up and how they act on a wide range of matters' (Ross, 1998: 42). With respect to the cultural analysis of social movements, culture is regarded as 'a framework for organizing the world, for making sense of the actions and interpreting motives of others' (Ross, 1998: 43). Thus, all societies have a culture for dealing with social protest, a so-called a 'culture of collective action'. In this regard, socio-cultural explanations of collective action relate patterns of social relations to the cultural

---

252 Two forms of political influence are flagged in the work of William Gamson, who sees collective action 'success' as a being linked to 'participatory' and 'material' outcomes. The participatory gains would result in the acceptance of social movements into the political decision-making process as legitimate representatives of previously underrepresented groups of people. The second part of Gamson's measures of success, is based on gauging whether movements have gained new advantages for their constituencies. Such gains include legislative and policy changes, or redistribution of resources to benefit the social movement constituency.

response to a social movement.[253]

The cultural perspective in the study of social movements has tended to be discussed in two different senses: the political ideologies of movements; and the relationship of movements to the particular political culture of a host society, including its wider cultural features (obviously these two things are not completely separate, not least because movements themselves are not divorced from a host country's political culture). In this regard, the unemployed movement is very much moulded and conditioned by the socio-cultural frameworks of working class ideology and Argentine political culture (particularly Peronism).

This chapter focuses on socio-cultural explanations behind the rise and comportment of the unemployed movement, examining the interaction between a new 'critical consciousness' and a more traditional working-class ideology and the political culture of Peronism.[254] Both of the latter comprised crucial factors to shaping the unemployed movement, while the ideology of Peronism, being deeply-rooted in Argentine socio-political culture, framed their demands. This gelling of the 'old' and the

---

253 Alvarez et al. stress that culture comprises 'a dimension of all institutions - economic, social and political [and] a set of material practices which constitute meaning, values and subjectivities. It is in this sense that the cultural dimension of collective actions can shed light on the meanings that shape social experience and configure social relations' (1998: 3).
254 Peronism has been studied by many scholars, who have traditionally highlighted its chief ideological characteristics as follows: 'nationalism, mass politics, a personalist leader, a cross-class political alliance incorporating the urban working class, and an anti-status quo ideology' (Di Tella, 1965); 'a strong element of mobilization from above, a central role of leadership from the middle sector or elite and nationalist ideology and program' (Collier and Collier, 1991: 788); 'all appeals to the people which are 'antagonistic to the dominant ideology' ('against the ideology of dominant bloc') retained and refined the idea of opposition to the status quo' (Laclau, 1977: 172-73). However, in the contemporary context of the resurgence of populism the emphasis is quite different. Commenting on a new form of populism ('neo-populism'), Cammack argues that: 'by far the most significant aspect of contemporary populism is the phenomenon of individuals who seek to pursue neoliberal projects from a position of executive power, either in defiance of their own party history, or without the benefits of a well-institutionalised party at all' (2000: 159). Neo-populism may, therefore, be identified as 'authoritarian interventions or leaderships with neo-liberal projects'. Thus, strategically neo-populists stress individual, as opposed to class or national identity, and it plays an important role in 'neutralising the threat of radical mobilisation from below, and of giving rise to a new phase of capital accumulation' (ibid: 160).

'new' proved to be important (Bonner, 2005: 56) – as Tarrow argues, one of the greatest challenges for social movements is framing contention in such a way that the symbols used are both familiar and dynamic (1998: 107). That is, the symbols used by SMOs must be rooted in the history of the country, but at the same time contain a transformational power. In Argentina, Peronism is so deeply frame-rooted in history that its discourse and memory may be used to galvanise the mobilisation of the unemployed movement.

This chapter examines the current cultural meaning and identity of the unemployed movement through its different ideological viewpoints. To date, however, research has largely ignored the cultural identity of the unemployed movement. Although such studies are not completely inexistent, very little has been written from such a perspective. This gap may be due to the actual or supposed lack of protest activities by organised groups of the unemployed, as compared to labour, peace, ecological and women movements, which are much more visible in the public domain. Despite this gap in the literature, however, NSM theory may be enriched by consideration of the complex ideological and cultural meanings that underpin collective action, as Johnston et al. argue:

> The ideological characteristics of NSMs stand in sharp contrast to the working-class movement and to the Marxist conception of ideology as a unifying and totalizing element for collective action. Especially in Europe but also in the United States, movements were characteristically perceived in accordance with overarching ideologies: conservative or liberal; right or left; capitalist or socialist. Marxist thought, always more dominant in Europe than in America, provided the paradigm for perceptions of action, either bourgeois or proletarian. The NSMs are more difficult to characterize in such terms. They exhibit a pluralism of ideas and values, and they tend to have pragmatic orientations and search for institutional reforms that enlarge the systems of members' participation in decision making (1994: 6-7).

In the Argentine case, such 'a pluralism of ideas and values', can motivate

mobilisation within the unemployed movement that falls outside of the formal political process and the 'normal' institutional boundary. What, then, political subcultures (including Marxism, Peronism, autonomism, anarchism, etc.), are to be found in this movement which affect its mobilization capacity? To what extent has the movement developed a homogeneous collective ideology?

The cultural identity in the NSMs and its critiques

As mentioned in Chapter II, much theoretical argumentation surrounding NSMs was formulated as a reaction to the predicted Marxist revolution failing to materialise. This encouraged the study of new forms of protest in contemporary society involving non-working class social actors who were often motivated by non-materialistic cultural and ideological concerns (Cohen, 1985; Melucci, 1985; Offe, 1985).[255] Although there are differing perspectives on the NSMs, a set of core concepts can be said to characterise this new paradigm. A central claim holds that NSMs are a product of the shift to a 'post-industrial society' (Bell, 1974).[256] Secondly, that NSMs are unique and as such, different from the social movements of the 'industrial' age dominated by working-class movements and their socialistic ideology. NSMs are believed to question the wealth-

---

255 Following a similar line, frame theorists argue that: 'the process of 'frame alignment' includes rhetorical strategies that attempt to align collective and personal identities. Social movement actors thereby work to create an intersection between a target population's culture and their own values and goals' (Snow et al., 1986: 467-469). In addition, 'the "master frames" - successful collective action frames that are appropriated as a cultural and ideological resource by subsequent social movements – are viewed as crucial to the formation and evolution of social movements' (McAdam, 1994: 41).

256 According to Bell, 'post-industrial society' can be divided three parts: (i) in modern society the axial principle of 'the social structure' is economising – a way of allocating resources according to principles of least cost, substitutability, optimisation, maximisation, and the like; (ii) the axial principle of modern 'polity' is participation, sometimes mobilised or controlled, sometimes demanded from the below; (iii) the axial principle of 'the culture' is the desire for the fulfillment and enhancement of the self' (1974: 12).

oriented materialistic goals of industrial societies.[257] They also call into question the structures of representative democracy that limit citizen input and participation, advocating direct democracy, self-help groups and the cooperative styles characteristic of SMOs.[258] Furthermore, the values of NSMs centre on 'autonomy' as a new form of ideology in searching for social change.[259] The ideological concept of 'autonomy' as a creative idea, emerges particularly strongly during period of intense grassroots political activity (demonstrations, etc.), but is also in evidence during the more mundane phases of movement-building. It helps create a sense of 'in-betweenness', latency, solidarity, common identity and community, which develops and becomes 'sustained through submerged networks' (Melucci, 1996; Tarrow, 1998). In these spaces, activists translate ideas into action. While they have to engage with wider politics to realise their goals, they also recognise the 'importance of acting for the present' (Melucci, 1996: 213). The affirmation of ideas combined with action (or praxis) of prefigurative politics, permits autonomous groups to make 'the future begin' (Jordan, 2002: 74). In terms of their 'autonomy' dimension, NSMs are supposed to prefer to remain outside normal political

257 Pichardo argues that: 'the participants of these movements have reached a point of economic and political security in the modern age that drives them to struggle for more sophisticated issues such as identity, participation and quality of life rather than economic matters' (1997: 413).
258 Many NSM theorists are concerned with the 'self-defense of society against the state and the market economy' (Cohen, 1985: 664). Additionally, 'the theme of self-defense and democratization raised implicitly and sometimes explicitly by the movements ... which are the most significant elements in contemporary struggles for democratization' (Cohen, 1983: 102). Taken together, 'the values of the NSMs center on autonomy and identity' (Offe, 1985, quoted in Pichardo, 1997: 414).
259 NSM theorists point out that the creation of new meanings and the reinterpretation of norms and values takes place at the level of social integration, not at the level of steering mechanisms (the state). Thus, they argue, the field of social conflict has shifted from the political sphere to civil society and the cultural realm (Touraine, 1985; Melucci, 1985: 789). They hold that new movements are transforming civil society by creating 'new spaces, new solidarities and new democratic forms' (Cohen, 1983: 106). It is in the context of these 'liberated' spaces, 'where alternative norms and values guide social interaction, which new identities and solidarities are formed. This reasoning resembles Gramsci's discussion about the need to move from a war of maneuver to a war of position. In this case the new spaces would be the new trenches that Gramsci said had to be conquered and secured in the process of building a counter-hegemonic project' (Canel, 1997: 193).

channels, employing 'disruptive ideologies' from traditional Marxism ideology and mobilising public opinion to gain political leverage.[260]

Another characteristic of NSMs is said to be found in their internal organisation, as they attempt to replicate in their own structures the type of representative government they desire. This means that they intend to avoid rigid vertical organisational structures and bureaucratic systems and instead rotate leadership and vote communally on all issues. Secondly, regarding NSMs' ideological concerns, some authors such as Arato and Cohen (1985) argue that they are not defined by class boundaries, but are marked by a common concern over various 'social issues'. Others scholars like Offe (1985) claim that NSM members are drawn from three sectors: the new middle class, elements from the old middle class (farmers, shop-owners and artisans) and a 'peripheral' population consisting of persons not heavily engaged in the labour market (students, housewives and retired people). Common agreement exists that NSMs are unlikely to embrace 'old' forms of working class ideology; their demands and methods of organising reflect 'post-industrial society'.

However, these arguments have been criticised on two grounds. Firstly, regarding the characteristics of NSMs, as soon as one looks closely at different contemporary social movements, one finds more exceptions than consistencies vis-à-vis the aforementioned NSM categories. For instance, according to the NSM paradigm, these organisations supposedly espouse open, democratic and nonhierarchical structures, yet there are many that do not conform to this 'ideal type' (see Chapter II). Moreover,

---

260 Regarding the question of 'ideology', in this chapter, Buechler's advice is followed. He argues that: 'social constructionalism (SC) has had more to say about grievance than about ideology. One of the challenges to contemporary social movement theory, therefore, is to use existing work to develop a more robust understanding of ideology in social movements' (2000: 196).

despite the fact that NSMs reputedly disdain institutional politics, many are regularly consulted by governmental bodies, others have been 'captured' by political parties and official entities. In the Argentine case, for instance, a few groups in the unemployed movement are very close to the trade unions. Given that most NSM theorising has been conducted in Europe and North America (Chapter III), another critique holds that it ill-adapted to the many different historical and contemporary realities founded in less developed countries around the world. Not only might the 'newness' of contemporary NSMs be a dubious argument; the literature represents an ideological construction focused on non-Marxist ideology that fits reality in only a few particular 'post-industrial' cases. How does the Argentine unemployed movement relate to such arguments?

The mobilisation of the unemployed movement based on ideologies

The unemployed movement based on the various groups of unemployed people not only continued their protests but also deepened their demands. Also, the movement at the beginning of the social protests achieved some of their goals: extra funding for assistance programmes and support from a wide cross-section of public opinion (Chapter VI). However, since the end of 2003 and the formation of the new Kirchner government, the oveall intensity of protest subsided and public support started to wane. As a result, the unemployed began to be seen once more through their traditional historical image of a 'marginal' group. During the period 2004-2005, although the UMOs shared common goals with numerous sister groups, it proved increasingly difficult for them to construct new solutions or viable responses to the economic and political crisis. They continued protesting via highways blockades, the occupation of

public buildings, and negotiating with public officials over the supply of subsidised food, the maintenance of neighbourhood soup kitchens, and the opening of health community centres, etc. To this backdrop, ideological debates grew that discussed the best 'way forward' for the movement, so as to ensure that it did not fade away as a political force.

A certain political and ideological fragmentation could be discerned in the early phase given the existence of so many heterogeneous UMOs. Three main positions could be observed. There were those sectors that opted for a constructive dialogue with the various extreme left groups, others became close to mildly militant union groups attached to centre-left parties; finally there were independent groups who focused on strengthening autonomous mobilisation with the aim of building new centres of power and bonds of solidarity, with a view to creating a kind of a 'parallel society' that would lead to an 'inclusive democracy'.[261] Examples of the three tendencies include:

(i) the FTV (led by Luis D'Elia) and CCC (headed by Carlos Alderete), who called for the formation of a government of national unity embracing Peronist (populist)

---

261 Guido Galafassi analysed how the popular rebellion of December 2001 illustrated a crisis in the institutions of Argentine 'representative democracy' and the capitalist market economy. These led to the creation of neighbourhood assemblies which constituted embryonic mechanisms of direct democracy and a new integral vision of society. He shows that three of the main components of an 'inclusive democracy' was attempted in practice in Argentina: direct political democracy, economic democracy and democracy in the social realm. According to this author, a new form of confederal democracy emerged in Argentina which was based on nearby communities organised into a territorial network at a local and regional scale and this event provided an important concrete example of the possibilities for inclusive democracy and how it might work in an actual social setting (2003). For a more theoretical approach, see Fotopoulos' study on the characteristics of 'inclusive democracy', which includes: (i) 'political democracy', which can only be a direct one; (ii) 'economic democracy', which extends beyond the confines of the market economy and state planning; (iii) 'democracy in the social realm', where all public realm institutions in which collective decisions can be taken (e.g. workplace, educational establishments, cultural institutions, etc.), are self-governed under an overall social control exercised directly by society, whereas personal relations are based on a value system that is compatible with the overall democratic institutions of society, i.e. a value system based on the principles of individual and social autonomy and solidarity that rules out any form of domination based on sex, race, ethnicity and cultural differences (2001).

ideology;[262]

(ii) the MTD Aníbal Verón, which mobilised a wide-range of base organisations in the unemployed movement and strove to maintain its 'autonomy' and 'independence'. They agreed that the issue was not to attain or 'seize' power, rather 'autonomy' would provide new symbolic values to a corrupt system and suggest new solutions to society's problems, that originated from the grassroots. For this reason, direct democracy and 'horizontality' were constituent parts of their working practices. This group was located in spaces 'forgotten' by the system and aimed to create a kind of a 'parallel society' that included the world of production, health, education and political formation, all administrated through assemblies based on open and free participation. The idea of 'counter-power' constituted the ideological base of some of this group; and finally

(iii) the organisations under the domination of the BPN (National Picketer Block), which included those holding radical leftist ideologies (PO and MIJD) and linked to orthodox Marxist parties. They believed that Argentina, after the events of 19-20 December, had entered a 'revolutionary process' and, therefore, they tried to win the streets and to recruit the biggest number possible of militants, the aim being to advance their political strategy for the taking of political power.

---

262 These groups' political coalition included a reformist workers union (CTA) as a part of a bigger coalition (FTV-CTA): during the late 1990s, these groups in the GBA came to overlap with the 'Manzaneras', agents of the anti-Menem Peronist machine of provincial governor, Eduardo Duhalde, of the local Peronist (municipal) administrations and became supporters of current president Néstor Kirchner (since May 2003). The Peronist Party connection was particularly important given that this group had acquired a hierarchical structure, where benefits were shared from the top down, and in many cases the heads of the movements served as intermediaries for the distribution of government welfare subsidies, from which each member of the group must discount a small sum to support the costs of protests, the hiring and maintenance of assembly facilities, etc.

Ideological conflict with new radical leftism: BPN, PO, MIJD

The lack of ideological unity within the unemployed movement mainly originated from the traditional political rivalries found with the Argentine working-class movement, especially the attitude adopted towards Peronism, the dominant current. Even if a good opportunity existed to achieve a united response to the crisis, many deemed it necessary to take the opportunity to construct a more radical current that could challenge the established parties, as leftist economist Katz notes:

> The opportunities that is now present for the left to become more defined as a pole of attraction in the working class, as a real option, and derives primarily from the loss of authority, after having led the country into the worst social degradation in its history, of the three large parties of the ruling class, the Peronist, the Radical and the centre-left ... this new alternative pole is in the process of birth, but it may be absorbed if the left does not solve the problem of its lack of roots in the working class, obstacles that their opponents have overcome over decades (2002).[263]

Commenting on the Peronist legacy and the complexities of the political conjuncture in 2001-2002, an interviewee noted that:

> The employed workers did not take part in the uprising of the 19-20 December 2001. They did not feel part of the movement which toppled the De La Rúa government, like the middle class or the youth. The middle class said 'Basta, it is enough' and started a huge mobilisation which toppled De La Rúa. The middle class is the social base of the Radical Party. The working class is the base of Peronism and it has not yet broken with Peronism. A stronger movement is necessary to create such kind of rupture ... Recently an old Peronist told me during a conversation that in the 1970s he had been in a very combative Peronist union. He still sees himself as a Peronist. A few days ago he went to the party office of the Peronists and cursed them for not supporting the unemployed struggle. He called them 'sons of bitches' and left. Although he sees himself as a Peronist, he curses the party. A rupture would mean that he would not see himself as a Peronist any more, that we get rid of the stuff that Peronism had put in our heads. The youth does not have this problem, but the working class has.[264]

A popular view of '*piqueterismo*' in the present conjuncture has been that it

---

263 See, http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article515
264 Interview: Ricardo at a conference at the UBA, coordinated by '*Ciudad Política*' with the theme: '¿ Qúe es Sindicalismo hoy en la Argentina?', 10 May 2004. See, www.ciudadpolitica.com.

reflects a state of dualism within the working class, i.e. the workers are divided into the employed (*los ocupados*), linked to the trade unions and ex-workers (*los desocupados*), who are linked to the unemployed movement. The latter group, it is posited, is separated from the ideology and organisations of the Argentine working class.

However, radical groups active in the unemployed movement adopt a different position, basing their arguments on classical Marxist political economy. Sartelli, Altamira and other group leaders, for example, regard unemployed movement participants (in organisations like the BPN, PO and MIJD) as possessing a strong 'working-class ideology':

> There is a question about whether 'an unemployed is a worker?' An unemployed person is, effectively, a worker who has nothing or lacks ownership of the means of production and life. Therefore, he/she has to live with handing over his labour power to Capital. The unemployed also have nothing for the means of production and for their lives ... If they want to survive, they must find a job. There is a mass population who can not find a job or lost it. After losing it, they always constitute the unemployed. But, why are these people working class? Because they also don't have any other form of survival ... only to be hired by Capital ... to be let, how? ... like salary. This is the only method of survival for the working class at the moment. Thus, the unemployed are no more than a fraction of the working class. The only difference between workers and the unemployed is whether they have the possibility to become incorporated as an active formal worker, who can attain a good salary - which is also at the moment very difficult to get it (My translation).[265]

> The *piqueteros* movement is the deepest historical expression produced by the Argentine working class. Currently, in spite of the fact that it is composed of different groups, it is the most advanced organizational effort of the unemployed in the history of the worldwide workers movement ... If mass unemployment is considered to be the most important attempt by capitalism to destroy productive forces and, fundamentally, the proletariat, the mass organization of the unemployed represents a gigantic anti-capitalist attempt to reconstruct the working class as a live historic force ... and develop a consciousness appropriate to its character. The

---

[265] Interview: Sartelli, in 'La Plaza es Nuestra: La Lucha de Clases en la Argentina del Siglo XX' (2003: 127-28).

piqueteros movement is, it is true, a vanguard force, more so if we take into account within it only the groups which are independent of the bourgeoisie, such as the BPN (Altamira, 2004: 5).

How else can the fact be explained that a socialist and Marxist party plays a prominent role in the *piquetero* movement? We are in the presence of a great experience. Why? Because it shows that a worker is not someone who is standing by a machine; the worker is someone who is exploited and capable of reconstituting the history and the organisations of his class, way before he may have been standing by a machine or was inside a factory; that actually the working class is the consciousness that the workers have of their historic role in this society. That is why the *piquetero* phenomenon has international relevance and is proof of the fact that in the midst of the barbarism of capital, the proletariat stands as the socialist alternative to capitalist barbarism: this is the fundamental. There would not have been a rebellion on 19 and 20 December without the *piquetero* movement, without these ten long years of preparation.[266]

We must take into our hands the solution to the most pressing problems of the masses: work, health, education, housing. This means putting forward and extending these organisations throughout the length and breadth of the whole country as the workers' own alternative. We define the strategy of the *piqueteros* and the combative union sectors gathered in this National Assembly by the incorporation of the industrial workers' movement and the large-scale, privatised, public services into the current *piquetero* struggles. Any serious claim to overthrow the present government and regime cannot bypass the fundamental role of the workers today in maintaining the principal centres of production and essential services, such as power, gas, telephones and transport (Altamira, 2004: 6).[267]

The above interviews insist that the unemployed movement originated and is driven by individuals who possess a clear working class ideology. Arguing along similar lines, a leader of the PO and other activists stressed that the unemployed movement contributed to the strength of working class. The employed and unemployed, according to this view, were united in a common struggle:

We stand consistently on the left. We do not want to be contaminated by the old political party system and trade unions - like the CGT, which has been deeply rooted with the Peronist party, supported neo-liberal policies. The CTA is another pro-state union which does not have any

---

266 Interview: Raúl Castells (a leader of MIJD), 6 May 2004. on this day, the MIJD took over toll booths along the Pannamerica, Ricchieri and La Plata-Buenos Aires highways.
267 For further argumentation along similar lines, see the international socialist web. http://www.irps.org.

capacity to confront the current pillage (*'poder depredador'*). We stand only on the left, for socialism, the working class and revolution. This is a great challenge ... we demand: reduced working hours and shorter shifts, instead of the extreme exploitation of 12 hours working a day, whilst almost 5 millions people did not have their job. We insist on 'no payment of the external debt', on the confiscation of the banks and 'nationalisation the banking system', and putting them under management of the working and popular class. The privatised companies as well.[268]

What about the strategy of the groups of *piqueteros* [UMOs] and how the struggle can proceed? Also old terms are subject to re-questioning in collective debates. 'Nationalisation under workers control' and 'workers government' are, on the one hand, the usual repertoire of Trotskyist notions of transition. On the other hand, these terms get a new meaning within an occupied factory. We have shown that we can run the production without bosses, so we will also be able to run the country. We neither need politicians, nor bosses. For a lot of comrades the slogan 'nationalisation under workers control' basically means: We do not want to buy the means of production, we do not want to become owners. The state should place them at our disposal. A factory, where no-one dared to raise their voice became a space of debates. This space was not created by a party, no matter how many parties try to pride themselves on this glory. The workers themselves conquered this space. If we create a space for democracy then the comrades themselves will decide how things should proceed.[269]

A very beautiful demonstration was the one when the comrades from MIJD decided to occupy the Minister of Labour again and we came to give support. The comrades were already on the bridge when we arrived with our demonstration, with our white shirts with the PO logo, which we always wear on protests. We sang the song which has now almost become an anthem: 'Come here, come here, you will find a friend. As unemployed and employed together we will always win the fight'. Both groups were singing this song and when both demonstrations met, people jumped around embracing each other – that was beautiful, merging white and yellow shirts, singing and embracing each other ... that was really beautiful. I think that was the moment when we really found a working class unity. The concrete synthesis of this situation was that the unemployed came here into the street.[270]

These pronouncements stress the difficulty of separating the unemployed movement from other fractions of the working class. In contrast, however, the NCI

---

268 Interview: Néstor Pitrola (a leader of PO), 8 March 2004. The PO marched to the Plaza de Mayo in support of the rights of workers and protested against the payment of the foreign debt.
269 Interview: Raúl (a leader of CCC), 12 May 2004.
270 Interview: Eduardo (a member of PO), 18 June 2004.

(*Nucleo Comunista Internacional*) through Luis Zamora and other spokespersons argue that the movement is 'petty-bourgeois' in nature:

It is absurd to compare the Argentinean inter-classist rebellion with the Russian revolution of 1917. Such comparisons are meaningless ... it is purely and simply the product of its ideology that distances it from dialectical materialism and historical materialism, whilst it embraces anarchist positions, that are a difficult mix to swallow. In its superficial terminology it adopts the petty-bourgeois ideology of the desperate and futureless middling strata (NCI, 2004).[271]

The *piquetero* organisations are appendages of the parties of the Left, whether they are 'independent' or arms of the main unions, as is the case of the CTA with the FTV. Its official leader D'Elia, is irretrievably part of capital, the bourgeois apparatus. Their purpose is the division and dispersal of the struggles, sterilising the unemployed until they are transformed into an integral part of the urban landscape, without revolutionary perspective, and isolated from their class (NCI, 2004).

The so-called *piquetero* movement, is demonstrating its anti-working class nature and the self-interested lies with which leftist groups of every hue have dedicated themselves to deceiving the workers with false hopes to make them believe that the aims and means of the *piquetero* movement contribute to advancing their struggle. This task of deception, falsifying events, and preventing the proletariat from drawing the real lessons of this movement and thus arming themselves against the traps of the class enemy, which is aided by the invaluable contribution of the *semi-anarchist* group with its pseudo-Marxist language, is clearly denounced by the current *piquetero* movement (NCI, 2004).

Others, however, adopt a less dogmatic, more optimistic view of the unemployed movement, its significance, potentiality and prospects:

I don't believe in the dogmatic postulates of Marxist revolution. I don't accept that we are living in a period of proletarian revolution. All that must be revised. Reality is telling us that every day. Are we aiming in Argentina today for the abolition of private property or a classless society? I don't think so. But if I'm told that because of that reality you can't do anything to help the poor, the people who have made this country rich through their labour, and never forget that some of it was slave labour, then I say 'We part company'. I will never accept that there can be no redistribution of wealth in society. I believe it's better to die in battle, rather than hold aloft a very revolutionary and very pure banner, and do nothing ... that position often strikes me as very

---

271 See, http://en.internationalism.org/book/print/287

convenient, a good excuse ... try and make your revolution, go into combat, advance a little, even if it's only a millimetre, in the right direction, instead of dreaming about utopias.[272]

The fact that the workers do not want to have anything to do with the unemployed is due to the politics of the government and the union bureaucracy. Most of the unions look down on the unemployed. They do not perceive them as part of the working class. It really helped that here in Buenos Aires a really independent unemployed organisation came to life and that it is a very progressive one. Because among the unemployed too it is not easy for the comrades to find people who want to support the struggle. Unfortunately, there are only few who want this. Most of them lead rather corporate struggles, each group for its own demands.[273]

Apart from activists and party militants, many scholars have also struggled to define the movement's ideology, as well as its potential to bring about fundamental social change. For example, Dinestein questions:

whether this is enough to confront the imperial power of capital and whether it is possible to build a political movement able to discuss the problem of income distribution and 'hunger' and, simultaneously, encourage the territorial and communitarian development of alternative social relations and values driven by the search for 'dignity ... this is an Argentine 'dilemma' for the politics of resistance, which has been intensified in Argentina due to the deepness of the crisis (2003b: 3).

Researchers have also pondered this 'dilemma'. For example, Rauber argues that: it originated from the traditional labour movement, but with 'distinct expressions, methods and protagonists' (2002: 1). Others adopt a more optimistic position, positing that the unemployed workers movement contributed towards creating a 'pre-revolutionary situation' through engaging in 'a rich mosaic of organized socio-political labour movements through direct mass action, blocking the transport of goods and services and paralyzing government activity' (Petras, 2002, 2003).[274] No matter what

272 Interview: Luis Zamora, in a web, http://www.herramienta.com.ar/ (19 April 2003).
273 Interview: Daniel (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 25 June 2004.
274 To provide a flavour of the diversity of opinion, Dinerstein argued that the movement represented 'a struggle for dignity against the violence of money' (2001: 3). Lapegna views it as 'an alternative to the classic working class action repertoire' (2002). North and Huber hold that the movement is: 'a collective process enabling those that Argentine capitalism has excluded to solve their problems themselves, with their *compañeros*. This movement, from atomised

disagreement existed vis-à-vis the potential and degree of radicalism within the unemployed movement, many agree that it represents an important anti-capitalist movement against the current dominant ideology of neo-liberalism:

> Neoliberalism is a political culture based on the rupture of solidarity and collective action, of the constitutive values of our own identity, like social justice, dignity, sovereignty, and its substitution by a political culture based on selfishness, racism, individualism, sexism, discrimination, the destruction of identities, looking for an homogenizing effort around a western cultural model, white, preferably Catholic, xenophobic, patriarchal, and heterosexual. It's the political culture that justifies the looting of our wealth and also the pillaging of the hopes and dignities of millions of persons who are sentenced to an inhuman life or a fierce death by hunger, malnutrition, lack of health, repression, etc.(Korol, 2004).[275]

> Today the bourgeoisie has no organised structure for anything ... If they are not able to weaken or discourage the mobilisations by other means, the idea that 'anarchy is intolerable for any society', implies they will impose order at some point in time. They are unable to address the people's demands, so they try to discourage the people, they try to wear them down, they try to cause divisions until the mobilisations can be defeated or suppressed. But today, repression is not the central policy ... The instance that Duhalde carried out a repression, all the world was against him.[276]

Reiterating points made in the above interviews, Pastore argues that the rise of the unemployed movement 'allowed the reconstitution of a lost socialising space, where the unemployed person could recreate her/his loss without the guilt attributed to them by a neo-liberal ideology that insinuates the uselessness of the excluded' (2000: 5). Authors have also focused on the 'defensive' and countervailing nature of the unemployed movement. It has been described as 'an expression of negative power without taking power' (Holloway, 2002); and a 'reinvention of politics through an expression of anti-politics' (Dinerstein, 2003c: 248). Still others have emphasised the complexity and

---

unemployed nobody, to a *piquetero*, part of a collective with a voice and a strategy provides a particular "ontological security" that moves beyond present day insecurities, providing some sense of a better future to be collectively won' (2004, 975-76).
275 See, http://www.cubanow.cult.cu/global/loader.php?secc=3&cont=list.php
276 Interview: Ernesto (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 14 July 2004.

heterogenous configuration of the movement. Oviedo, for example, argues that 'the movement is comprised of divergent groups and ideologies, ranging from a revolutionary radical wing to a petit bourgeois and bureaucratic faction that support reform within the system. In between these extremes, there is a vast array of greys' (2002: 3). Such a degree of diversity undermined the development of a unified class response, on the one hand, while the emergence of a strong 'anti-systemic movement was complicated by the programmes set up by the various UMOs with state aid - work schemes, food parcels and the payment of 150 *pesos* a month. Even when grassroots organisations talked about a workers' or proletariat revolution, many participants were locked into a dependent position. Consequently, the unemployed movement failed to develop an alternative working-class ideology, ultimately capable of threatening the system - no matter how 'revolutionary' the slogans that were adopted.

Yet at the same time, there is broad agreement that the unemployed were engaging in autonomous politics through innovative ways. In their rejection of the 'old politics' they moved a step forward, by creating their own UMOs based on different ideological principles, they laid the foundations for the 'new politics' to come. In this regard, Paula argued that the unemployed movement represented an important phenomenon became 'it has emerged in a distinct moment of Argentine history in which a social and politico-economic paradigm is being questioned and particular social actors are struggling to define the new rules of the ideological game' (2003: 3). This emergence went hand-in-hand with the growing crisis of neo-liberalism and traditional ruling class hegemony (including the Peronist party and affiliated trade unions who had long dominated Argentine labourism), which proved 'less and less able to satisfy the

material demands of the increasingly urbanized poor majority' (Kirby, 2003: 164).[277]

The appearance of these new ideological perspectives among a growing number of the unemployed and informal sectors, brought 'a crisis of traditional union labourism that used to traditionally define themselves as workers and a decomposition of the old identity with Argentine labour unionism' (Aufheben, 2003: 1).[278] Under such turbulent circumstances, 'alternative meaning systems and practices exist, are recreated in the universe of political discourse, a space within which social actors struggle over representation and ideologies are socially constructed' (Jenson, 1990: 3). One of these was the emergence of grassroots organizations adhering to a vision of society and political praxis that rejected established norms.

Autonomist projects: the MTD Aníbal Verón

As noted, since the mid-1990s there began to develop new forms of contestation from below, and increasingly outside of, the traditional political institutions and mechanisms of social control. Many of these struggles occurred around a reclaiming of citizenship rights, which had been lost during the process of neo-liberal restructuring. On this point,

---

277 Kirby identified the common features of newly emerging of social movements in Latin America as followes: (i) social movements have 'restored social actors in modern society to a fully conscious life (Foweraker, 1995: 36), thus counteracting the rather deterministic emphasis on social structure that marked both modernization and dependency theory; (ii) their forms of organisation are looser and more informal, as well as less hierarchical and more democratic, than those of most trade unions and political parties; (iii) they combine struggles for material resources with a cultural politics that seeks to contest dominant meanings; (iv) social movements are often rooted in local issues but link these to wider national and even international struggles through networking and establishing two-way channels of communication; (v) social movements help constitute and reinforce new social identities as people are 'motivated to mobilize as women and teachers, Indians and peasant, students and democrats, workers and socialists, or as any other more or less complex multiple identity' (2003:164-165).
278 It has been suggested that: 'the neoliberal attack has resulted in a massification of the class in which the middle classes are being absorbed into the proletariat ... this is happening in specific conditions of a country on the periphery of capital, where immediate social mobilisation around the neighbourhood is possible' (Aufheben, 2003).

Mecle Armiñana notes that the bulk of the unemployed suffered from a 'disappearance

of citizenship rights':

> The reforms of the state and public administration dictated by the Washington Consensus, produced an alarming level of political and social cost for the Argentine people, and threatened the stability of political and social democracy. As a result of these reforms, almost the half population, who were economically became unemployed (*desempleada*): 13,000,000 people fell below the poverty line. This was accompanied by a surge of new forms of precariousness, or fluidity between the distinct classes (*'flexibilizados de distintas clases'*) and social stratum (*estratos sociales*). Finally, ex-workers became excluded from the labour market. All these combined to promote 'de-citizenshipisation (*'des-ciudadanización'*), which means that these people lost their political, social and human rights ... it spread outrage became it went against the basic principles of a fair democracy (2002: 43. My translation).

Thus, from this viewpoint, struggles partly represented an attempt to regain universalised rights.[279] An example of this social process is provided by the MTD Aníbal Verón, whose members sought to devise new ways to organise processes of production and distribution in a non-exploitative and egalitarian fashion. The mechanism for achieving these goals was through the unemployed assemblies.[280] Participatory decision-making processes based on principles of direct democracy and a rejection of political parties working within the state orbit, were adopted.[281] The

---

279 On the connection between exclusion and rights, it has been noted that: 'the association of poverty with a more divided society has led to the broader concept of social exclusion, which refers not only to material deprivation, but to the inability of the poor to fully exercise their social, cultural and political rights as citizens' (Powell, 1995: 22-23).this position has also been adopted by some international bodies: 'for a large part of the population, the current situation is compounded by the fact that people are often unable to exercise their rights as citizens. At the legal and political level, this is manifested in a fundamental inequality in terms of access to the justice system ... lack of involvement of political decision-making. In the economic and social spheres, it takes the form of inequality of opportunity, job instability, low incomes, barriers to social mobility, a disregard for ethnic and cultural diversity and a lack of protection in the face of misfortune' (ECLAC, 2001: 18).

280 Compared to some groups, such as the MTD Aníbal Verón, since the early 1990s, affiliates of the CTA-FTV have struggled to prevent privatisation of state owned companies and demanded work plans, state subsidies and universal unemployment benefits. They are consequently more emeshed with state bureaucracies.

281 The assembly is the method of decision-making that internally governs the UMOs. According to Delamata, 'assemblies are mechanisms of direct democracy which potentially allow for the full participation of all the organization's member' (2004: 12).

meanings of the idioms and symbols of these groups' struggle and political engagement

- for example, calls for social justice and democratic citizenship - became reworked and

expanded as unemployed movement groups demanded the right to determine their

futures under conditions of their own (i.e. autonomous) making.[282] When describing the

emergence of these trends, Haman notes:

> We can say that a new cycle of struggles has started which has features very distinct from those
> prevailing in the struggles of the past decade. Everything is being questioned. In the population
> there is a state of permanent debate ... there is a new vanguard developing within the popular
> layers, which is beginning to acquire certain features. Above all within the unemployed
> movement, but also among sections of the employed ... the new movements arise in general
> outside the old traditional trade union organisations, with direct democracy from below and new
> leaders (2002: 33).

Grassroots activists aimed to empower themselves through 'maximising the

autonomist projects available to them without constraints, concerned with the processes

that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions'

(Rowlands, 1997: 13-14).[283] The unemployed assemblies proved to be an integral part

of this process, for they spawned a non-hierarchical, horizontal mode of political

participation:

> The movement began in the interior, in *Cutralco, Tartagal, Mosconi, Santiago del Estero*, and
> they spread throughout the country, blocking the trade routes that fed the most important cities.
> Once that had started, people began to take this movement seriously as a way fighting, even here,
> in Buenos Aires ... the first was somewhat improvised, and some of our *compañeros* were

---

282 Zibechi (2003) identifies the autonomist project as being present within the practice of various social movements in Latin America. He stresses this connection in his analysis of the Zapatistas in Mexico, the MST [Landless Workers' Movement] in Brazil, the Ecuadorian indigenous movement, the Bolivian *cocaleros* [coca growers], and the Argentine unemployed movement.
283 On the concept of empowerment used in this chapter, Breton makes an attempt at definition, stating that: '... the process of conscientization (developing an awareness of personal and structural dimensions of situations or problems) becomes part of an empowering strategy only if the cognitive restructuring it entails leads to seizing or creating opportunities in the environment to either change the structural dimensions which constitute obstacles or to take advantage of the structural dimensions which constitute resources, and only if these exist the capacities and the will or motivation to seize the opportunities' (1994: 32-33). Moreover, 'the power to name must be accompanied by the power to act' (ibid: 36).

arrested. But, little by little, it started to become clear that a new way of fighting had been developed ... the most important thing, however, was that our numbers started to grow; we started to build productive workshops, to enable people, to teach what we were learning, all of those things that were so much more important than the blockades: work, dignity and social change.[284]

The movement is a movement of unemployed workers, which started to organise after 1996. It is not one group ... it consists of many different organisations with different strategies. But they are all known as the unemployed movement ('*piqueteros*') because of the road blockades that they usually use as a way to put their demands forward. The first movement organised spontaneously to resist neo-liberal policies, and they did so by gathering in democratic and 'horizontal' (meaning without hierarchies) assemblies. Later on, some Trotskyst, Communist, Maoists and populist parties 'copied' the movement strategy, but without the radically horizontal approach. Some of the groups, however, still organise through real assemblies, and make decisions in a horizontal way.[285]

The direct democracy and direct action practices established by the unemployed assemblies, for example, became a source of education and providing vital new experience for many activists. Knowledge and information could be transmitted effectively and quickly through this mechanism. From the beginning, one of the main principles learnt, was to maintain their 'autonomy'. One of the unemployed movement groups (MTD Solano) defined 'autonomy' in their declaration:

We understand by autonomy the ability which, as a people, we have to organise ourselves and direct ourselves independently. Our movements are independent of the state and its institutions, political parties and the Church. But autonomy goes beyond simple independence: we reject the subordination of popular organisations to any super-structural petition, since we believe that the people who organise themselves from the grass roots within their own areas, should be those that determine, in a democratic way, the decisions and the politics to follow.[286]

---

284 Interview: Vega (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 26 June 2004. The MTD Aníbal Verón blocked the *Puente Pueyrredón* in order to commemorate the second anniversary of the killing of two fellow *piqueteros* by police on 26 June 2002.
285 Interview: Britos (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 26 June 2004.
286 This agreement was drawn up collectively by the members of base groups of the MTD Aníbal Verón: Lanus, Dario Santillan de Alte, Brown, San Telmo y Lugano de Capital Federal, Berrisso, and Oscar Barrios de Jóse C. Paz (21 November 2003), in http://www.solidaridadesrebeldes.kolgados.com.ar/

Educated middle class elements took on leadership roles in the MTD Aníbal Verón following their disillusionment with centralised parties, but rejected a formal structure that everybody felt would limit political freedom:

> We organised people's assemblies, where if you choose a spokesperson for today, you can drop them tomorrow. In our organisation nobody's a permanent politician. This is a principle for me, that people's positions change. That nobody is fixed in a position, because we have seen that with fixed positions people turn into the unionists of the CGT [the official Peronist trade union]. When there's a need, an assembly is called. At the assembly the agenda is set. If someone can't pay their electricity bill or are going to be thrown out, the decision is made to go to the municipal office to ask for rent money, or to go to the electricity company about the electricity.[287]

> If this struggle has pushed things forward, then it is due to the democratic ways it was and is led. The only authority is the assembly, the whole collective of the unemployed workers. In the assemblies we all have the right to voice our opinion and to vote – not in a secret ballot like the ruling class do and who after the vote do not want to remember anything. Here nothing gets forgotten. The assembly votes and the majority decides. I have lost votes in the assemblies. You have to stick to the decision. It does not matter if you lose or win, the important thing is that we decided together. This is the way we work. We debated all the issues. This helped us all to create consciousness. Because here in Argentina we have a major cultural problem, they killed our roots in the military dictatorship in the 70s.[288]

The emphasis was on breaking with the past, of building a new form of 'doing politics' (Freeman, 1970: 151). Thus, Adamovsky regards this component of the movement as 'a different type of left politics, on which the principles of direct democracy, autonomy and horizontal organising based':

> The first thing you need to know is that, before all these movements emerged, we had a strongly hierarchical and leader-oriented political culture. I am not referring here to mainstream politics (think of Peronism and the innumerable military coups we suffered), but also to unions (which, in general, are a highly corrupt bureaucracy), and the left. Almost all previous experience we had was that of Leninist and national liberation traditions, which are very hierarchical and sometimes

---

287 Interview: Soria (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 23 June 2004.
288 Interview: Manotas (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 14 July 2004.

very authoritarian ... Nowadays the situation is different. After all the struggle Argentina has been through, the people in the movements became aware that we are actually experimenting with a different type of left politics, unlike anything we had seen in the past. And they are generally eager to learn new ideas based in principles of direct democracy, autonomy, and horizontal organising (2003).[289]

The importance of maintaining autonomy was perceived at three key levels: working-class autonomy in order to build a significant anti-capitalism movement, autonomy regarding the state, and finally, vis-à-vis the political parties and trade union bureaucracy. This sentiment comes through powerfully in the following quotes:

It's not new, just different and better. We started from the premise that we have to break with the old, classical structures of the political parties, including the parties of the Left, which were very closed in their perceptions and are now obsolete. We've also broken from the Catholic Church, which is incredibly powerful, from the municipality and from the national government. In fact, we've discarded all the props we used to use, in favour of what we call 'autonomy'. We don't know how long it will take, nor yet if we'll succeed.[290]

It is evident that the Argentine state failed, not only the political parties, totally captured by the mafias, a state that neither manages to regulate nor generate mediations in society, ended up destroying the idea, so strongly installed in Argentina, that everything had to pass through the state. Thus, between this and the global militancy that was developing, the ideology of the network, plus the presence of the Internet and the new technologies, the new forms of the organization of work ... these things reinforced the ideology of horizontalism (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003: 9).[291]

It can't be said, as others claim, that we are just a 'base' movement. We do have a political project. In fact, we do know how to read the current political conjuncture, but our project occurs at the neighbourhood level, with the people. Our thinking is more comprehensive, precisely, because we work in this manner. They can't reproach us for lacking a strategy and a guiding political structure; that's a lie. The movement itself is a political tool; all of us, all the *compañeros* in the movement, constitute this tool and we all work on which our thinking based. When we are asked what our political project is, we explain that it is this: politics from below, a

---

289 See, http://www.zmag.org (4 August 2003).
290 Interview: Andrés (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 14 July 2004.
291 See, http://www.solidaridadesrebeldes.kolgados.com.ar/

comprehensive politics from below. Our goal is the complete formation of the person, in every possible sense. Everything counts, everything is important.[292]

It seems to me in the short term they are just words. They're positions put with the goal of confusing and weakening the mobilizing process and the revolution in consciousness. But at any rate they are something of a warning that the ruling class is considering other alternatives ... As we said before, Duhalde's only strength resides in being able to persuade certain sectors of the population to support him by saying: It's me or chaos. This was used many times before by Alfonsín and by Menem ... but now we are in a different situation, it seems to me.[293]

We have to come out because they want to cut our plans, they don't want to renew them. It was an attempt to put a stop to our organisation. What we never do is to come out when a super-structural power tries to convene us, when an organisation with a pre-determined political agenda tries to mobilise us; we analyse and decide upon a situation according to our own agenda.[294]

Altamira reaffirmed that the autonomy of the MTD Aníbal Verón was from the very start an attempt to achieve political emancipation against the old bureaucratic trade unionism and Peronism:

It has had to confront from the start the apparatus of point men and the party machinery of the Justicialista party and the trade union bureaucracy. The organization of the unemployed took place outside the realm of the unions and was sabotaged by the bureaucracy. The development of the organization of the unemployed and its growing demand for jobs is incompatible with the permanence of the bureaucracy in the leadership of the unions. Not for nothing, both Duhalde's as well as Kirchner's Ministers of Labor and of the Interior have come out at various times for the bureaucracy to mobilize on the streets against the unemployed movement. From the point of view, not just of the working class, but of Argentine political history, the unemployed movement represents a great goal: that of the political emancipation of the workers from under the aegis of Peronism (2004: 7).

For the unemployed movement, the idea of 'autonomy' from state power, was, therefore, a guiding principle. Instead, it was seen as desirable to build up 'self-help-

---

292 Interview: Carigao (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 22 July 2004.
293 Interview: Leguizamon (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 22 July 2004.
294 Interview: Ramírez (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 26 July 2004.

organisations' or 'counter-institutions' that would not be tainted by 'verticalism'. This sentiment is expressed strongly in the following extracts:

> Decisions made by all; the lack of leaders; the idea of liberty; that no one is subordinated to another; that each one has to assume within him or herself responsibility for what is decided; the idea that it is important to struggle in all dimensions; that struggle doesn't take place in one privileged location; the idea that we organize ourselves according to concrete problems; the idea that it is not necessary to construct one organization for all, but that organization is multiple; that there are many ways to organize oneself according to the level of conflict one confronts; the idea that there is not one dogma or ideology, but rather open thinking and many possibilities (Colectivo Situaciones, 2003: 9).

> At the grassroots, these movements are devoting themselves to developing alternative paths out of poverty for their communities and have undertaken an enormous variety of mutual-aid activities, including the collective construction of community or health centers, housing occupations, the planting of organic gardens, the raising of livestock, the creation of youth programs, the organization of festivals, and the creation of an impressive number of collective neighborhood soup kitchens. The unemployed assembles work together in modest vegetable gardens on occupied land, then cook their produce in those collective kitchens, and finally serve food in public neighborhood dining halls, where the jobless and hungry can eat with a genuine sense of dignity and solidarity (Straub, 2004).[295]

The MTD groups have rejected all forms of hierarchical 'party' organisation - and palliative 'stopgap' work. Instead they have focused on engaging in socially useful productive activity as far as possible given the wider socio-economic constraints. One example is producing food to supply neighbourhood soup kitchens. When conducting these activities, a more open, discursive and egalitarian mood prevails, where members seem to participate on equal terms as a matter of course. Via these practices and collective action, the unemployed assemblies were developed as a means to advance certain goals, particularly working class autonomy from capitalist work practices and

---

295 See, http://www.zmag.org/content/print article.cfm?itemID=5077&sectionID=40

old-style trade unionism. Part and parcel of this initiative was to build up a form 'counter-power':

> As Argentines lost jobs in factories and the public sector, they were limited to low-wage, un-
> organised and unstable work wherever they could get it. Meanwhile, decades of bureaucratic
> corruption gradually turned what remained of Argentina's unions into little more than mafia.[296]

> In many assemblies, to take a concrete example, there were those who wanted to form
> employment bureaus and commissions to respond to the problems of the neighbourhoods. Thus
> the people are being given very rich experiences ... and start to see in a more concrete way the
> formation of elements of a 'counter-culture' that implies a solidarity practice of struggle against
> fragmentation and individualism, in opposition to capitalist culture, with the enormous strengths
> this gives to any collective action. We also see the beginning of the construction of a 'counter-
> power', because in many ways the popular assemblies are discussing organising society on the
> basis of a different model from the one that exists now and which is controlled by the ruling
> class (Luis Zamora, 2003).

> We are quiet at the moment, we could be sinking. Or we could be surfacing with new ideas, a
> new aesthetic, and we won't recognize ourselves any more - rather like what happened with the
> beards and long hair of Fidel Castro in Cuba. But what's going on here has less to do with Fidel
> than with the Zapatistas in Mexico - that's where the aesthetic of the unemployed movement
> comes from ... But if people come to us they have to understand, truly realise, what we're doing.
> I don't read very much. But we all think a lot about the Zapatistas in Mexico, we identify with
> them, even though they face a very different reality from ours. There's a common logic to the
> way capitalism dominates us all, through its hierarchies, 'verticalism' and the like. Breaking
> with that, creating 'horizontalism', is one of the most powerful weapons we have.[297]

> Horizontalism is a tool of counter-power - power is socialised, it is democratised, it is the power
> of all – but horizontalism is a tool of power when it is a response, when it the ends the search,
> when it shuts down all questions. Horizontalism is the norm of the multiplicity and the power of
> the people who are different, not of those who follow the conventional (Colectivo Situaciones,
> 2003: 11).

The autonomists' ideology also broadcast moral critiques of current capitalism

---

296 Interview: Diego (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 27 July 2004.
297 Interview: Tabaré (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón), 27 July 2004.

from an anti-authoritarian perspective, rejecting all forms of fixed leadership and state power.

As mentioned (Chapter III and VII), means were not subordinated to ends in the praxis of the MTD Solano, as the process was viewed as part of the creative act of change. Internally their group was based upon four guiding principles: horizontality, participation, direct democracy, and autonomy. These principles structured all their meetings, decision-making processes and collective activities. This understanding of direct democracy rejects the need for leaders, but not for group. Individuals, for example, who speak for the movement publicly, do not become fixed into their institutional position. This type of democratic organisation was practised as it sought to prevent a process of bureaucratisation, elitisation and concurrent disempowerment of the 'mass'. Their rejection of political instrumentalisation stemmed from their rejection of the formation of political parties, which, as argued above (see interviews), have historically become vehicles of self-interested elites seeking to manipulate their community in order to maintain its subordination and further the parties' interests and power. This, in turn, has implications for their relationship with the state. The MTD's immediate source of financial survival was based upon the unemployment subsidy received from the state. Nevertheless, their aim has not been inclusion into the state. They thus did not seek to form themselves into a political party competing for state power, or to become a new form of social movement constitutive of a 'deepened' democracy. They used a libertarian discourse and defended self-organisation, emphasising values of solidarity and neighbourhood community. Based on their own autonomist ideals, they presented the neighbourhood assemblies and the unemployed protests as examples of a new emancipatory self-organisation and construction of

'counter-cultural' collectives.

Thus, the unemployed neighbourhood assemblies are among those that have rejected, or at least have questioned, representative and capitalist democracy. Also, the above mentioned movements represent the emergence of embryonic mechanisms of direct or 'participactory' democracy, and even extend their demands towards a new integral vision of society, very close to the project of 'inclusive democracy'. All these movements, together with some small political and social organisations that promote the theory of participative democracy, base their work on criticising capitalist democracy and on practising radical forms of democracy. However, in all of these popular organisations, differences regarding the new type of democratic organisation exist. Direct democracy practices were important in almost all the neighbourhood assemblies from the beginning, but later the practice of direct democracy in some cases vanished, while many of these assemblies decreased in size and/or disappeared. Some orthodox left parties (organised on democratic centralist lines) have controlled a number of these assemblies and, as a consequence, direct democratic practices in them have weakened. In contrast, some groups advanced and deepened their vision of politics closer to the postulates of inclusive democracy, not only in terms of political, economic and social democracy, but also in terms of a new citizenship concept. As regards the movements of unemployed workers, it is possible to see important links to the project of participatory democracy in those MTD grouped under the Coordinadora Aníbal Verón. Despite the autonomy (they hold different conceptions of internal organisation) that characterises all of them, they focus their work on the practice of direct and participactory democracy in political, economic and social terms. This means that the 'community' notion (autonomy and democracy) has a crucial importance in these groups.

Limiting autonomous ideas with the unemployed assemblies

Despite the fact that sectors of the unemployed movement embraced autonomous thinking - involving a moral critique of capitalism, anti-bureaucratic perspectives and rejecting all forms of leadership and state power - they soon confronted serious internal problems, which combined with an ever-more complex national political situation that was shifting horizontal autonomous practices back to a top-to-bottom model. This concatenation of circumstances determined that, despite the upsurge of these experiments in grassroots independent control, the old political system was able to reestablish itself in quick measure during 'the first year of President Kirchner's regime, May 2003-April 2004' (Petras, 2005: 40; Rossi, 2005: 84). The bourgeoisie's recovery (centred on a modicum of economic restabilisation), weakened the autonomous assemblies and unemployed organisations, as well as diminished expectations for the continuation of unemployed collective action. Petras pinpointed a weakness of the movement as Argentina edged gingerly to 'normal capitalism':

> It is in a position to confront structural problems [poverty, unemployment, low salaries] and learn from its limitations – the absence of a mass-based national political party movement aiming at state power and the re-socialization of strategic sectors of the economy. Once again the mass movement will learn that none of the basic problems will be solved by an 'alliance' with the national bourgeoisie, even a benign Kirchner version (2005: 59).

The autonomist projects did not grasp fully that the ruling class would be able to take advantage of the limitations of an unemployed movement that took militant action, but lacked organisation, leadership and ideological coherence. The assemblies emerged when the collapse of government institutions turned disgust against politicians and the state into a radical mobilisation against the entire regime. The assemblies focused popular participation in the key moments of the uprising, but they subsequently declined when the ruling class regained the reigns of power. This development was facilitated by

a number of contradictions within the movement itself. First, it is wrong to suppose that members of the unemployed movement did not want to return to formal work or that they had constructed an identity opposed to that of workers. Such a belief contradicts the core of the demands and actions of the unemployed. They always demanded unemployment assistance and reinstatement in the formal labour market, where capitalist logic obviously operated. In their mobilisations they demanded genuine jobs and decent salaries. Second, the dire circumstances that fueled social and economic experiments, diminished under the impact of the economic recovery. Capitalism's competitive pressure especially affected the self-managed institutions. Some autonomists lost sight of the defensive character of these experiments, which emerged as a means of survival at the height of economic crisis. Because the principal objective of these initiatives was to preserve some source of income in the midst of economic catastrophe, they understandably began to decline when the depression receded. Third, the initiatives did not generate large-scale employment, nor provide income to the bulk of the population. Instead, it only developed community support. Given these contradictions, the autonomist projects seemed to only present a 'romantic vision' of the unemployed movement in Argentina (Katz, 2005).

In sum, despite the efforts which the autonomist projects made to promote the expansion of a 'counter-cultural movement' outside the boundaries of bourgeois institutions, they did not demonstrate evidence of the implementation of these ideas, nor did they take into account the obstacles that confronted their long-term viability. They disregarded the logic of capitalism. The aforementioned contraditions suggest why the autonomist projects and their assemblies fell apart or underwent a deep crisis. They also

account for a renewed advance of a once discredited Peronism under the governments

of Duhalde and Néstor Kirchner.

The unemployed movement and Peronism: FTV, Barrios de Pie

Peronism has been the most studied political phenomenon and socio-cultural ideology

in contemporary Argentine history. Since the 1960s, Peronism has been considered by

social and political scientists as the paradigm of populism, the emblematic product of

Argentine urban politics that originated in the 1940s.[298] Kirkpatrick, for example,

advances a commonplace set of arguments in this regard:

> Perhaps it was Perón who translated personal miseries, such as low wages, unemployment and
> the poor housing, into the problem of public policy for Argentina's *descamisados* [poor people]
> and in this fashion simultaneously created and politicized them. There was also near-universal
> consensus in Argentina that it is the business of government to solve these economic problems
> ... Peronists were not only uniquely sensitive to the hardships of low-class Argentines were
> convinced that this hardship resulted from inequality (1971: 199-203).

In the following decades, nothing escaped the influence of Peronism. Every

political institution has been imbued with Peronist notions of 'social justice'. Kaufman

points out:

> Up until 1976 the utopia, which is to return to Europe, or create Europe here, was to be achieved
> through a growing process of social integration. Yrigoyenism [Radicalism], Peronism, the sixties
> revolutionary movement, all in their different ways propose a logic of recognition, which is what
> defines a real institution. When this was all smashed no cultural or social initiatives, not even the

---

[298] Populism is a 'political philosophy' or 'rhetorical style' that holds that the common person's
interests are oppressed or hindered by the elite in society, and that the instruments of the state
need to be grasped from this self-serving elite and used for the benefit and advancement of the
people as a whole (on-line encyclopedia, Wikipedia, defines the term of 'populism' in
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Populism). More broadly in Latin American regional contexts,
'populism has generally been urban in focus, opposed to the status quo where it has rested upon
open export-oriented economies, generally oriented towards accelerated industrial development,
and therefore likely to construct alliances linking an emerging working class to an industrial
bourgeoisie. These groups are likely to be tied to and linked through the state, and attempts are
likely to be made to minimize inter-class antagonisms through the propagation of a broadly
nationalist ideology' (Archetti et al., 1987: 117).

relative affluence of the middle classes, established such logics. The other was now both above, to the side and below. This means that in Argentina it is very easy for there is a war of the poor against the poor, for the social tie to become unraveled. And this is why those historical processes that have tried to create something else have failed or been destroyed. And it was especially serious that for decades a large part of the middle class including progressive intellectuals and the left did not acknowledge that Peronism was the practical conditions of the real experience of social justice. The renewed currency of the term 'gorilla' indicated just how difficult this society finds it to come to terms with its history (in the interview with Moreno, 2002: 137).

Peronism and Radicalism, whose heirs have for decades stood in strong opposition to each other, in fact shared more in common than either dared admit, particularly a common culture of Argentine ideological conflict. In addition, Peronism created the new nationalist direction for Argentina. Under Peronism the country would supposedly be neither capitalist, nor communist, but would pursue the 'third way' of nationalism. Through this national project, the government and party became deeply embedded into all areas of Argentina's economy, controlling industry, unions and regulatory bodies. The system was glued together by patron-client relationships on a massive scale, allowing any promise to be fulfilled in order to maintain public support. In this process, the government guaranteed high wages, free health care and university education, while protecting uncompetitive industries by banning foreign competition. Workers were guaranteed jobs for life and the trade unions kept quiet as long as their pockets were full.

With the iconic figure of Perón's wife, 'Evita' doling out gifts to the poor, Peronism became a populist force that survived beyond the death of Evita and the exile of Perón at the hands of a military coup in the early of 1970s. Even after the exile of Perón in 1955, searching for details of Peronism, its ideological origins and historical survival, became a fascination for intellectuals interested in the recent history of

Argentina.[299] Moreover, the more Perón and Eva became icons in the media and

popular culture in Argentina, the more Peronism posed a puzzling ideology for

Argentine intellectuals.[300] Di Tella notes:

> What is puzzling is that non-democratic practices are usually implemented by minority parties which cannot win in any other way; the Peronists were able to win elections by substantial margins but also thought it necessary to take coercive measures quite unnecessary for electoral success (1983: 18).

However, without solving the 'puzzle', Peronism through Peronist regimes had

redefined Argentines' political identities in such a way that (at least until the early

1980s) most political allegiances were articulated around 'the dichotomy of

---

299 For example, Roxborough argues that: 'there is little doubt that Peronism meets the minimal definition of populism. That is, the support for populist leaders was not a multi-class alliance, with independent trade unions lending the support of an autonomously organized working-class to a Bonapartist figure, but rather an amorphous mass movement or coalition with direct ties between individuals and the charismatic leader' (1987: 121). Stein argues that: 'urban-based populist movements were a conspicuous feature of Latin American political life between the 1930s and the 1960s ... in the case of Peronism, it constituted a political response to the severe structural crisis that accompanied Argentine transition from a series of agriculturally centered export society in the nineteenth century, to the rapidly urbanizing, massifying society of the twentieth century. That crisis contributed to the political bankruptcy of a traditional elite political system which seemed incapable of neutralizing large concentrations of working-class people that had emerged in a modernizing and increasingly complex nation. In bridging the gap between orderly oligarchy and mass society, populist movements have contributed the principal political form of social control in modern Argentina' (1987: 127). Employing more ideological arguments, Laclau argues that Peronism originated in the dynamic relationship between the decline of oligarchic hegemony and the emergence of new contradictions in the power bloc: (i) the power bloc experienced a deep crisis: the world depression led to a process of ISI that created new antagonisms between nascent industrial sectors and the land-owning oligarchy; (ii) through the scission between liberal demands of the oligarchy and the democratic demands of the masses; (iii) the demand for an industrialist reorientation of the economy based on nationalism against British imperialism; and (iv) originated from working-class ideologies: internal immigrations had incorporated into industrial activity a new proletariat from the interior of the country, 'whose ideology was not based on the class reductionism of the old proletariat of European origin, but on a particular type of discourse in which popular-democratic interpellations were central' (1987: 141).

300 Since the time of Eva Perón, female political activities have been characterised as 'social work' in Peronist discourse. Evita, the indisputable model for Peronist women, always insisted that through the social programmes established by the Fundación Eva Perón, the Escuela de Enfermeras, and similar institutions, she was not 'doing politics', but administering social justice. In fact, there are many other ways in which a Peronist woman can engage in political activity and many other 'images of Evita' that could be appropriated, as the 'montoneras' (Peronist guerrillas) of the 1970s and many others have shown: 'Evita's myth is multifaceted and admits many, sometimes contradictory, readings' (Plotkin, 2003: 495).

Peronism/anti-Peronism' (Ostiguy, 1997).[301] Furthermore, despite the prediction of

nearly all anti-Peronists (ranging from conservatives to communists), the organised

urban working class and traditional trade unions continued to be loyal to Perón after his

death (James, 1988: 38). For the anti-Peronist progressive intellectual middle class,

Peronism went against the grain of the 'natural historical line of development' of the

country; it was perceived as a pathology. It is not by chance, thus, that until the 1970s,

most studies on Peronism concentrated on the origins of the movement and on the role

of the working class, seeking to solve the 'enigmas of Perón and of Argentina' (Plotkin,

2003: 494). As time went by and as the first government of Perón receded into the past -

the memory of it mediated by the second and traumatic Peronist experience of the early

1970s, which ended with the military coup of 1976 - scholars started approaching

Peronism with a fresh set of questions, not necessarily linked to the previous passion for

explaining 'how' and 'why' it had been possible.

The principal question evolved into 'what it meant to be a Peronist in the 1990s',

when the Peronist government of Carlos Menem literally 'declared war on the poor' and

undid most of the reforms that Perón had introduced in the 1940s and 1950s. Although

Peronism continues to be the main political force in places, it has nonetheless lost some

of its past relevance.[302] If between the 1950s and the 1970s, union resistance was the

---

301 Ostiguy argues that: 'Argentine politics since the 1940s is best interpreted in terms of a double political spectrum within a related two-dimensional political space of appeals. Political figures and voters are separated, in terms of hailing and mode of recognition (respectively) in the political arena, first by a social-cultural distinction between the culturally-popular and the 'bien educados'. Or in other evocative words, between the social-culturally 'raw' and the 'cooked'. The peculiarity of Argentine politics is that these social-cultural differences, which are undoubtedly present in many societies, have become politicized, as markers of political identities. That is, these social-cultural differences have entered the political realm as a mode of political differentiation, and/or self-expression ... They are reflected in Argentina in political parties and political identification, and they best distinguish (the various parties of) anti-Peronism from (the politically different tendencies within) Peronism, more than any orientation on a Left-to-Right spectrum' (1997: 1-2).
302 Even if the features of Peronism have been interpreted through employing various terms

267

main element of the Peronist opposition culture identity, Auyero claims that by the 1990s, its 'problem-solving' network was the most important element that kept alive a strong Peronist identity among the poor. But is this very different from the original Peronism of the 1940s? According to Auyero, while the 'original' Peronism was a heresy (against, among other things, traditional forms of political clientelism practiced by the conservative governments that preceded it), today's Peronism is an orthodoxy that provides justification and legitimacy to these clientelistic practices. For instance, throughout the ten years of its existence as a social movement (1996-2005), Peronism did become an 'orthodox ideology' to the unemployed movement. It created an ideology and imagery that were strongly associated with the delivery of 'social justice' to those who are the new poor and unemployed:

> Perón's most remarkable achievement was a social revolution. The poor, the workers and the dispossessed were given their own voice and a new sense of their relevance: the workers, women, children, the poor were now addressed as the central concern of Perón and Evita. She was instrumental in transforming the sense of identity of the workers and the poor, and in doing so she helped them gain a sense of their own 'dignity', as she frequently repeated. Both Perón and Evita were extraordinary skillful 'storytellers', and in the tradition of the best storytellers, they became the heroes of the story they were telling (Szusterman, 2000: 199)

Without doubt, scholars' interest has shifted from the origins of Peronism to different aspects of how the Peronist movement actually worked in terms of informal organisation networks which 'remained a loose and heterogeneous collection of weak

---

such as its (neo) populism, pragmatism, and dependance on strong leaders, it has remained constant. After the expulsion of De la Rúa by the revolt of December 2001, the PJ, Peronism's official party structure, was almost unanimously supported by the political establishment as the most secure means to reestablish institutional continuity. Peronist senator Eduardo Duhalde was appointed provisional president in January 2002 after three members of his party failed to form a sustainable government. During the 1990s, when he was the governor of Buenos Aires, Duhalde consolidated a powerful network of support in that province, whose visible side included the exchange of votes for assistance and political favours. Journalistic investigations have revealed that the network also includes connections with organised crime and the provincial police of Buenos Aires. Duhalde openly put this political machine (or what was left of it after the downfall of representative politics) to work for Néstor Kirchner's electoral campaign.

national factions, rump paramilitary organisations, labour organisations and emerging provincial fiefdoms' (Levitsky 2001: 33).[303] Levitsky further notes:

> The Argentine PJ and party reformers dismantled Peronism's traditional mechanisms of labor participation and clientelist networks, replaced unions as the primary linkage to the working and lower classes. By the early 1990s, the PJ had transformed from a labor-dominated party into a machine party in which unions were relatively marginal actors. This process of de-unionization was critical to the PJ's electoral and policy success during the presidency of Carlos Menem (1989-99). The erosion of union influence facilitated efforts to attract middle-class votes and eliminated a key source of internal opposition to the government's economic reforms. At the same time, the consolidation of clientelist networks helped the PJ maintain its traditional working- and lower-class base in a context of economic crisis and neoliberal reform. Peronism's radical de-unionization was facilitated by the weakly institutionalized nature of its traditional party-union linkage. Although unions dominated the PJ in the early 1980s, the rules of the game governing their participation were always informal, fluid, and contested, leaving them vulnerable to internal changes in the distribution of power (2003: 3, 11).

Since the early 1980s, therefore, new work using innovative methodologies have appeared that analyse such topics as the relationship between informal sectors and those categorised as the 'new urban poor', with a 'transformed' Peronism which goes beyond the old relationship between political party and trade unions. Gilly, for example, predicts the emergence of a new 'radical populism'centred on the 'new urban poor':

> [With] a new mix of disposed, displaced and informal-sector workers ... this is a population forced to adapt to the new reality of unemployment, vulnerability, precariousness and hunger ... However, the subordinated are no longer caught off-guard by the neo-liberal assault, and their fight now focuses on mending or restoring the protective networks woven in difficult struggles that were so quickly destroyed. Although an idealized longing for the past remains alive, many

---

303 McGuire's study is useful to understand this flexible relationship which can easily absorb another sectors, on which Peronism or the PJ are weakly institutionalised collective identity or political party based. He argues that: 'Peronism is strong as a collective identity, but weakly institutionalized as a political party ... Peronist leaders (Juan Perón and Carlos Menem) have never moved far toward infusing their party organization with value. Those who spoke for the Peronist movement, beginning with Juan Perón himself during his 1945-55 presidency, have repeatedly insisted that Peronism is a national movement committed to real democracy, not a political party preoccupied with formal democracy. [Thus], the basic goal of the movement is to put into power a Peronist who will enact policies pursuant to social justice, economic independence, and national sovereignty' (1997: 1).

are looking for something else: new rights, guarantees and protections, and new liberties. This intersection is far from having left the stage of politics ... it is in this interregnum that what I call 'unidentified political objects and subjects' appear, or in the words of the 'general/sociologist', the 'emerging threat of radical populism'. But the threat he sees materializing from the leaders is really the uprising of the subordinated. With their own style of organizing and engaging in politics, with their own imaginations and subjectivities, with their demands (2005: 40).

Observers (Auyero, 2001, Pozzi, 2000, Ransom, 2003) have also noted these Peronist informal organisation networks sustained by social assistance payments developed in the shantytowns, to explore the changing nature of traditional political practices, particularly the idea of clientelism.[304] The studies were carried out in the mid-1990s, when Eduardo Duhalde (as of March 2002, Argentine president) was governor of the province of Buenos Aires:

> At this time Duhalde was also tearing his own Peronist apparatus apart from the unions through 'a neighbourhood provincial network structured around the *manzaneras* (women block leaders). These women served as a conduit for government aid and as connection for political favours ... they served as an element of neighbourhood control and political mobilisation (Pozzi, 2000: 79).

One sees an important dimension of the Peronist management of society. Perón's government had long ago established grassroots surveillance by a system of '*manzaneros*', literally a blockwatch network of Peronist ward heelers who dispensed favors and fingered troublemakers. After 2001, once more, under the pressure of the movement that had begun, the government developed a 'plan social' or welfare system. The 'plan social' compels the unemployed to do menial work in exchange for this pittance. They give a grassroots footing to the Peronist state by the disbursement of money and jobs, essentially updating the old clientelistic system. The piquetero bureaucracy grew directly out of this arrangement. They are today state civil servants, often people who had nothing to do with the piquetero movement in its heyday (Ransom, 2003).[305]

Auyero has also recognised that food and favours go in one direction, from the

---

304 According to Calvo and Murillo: 'clientelism is a strategy, minimizing redistribution to the middle classes and subsidizing low-income voters, or labor parties, benefiting their constituencies for both electoral and ideological reasons. The PRI in Mexico and the Peronist in Argentina followed similar strategies to cement their electoral coalitions, while also using public good redistribution through the most extensive expansion of social policy in their respective countries' (2004: 749).
305 See, http://www.newint.org/issue356/iam.htm

top down, while votes go in the opposite direction, from the bottom up.[306] Even so, as

Auyero convincingly shows, the reality of clientelistic relationships in an impoverished

urban setting is much more complex than a mere exchange of votes for favours.

However, participation by the urban poor in political rallies dramatises 'the already

existing informal networks and shared cultural representations' (2001: 13).[307] It is

precisely the analysis of such multidimensional networks and representations that

constitutes the kernel of 'the poor and unemployed people's politics'. Prominent

brokers have their own circle of collaborators and sub-brokers. Brokers are in control of

a complex system of delivering information, goods and favours - what Auyero calls the

'Peronist problem-solving network'. Although there are other such networks (most

notably, the one established by the Catholic Church or NGO groups), the Peronist

system has grown and acquired extra importance in the past decade. By using this

problem-solving network, unemployed poor people have participated in and reproduced

a powerful system of political domination.[308] What is clear, as many observers

---

306 Calvo and Murillo studied this relationship statistically on the basis of focusing on the political parties' (PJ and UCR) access to resource (supply side) and voters' dependence on fiscal largesse (demand side) as a function of their different access and use of patronage. They argue: 'this country has experienced a competitive democratic process since 1983 that has included two partisan alternations on presidential power and presents considerable competition at the sub-national level, where half of public expenditures are concentrated' (2004: 744).

307 Adopting more institutional approach, Rodger argues that: 'since December 2001, the most instances of the unemployed movement have become institutionalised as a new form of political clientelism. This suggests that none constituted a sustainable mode of alternative political participation. At one level this is easily explained: politics, at its most basic, is about resource distribution decisions, and none of the above practices controlled anything significant in the way of resources or access to resources. They furthermore all positioned themselves in opposition to an Argentinean state that they decried as weak or irrelevant, but which in actual fact following the crisis rapidly embarked on a wide-ranging programme of social assistance in order to mitigate its effects and to shore up its dominant position within the institutional fabric of Argentinean society' (Rodger, 2005: 2).

308 The Peronist political structure operating at the provincial, municipal and local levels, fills in part the void left by the state and by the disappearance of existing networks of solidarity. Most social programmes are managed by local caudillos, who have access to resources made available by social programmes funded by the provincial government. However, these resources are also used for political and propagandistic purposes. As Auyero points out, the confusion between political propaganda and social programme is evident: 'Everything can be done for the happiness of a child: stamping your face on the balloons with which they play, diverting

convincingly demonstrate, is the impact of these problem-solving structures established in the unemployed movement (e.g. the FTV). It is interpreted by leaders and clients alike through the lens of the 'memory' of Peronism. They demonstrate the importance that impoverished urban spaces have for the survival and transformation of Peronism in more recent times.

As in all other UMOs, the FTV groups had members with different levels of political sophistication. Many members expect problems to be solved for them in line with the Peronist tradition of hierarchical organising and clientelism. In other words, the resurgence of Peronism heralded a new 'settlement' with the FTV movement, which helps explain some of the peculiarities of the present-day struggles. However, this sub-cultural identity with Peronism had nothing to do with the 'old' Peronist identity based on social integration. On the contrary, new linkages relied on shared memories of certain aspects of previous, better times under the governments of Perón and Evita.[309] These new linkages are revealed through interviews with leaders and members of the pro-Peronist (government) unemployed movement groups:

> I think all of us in the world who fight for peace, have to work together in order to change the power. Because as power is conceived today it grabs, traps and destroyed. Evita said, 'I don't search for power, I search for justice'. To search for justice is to transform power.[310]

> In the FTV, the lower-middle class shows a strong Peronist identity. This identity was not questioned a few years ago, but now it has an instrumental role to represent this lower-middle sector. In the unemployed movement, there are many historical memories. I think that the day of

---

resources from state funded programs, mixing party politics with official responsibilities' (2001: 82). Such an attitude characterised the Peronist party from its very beginnings in the 1940s.

309 Various UMOs protested on 26 July 2004. A few UMO groups who supported President Kirchner held a march to commemorate the 52nd anniversary of the death of Eva Perón. The Movimiento Barrios de Pie, the Federación de Tierra y Vivienda (FTV), the Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados Evita, and other groups marched from meeting points at Benito Pérez Galdós and Almirante Brown to the amphitheatre at Lezama Park, where they held a ceremony.

310 Interview: Carrió (a member of FTV), 26 July 2004.

17 October 1945 was a moment when these sectors were amplified. Above all, the humble or poor people incorporated into income distribution, social justice and political sovereignty with the process of strong economic autonomy. Eva Perón represented the symbol of this memory (Almeyra, 2004: 150; My translation).[311]

In Argentina there are two main Peronist union umbrella organisations (the CGT and CGT-d). They are bureaucratic organisations, true to the state and run by corrupt officials. The third umbrella organisation, the CTA, was formed as an alternative ten years ago and has its main strongholds in the public sector. Its formation process was accompanied by combative rhetoric, but nowadays it hardly differs from the other two. The unemployed workers only ever call the unions 'union bureaucracies' or shorter 'the bureaucracy'.[312]

The above interviews contribute to understanding of the legitimacy of current Peronist practices within the unemployed movement (Delamata, 2004: 7). The specific features of Peronist insertion inside the unemployed movement has been one of the central political dynamics in contemporary Argentina. Also, it is important not to be blind to the particularities of current 'progressive Peronism': Kirchner's cooptation of the unemployed movement has worked spectacularly effectively in the outskirts of Buenos Aires, in what used to be 'the industrial belt', but is now the home of perpetually high unemployment rates. An important group of the unemployed movement (the FTV) decided to back the present government and was happy to receive much more financial support than other unemployed organisations on condition that the streets were quieter. Today, the relatively 'progressive' Peronist regime headed by Kirchner is enacting what some define as a mixture of an attenuated version of neo-liberal economics with traditional Peronism: price control, cooptation via social initiatives administrated by the state (many social programmes created by the UMOs are

311 Interview: Luis D'Elia (a leader of FTV), 18 November 2003.
312 Interview: Mario (a member of BNP), 26 July 2004.

now funded and controlled by the government), coupled with repression against those who refuse to accept this state of affairs.

At the same time, Peronism lies at the heart of the socio-cultural problems that have decimated the nation. Despite possessing abundant natural resources and an educated population, Argentina fell from crisis to crisis, hobbled by the political corruption that Peronism encouraged:

> Today's rulers have certainly been chastened by popular revolt, but their hold on power is locked tight. The strange dreams that sprouted in such tropical abundance when De la Rúa was airlifted out of the Casa Rosada [government house] wilted long ago ... several reasons account for this inertia. Divisions between the discontented factions of society have certainly sapped the movement's initial vigour, particularly so now that the economy is functioning again and the government can claim to have outwitted the IMF. Yet none of this would have been possible - nor would Argentina's democracy, pallid as it may be, have even survived - without the influences exerted on public and politicians alike by one force: Peronism. Its ideology is a matter for scholastic dispute, but the source of the Peronist mystique (mística) remains intact: Juan Domingo Perón and his doomed wife Evita took the gold bullion from wartime trading, and gave it to the grateful masses. Even today, the 35% of the labour market with formal employment still enjoy the perks of the duo's legislation: twice-yearly bonuses, ample severance pay, ever-ascending holiday entitlements (Briscoe, 2003).[313]

> There is a 'systematic populism' today. This constitutes a precondition for access to these subsidies: cooperation with the administration's anti-inflationary policy through 'voluntary' price controls. Massive poverty as never before seen in Argentina is strengthening classical populism. The relatively new picketing organizations of the unemployed, which were instrumental to the downfall of presidents De la Rúa and Rodríguez Saa, must be kept satisfied. They are a constant reminder that Argentina is close to the failed state syndrome. Controlling them requires a little money, although much less than is usually spent for right-wing populism, but a great deal of tolerance for their frequent law-breaking, which results in double-standards in law enforcement. Piquetero leaders who destroyed a police station (and more), were not only not arrested, they were even allowed to become lawmakers and government officials. In this way, the institutional order has further eroded (Escudé, 2006: 143).

---

313 See, http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/articleId=1167

The Peronist Party connection is particularly important given that numerous movement groups have recently acquired a hierarchical structure, where benefits are shared from the top down and in many cases the heads of the movements serve as intermediaries for the distribution of government welfare subsidies.

Over a decade, therefore, the Peronist informal network has progressively 'captured' the unemployed movement in its web. Eduardo Duhalde (2002-2003) tackled the opposition of the unemployed in true Peronist fashion. The money would not go directly to individuals, but would be handed to the UMOs' leaders and distributed as they saw fit.[314] On this development Ransom argues:

> How do these people survive? It's impossible to say. There is a government programme, the *copa de leche* [a cup of milk], which distributes milk to children. Schools still function without fees, though children who lack shoes or food do not always attend. There are 'plans' funded by the World Bank. The *'Jefes y Jefas de Hogar'* ['Heads of Household'] programme is supposed to provide about $50 a month to every unemployed family - roughly half of what is needed to stay alive. But the distribution of even this money is venal and, as elections approach, constantly preyed upon by the Peronist party machine and its dreaded *'punteros politicos'* ['political point-men' or 'officials'] (2003).[315]

What has emerged is a system that only strengthens the power of the UMOs, while doing nothing to alleviate their members' unemployment situation. Heads of unemployed households are told to attend protests and roadblocks. In doing so, they accumulate points within the unemployed movement, based on attendance and the number of family members they bring to protests. The UMOs' leaders then pay out the cash along these lines, rewarding the most loyal and active protestors, while

---

314 According to NCI, 'the confrontation that took place on the day that Duhalde became president, was between factions of the bourgeois state apparatus, on the one hand Peronism, and on the other hand, the leftist MST (Movimiento Socialista de los Trabajadores; Socialist Movement of the workers), PCA (Partido Comunista de la Argentina; Communist Party of the Argentina) and other less important Trotskyist and Guevarist groups. The working class was absent that day' (2004: 4).
315 See, http://www.newint.org/issue356/iam.htm

discouraging those who stay at home or are out looking for work. Through this mechanism, Argentina's unemployed movement became the latest 'symbol of Peronist corruption':

> There is a dark underside to [Peronism's] social embeddedness. Because urban slum zones are frequently centers of illicit activity such as drug-trafficking, prostitution, and gambling, Peronist networks are inevitably linked to these forms of organisation as well. Although verifiable data on illicit Peronist activity is difficult to obtain, it is widely believed that Peronist factions in La Matanza are linked to drug running, gambling, prostitution, and extortion networks. For example, networks of temporary workers in La Matanza's Central Market, which are regularly mobilised by Peronist factions to paint graffiti and attend PJ mobilisations, are also rumored to be involved in drug trafficking and thug work, including the beating of a journalist who was writing a book on (former) Buenos Aires Governor Eduardo Duhalde (Levitsky, 2001: 41).

Political entrepreneurs such as Luis D'Elia and Juan Carlos Alderete were smart to seize this large demand by figuring out that access to workfare was a matter of political strength, not of fulfilling formal requirements. They began organizing streets blockades in 1997 demanding access to workfare benefits presenting themselves as organizations of unemployed workers, even if their organizations were not formally registered as NGOs ... several groups who were given lower priority, or even not allowed to participate in workfare according to the eligibility requirement, such as *cuentapropistas* (low income but self-employed), poor women (usually not head of household), or ex-workfare participants, plus all the eligible applicants who could not access benefits (Franceschelli and Ronconi, 2005: 13).

The current Peronist President Kirchner has contingent plans to attack underemployment through ending with 'piqueteroism'. The monthly unemployment plans have been forever used as a way for the state to keep unemployed worker organisations in check and distinguish between the good *piqueteros* willing to negotiate and the hardliners who continue to block roads and demand structural changes ... disarticulate *piqueteros* is to benefit certain friendly organisations with subsides and to isolate ideological *piqueteros*. Those ideological *piqueteros* are those who go out and demand more than minimal subsidies, such as genuine work, against free trade, tansnational corporations' accountability and an end to poverty.[316]

---

[316] Interview: Dalmas (a leader of MUP 20), 14 July 2004, on a national day of the unemployed protest.

It is clear that the unemployed organisations are not all what they appear to be, unemployed workers fighting for social justice. Particularly the Peronist Party, now in power, has used the job subsidies to try to divide [the UMOs], handing out job application forms via their barrio ward bosses and organising thugs to disrupt local meetings. In addition, local Peronist bosses have hired the unemployed to assault and intimate assemblies in popular *barrios*, though they seldom attempt to threaten [the UMOs].[317]

In sum, no Argentine leader has ever been more personalistic than Perón who subordinated both institutions and the party to himself. Perón came to power on the basis of charismatic leadership and his relatively informal, paternalistic relations with Argentina's working class. Under his direction, Peronism never fully evolved from a social movement to an 'organic' political party, in large part because Perón himself eschewed parties. Within Peronism, he maneuvered to perpetuate his preeminence by supporting second and third tier leaders against each other, switching sides whenever one group seemed to gain in power, and opposing any single individual who appeared to rise within the movement (Mcquire, 1997). Within society at large, Perón relied on his charisma and that of his wife, Eva, to produce clientelistic ties with the working class and to eclipse institutionalised process and policy with personality.

But Perón and his movement shared other cultural expectations about the use of power with leaders who preceded him. These included disrespect for democratic institutions, contemptuous and repressive treatment of the opposition, efforts to curtail critical thinking and higher learning, and violence against opponents. In power, Peronism denigrated the Congress and opposition leaders, treating them as unworthy of respect. Peronist legislators worshiped Perón and turned the legislature into a rubber stamp and official forum of homage to their leader. The nondemocratic tendencies of Peronism were remarkable since the movement had a vast electoral majority sustained

---

317 Interview: Mirta (an independent journalist), 26 August 2004.

through patron-client relations (mutual benefits). This relationship has recently reappeared vis-à-vis the unemployed movement and been capable of intimidating rivals within the UMOs or outside of Peronist networking and providing support when needed. Essentially paid by the government to movements, they are often seen at rallies beside the Peronist faithful, recently cheering on President Néstor Kirchner. The unemployed movement and its leaders can deliver blocks of votes during elections. This was seen as a key factor in the Peronist victory during last year's provincial and general elections in Buenos Aires.[318]

Conclusion

This chapter argued that the socio-cultural dimension of the unemployed movement, its symbols and ideologies, proved to be important factors enhancing mobilisation. This has also been observed by activists. Neumann, for example, concludes:

> I see two parts of cultural resistance of the unemployed movement. The first is to bring culture into the streets, into our movements communicating not just to people heads, but to their guts and their heart. The other is to bring of creativity and innovation into our organizing. The point is not just to expand the set recipe for resistance with puppets or street parties, or whatever, but to constantly think about how else could we articulate our values and ideas. Many of us call this principle 'laboratory of resistance', the idea bring to experiment and evaluate (2004: 4).

A number of political subcultures such as Marxism, Peronism, autonomism and anarchism could be discerned within the movement at the grassroots and impacted on its mobilisations, with traditional working class 'labourist' ideology and Peronism, given their deep historical roots, understandably being particularly influential. All of these

---

318 Many other observers have agreed on the extent to which Peronism absorbed cultural patterns ingrained in Argentine politics long before Perón's arrival and quite apart from the popular support his government had. Contemporary scholarship, for example, has begun to draw parallels between the personalised style of Menem, Duhalde and Kirchner and that of Perón.

contributed in their own way to fostering the formation of the unemployed movement. Struggling to cope with neo-liberal restructuring during the 1990s and economic collapse in 2001, initially the movement preoccupied itself with meeting its member material basic needs, demanding that the state deliver on what it had promised. However, activists soon realised that the problem of unemployment was endemic to the capitalist structure, became radicalised, and allied themselves with groups possessing a history of resistance, such as the socialist or communist parties. This led to a more critical stance towards state handouts and a rejection of government attempts at cooptation. Grassroots unemployed worker's groups, such as the MTD Aníbal Verón, consequently took up a position that emphasised autonomy, along with a stress on participation and the importance of horizontal organisation within the movement. Developing a strong anti-neoliberal and anti-capitalist critique, the MTD Aníbal Verón and similar organisations rejected all forms of hierarchical 'party' or bureaucratic trade union structures and adopted a critical awareness of the limitations and danger of state handouts. Instead, they focused on productive activity, as far as was realistically possible, outside of the 'normal' dictates of supply and demand.

However, these and similar grassroots initiatives had their limitations. Of crucial importance was the difficulty they experienced in mounting a united political movement. As several observers pointed out, historically it has proved difficult for the unemployed to accept their differences and work together to build a powerful movement; it is an obstacle that they have yet to surmount. The years spent under the dictatorship led to a certain degree of social atomisation and it has taken years to overcome fear and build up a level of social confidence and trust to a level to get peace back on the street again and fight for social justice. Another related problem was that historically, particularly in the

early- to mid-1970s, civil society organisations and movements were extremely hierarchical and often separated themselves from the people. The movements that are now prevalent have reacted quite strongly against this culture of hierarchy and tend to avoid anything that resembles 'structure', as is evident by the autonomous movements and their horizontal organisation. This brought advantages and disadvantages. Increasingly, however, some groups have begun to realise that it was not possible to build a political front while avoiding any sort of structure, and so have begun to modify their stance on this key issue.

Any analysis of whether a vibrant and truly democratic political movement is feasible in contemporary Argentina must take into account how deeply-rooted Peronism is in Argentine political culture. Its history and co-optive capacity are obviously crucial factors that impinge on the activity of grassroots social movements. Not surprisingly, it managed to co-opt a few groups within the unemployed movement (i.e. the FTV), who soon fell into a traditionally framed political culture and praxis. The current situation involving the unemployed movement is thus undoubtly complex. Certain groups have literally become arms of the state, while there were also movements like MTD Aníbal Verón's, which remain truly autonomous. Such divisions have often been used by the government to set various sectors of the unemployed workers' movement against one another. Thus, it is still an open question whether this inspiring unemployed and popular movement can successfully transform the politics of the future. What has been evident, nevertheless, is that Argentines have been increasingly taking democratic struggles into their own hands. In this regard, the autonomous movement in Argentina represents a testimony to the power of collective action to work together for social change.

VIII

CONCLUSIONS

During the past decade, Argentina has passed through the worst crisis in living memory. All aspects of social, economic, political and cultural life were affected profoundly, with the middle and poorer sectors of the population experiencing a huge setback in terms of jobs, income and life prospects. Blame for the collapse has focused on the long-term historical development problems of the country, as well as its tradition of political schism and authoritarianism. These combined with conjunctural factors (awful policy decision-making, the structural adjustment programmes imposed by the IMF to produce an economic meltdown that a bankrupt and corrupt political class proved unable to prevent. External events (e.g. the Asia crisis of 1997-98, Brazil's devaluation in 1999), only acted to worsen the situation.

To this backdrop, the grassroots unemployed movement emerged as a popular response to economic mismanagement and political failure. It produced a new intense level of popular protest, to a degree that it could transform itself into a national political force capable of challenging the current limitations of Argentine democracy and the prevailing economic direction of society. Among the pressing questions confronting the movement are: to what extent does the 'collective identity' of the unemployed movement reflect the current state of Argentine democracy? When campaigning in favour of a qualitively different, more inclusive and 'just' democratic society, do they uphold an idealised vision of democracy? To what extent should they bargain their 'autonomy' for political 'power'?[319]

---

319 Zibechi has raised these issues in the following terms: 'social movements faced an array of new dilemmas and questions in Latin America. For example, how should they relate to political forces with which they share common features? How to go from mobilization to some form of action not based on confrontation? Should they participate in government or remain in the

This concluding chapter aims to evaluate the accomplishments of this grassroots unemployed movement and the implications of the movements' development of a more critical collective identity for the 'consolidation' of Argentine democracy.[320] What is the historical significance of this socio-political phenomenon given 'a poverty of democracy' and the creation of 'an unemployed democracy' post-Menem (1996-2005)? What are the implications of this unemployed movement for the development of Argentine democracy?

Grassroots social movements and democracy

Often it is the powerless who demand democracy, those who own neither land nor large companies, those who possess less education, receive lower pay and thus exercise less influence over social change. Democracy offers the potential for those of slender means to gain more power. By taxing capital and thus awarding themselves a little of its power, by battling for laws and rules that limit private companies' freedom of action to exploit

---

opposition? How to continue building their own movements when the government seeks to divide and co-opt their most capable leaders?' There are no easy answers to these questions. However, he notes that: 'possibly one of the most noticeable things is the growing self-esteem of the movements, which now feel capable of drawing their own courses and establishing their own programs without waiting for political parties to take on work that only organized civil society can carry out. In this way, Latin American social movements are preparing more extensive and substantial offensives that can once again modify the regional scenario in the coming years'. See http://www.americanspolicy.org (2005).

320 Theories on democratic transition and its consolidation in Latin America tend to examine the political dynamics of 'elite actors' and 'institutionalisation' during the transition process (Powers, 2001: 4). The focus on elites and institutions complements a preoccupation with the procedural aspects of democracy generally employed in these works. Thus, democracies are understood as legally instituted processes which protect citizenship. In this context, scholars suggest there are still many key problems to democracy in the region, mainly focused on macro-level analyses such as: (i) the centralisation of power: democracy is threatened when power is centralised in the executive branch of government. The subordination of congress and the courts creates opportunities for the executive to act illegally with impunity; (ii) resurgent militaries: the quality of democracy is also threatened when the military refuses to accept its role as 'obedient and non-deliberative'; (iii) the lack of judicial independence and rule of law: Judicial subordination turns judges into pawns in a political chessboard, and is often motivated by the need to provide impunity for an illegal executive and an abusive military. The lack of judicial independence leads to repeated curtailments of fundamental rights; and (iv) weak political parties and representative institutions.

people and nature, more people have gained power.

Furthermore, the 'political development toward democracy' has generated arguments about how to consolidate democracy while widening participation: the power of the few is based on the majority not taking decisions, at least not ones affecting the economy, and thus people are not given the opportunity to change relations of ownership. Contemporary social movements and collective actors have realised that the participation force of a democratisation process would (and should) move social change forward. On this issue Giugni notes:

> Even assuming that social movements always go in the direction of a democratization of society, their impact in the regard depends very much on how we define democracy, for example, whether we adopt a legalistic or a participatory definition of democracy, following the American or the French tradition, respectively. If on the one hand, we conceive of democracy as a set of formal norms and rules that grant the aggregation of individual interests, then the democratizing role of social movements will consist of an enlargement of formal rights and freedoms ... if on the other hand, we follow the tradition started by Jacques Rousseau, and accordingly, think of democracy not as formal rules but, rather, as the actual participation of citizens in the public sphere, then social movements will have a democratizing impact simply by 'showing up' in the public space (1999: xxx-xxxi).

This was what the working class movement achieved through successive stages of struggle. Armed with 'class consciousness' (discussed in Chapter II), they first participated in a labour movement, later demanding democracy and redistribution. With more democracy one can increase redistribution, with increased redistribution one can demand more democracy. The two processes interlocked, eventually leading to the welfare state and universal adult suffrage characteristic of 'late' capitalism.

Historically, different types of participatory democracy have also arisen at moments that came to be called 'revolutionary situations' or at times of particularly intensive social struggles. Today, against a backdrop of rapidly expanding

informalisation in most Latin American countries, the poor majorities play a more important role compared to traditional labour movements. Their collective actions centred outside the workplace have had a national impact on the transitions to democracy. They have participated with many 'nonelite actions, such as popular riots and rebellions; grassroots social movements, political mobilisation, abstention and more importantly, community activities without breaking the surface of national politics' (Peeler, 2004: 79-80). In particular, various forms of non-elite participatory democracy can evolve as a response to a serious economic crisis. An example occurred in Argentina in 2001 - when 'democracy' failed to deliver what people needed. The unemployed movement mobilised through collective participation, which in practice has had a democratising character. It occurred under circumstances where the political system deteriorated markedly, when the popular demands placed upon it overwhelmed it, and when an upsurge occurred in civil society calling for increased democracy. In this regard, Gramsci was right what he suggested that civil society comprises an autonomous arena between economy and state, where the hegemonic ideology of capitalism can be challenged as well as reproduced. The unemployed movement succeeded in building a collective hegemony in their own right. They resisted cultural and social, as well as neo-liberal economic, forms of domination and repression. Many small political parties of the left, who had been seriously weakened by military repression, by the collapse of 'really existing socialism' and who were poorly equipped to adapt to a more open post-transition politics, have been revived by the uprising of the unemployed. Given the depth of the crisis, the 'new' politics of the unemployed movement gained credibility and momentum.

The grassroots movement's contribution to democratisation in Latin America

To suggest that Latin America at the dawn of the twenty first century has entered a new democratic era is an understatement. Latin American societies are, in general, more democratic than ever before, while the region's economies have been irrevocably tied to a neo-liberal development model based on competitive markets and a markedly reduced state. Yet the growing, 'multifaceted marginalization of substantial segments of the population raises serious doubts', via popular mobilisations mounted by a plethora of grassroots movements that are able to operate without much repression under the shelter provided by a return to democracy, which raises questionmarks 'as to what this new era actually means for the average citizen' (Oxhorn, 1999: 1). Popular power built by NSMs from the grassroots, based on democratic internal practices and conscious participation, has permitted important swathes of the population a 'glimpse' of a better, more just society. They have also raised demands for political reform and more 'poor friendly' economic policies.

Many theorists of new social movements in Latin America contend that their non-traditional identity and strategies may make them bearers of a more democratic political culture (Mainwaring and Viola, 1984: 17; Evers, 1985: 56).[321] This perspective on democratisation stressed the positive impact of grassroots movements,

---

321 Political scientists (especially those preoccupied with 'transition' and 'consolidation') have regarded new social movements as legitimating the consolidation process of liberal democracy. For them, politics must be institutionalised with mechanisms of accountability (involving free elections, the division of power and the existence of an effective system of checks and balances). From this perspective, movement activity helps legitimise a top-down model and the rule of law. In the 1990s, O'Donnell went on to monitor the process of democratic 'consolidation', but in the end, was forced to recognise that institutional change did not achieve a consistent democratic outcome. His idea of 'delegative democracy' sought to capture something of the peculiarities of the democratic models emerging from the transition process in many Latin American countries, in particular the survival of traditional political practices such as clientelism and *caudillo* forms of leadership, in a period which had nevertheless widely come to be characterised as post-authoritarian (O'Donnell, 1994).

through encouraging participation by *marginal sectors*, as well as their informal, nonhierarchical structures and decision-making practices.[322] Participation became considered as a value in itself, a means by which the poor and marginalised can critically challenge political and economic elites in what remain extremely inequalitarian societies.[323]

In addition, Latin American post-Modernists have also challenged the 'development of liberal or elite democracy' and stressed the democratising effect of new social movements, because they encourage participation by excluded social actors and because their informal, nonhierarchical structures provide an example and experience of grassroot democracy.[324] While new social movements are often seen as being an

---

322 Evers regarded new social movements as '*new forms of politics, specifically an assertion of human dignity through identity, autonomy and emancipation*' (1985: 56).
323 However, Pearce argues: 'it was not about building a democratic infrastructure that could guarantee the integrity of the civil society arena as an end in itself. Gramscian influence led many to interpret "civil society" as equivalent to the protagonism of social movements. It was not a pluralist arena of negative liberty, housing an heterogenous assortment of interests that liberals valued in itself as a protection against the encroachments of state power or to ensure that no particular interests could dominate over others. Many social movements in Latin America spoke of themselves as "civil society", the new force for emancipation in the region. This was not about the building of a civil society arena of public participation within a market driven economy that external donors had in mind. Nor did they wish to merely collaborate with governments that used the language of democracy to mask the unequal wealth and power that still characterised the region' (Pearce, 2004: 498).
324 The democratisation literature on Latin America contains two broad and conflicting perspectives upon politics. One can be described as the official or established orthodoxy, held by both practitioners of government and many academics, who talk of politics as being consensual and of democracies as 'pacted' (which is posited upon a non-participatory view of democracy, with politics being regarded as an elite occupation). In this it adheres to 'the tradition of the Western liberal democratic paradigm which considers politics to be a compromise and repudiates ideological, holistic world-views' (Lievesley, 1999: 3-4). The other perspective is based upon a radical democratic model, which is critical of the liberal democratic model and advocates popular empowerment. It projects the need for structural transformations of societies and economies in the Marxist and socialist tradition, but searches for new methods and strategies, e.g. building upon the experience of the new social movements (Eckstein, 1989 and Foweraker, 1995). It emphasises the important role that popular participatory mechanisms played in opposition to military rule, their efforts to maintain their independence from the corporatist intentions of governments and their relationship to revolutionary regimes. However, the radical model has itself been criticised as naïve, for overlooking the weakness in terms of organisational sustainability and political consciousness of the new social movements and their capacity to influence local, national, and transnational power structures (Lievesley, 1999: 5). In this regard, Whitehead observed that 'the emergence of stalemate politics such as reformist, populist or socialist projects had been attempted and had failed; reactionary authoritarian

indication of the political 'disintegration and loss of cohesion' on the part of the

excluded socially or 'invisible' groups, grassroots movements are increasingly likely to

be seen as the exact opposite: as a force of inclusion and integration. Indeed, for

grassroots activists, 'fragmentation' and 'disintegration' better describes what existed

before, when the categories of the social or the political were homogeneously defined

through structures of exclusion and willful neglect.[325] Post-Modernist inspired research

has given emphasis to the need to discover new political alternatives, based on the lived

experiences of the excluded via the growth of alternative forms of political involvement,

which relies on grassroots people's actions and organisations. From this perspective,

'culture' is a central concern, but not in the restricted sense of political culture. Instead,

'culture' is defined in its most ample sense, including traditional social rituals,

languages, new ideologies and symbols which are not directly connected to

conventional notions of politics and the state. These 'cultural' resources are seen as a

source of empowerment for building grassroots democracy that can have important

political consequences.[326] It is also theoretically important because it can provide a

timely counterweight to the top-down model of elite bias in the 'democratic transition'

literature. Analysis along these lines attempts to 'measure the grand incognitus of social

movement research'; namely, the political and cultural impact of social movements

from below (Foweraker and Landman, 1997: 234). However, much research remains to

---

projects had also been attempted and had also failed' in this region' (1992: 148).
325 One of the peculiarities of democratisation in Argentina is that the long strived for
democracy is proving perhaps a more problematic political context for social movements than
military rule. In Argentina social movements were virtually invisible. Firstly, this was due to the
historic chronic weakness of an autonomous civil society and grassroots movements; and
secondly, the extent of the repressive measures adopted by the military governments ('Junta').
326 Alvarez et al. stress: 'culture is fluid, conflictive, and permeated by politics, as popular
actors mobilize collectively on the grounds of very different sets of meanings and stakes. For all
social movements, then, collective identities and strategies are inevitably bound up with culture'
(1998: 6).

be undertaken on this dimension of new social movements, especially considering the vast array of social movements encountered in Latin Amrica.

Since the late 1990s attempts have been made to combine both approaches to the study of social movements, as epitomised in the catchphrace 'cultures of politics/politics of culture', with 'cultural politics' being interpreted as:

> The process enacted when sets of actors shaped by, and embodying, different cultural meanings and practices come into conflict with each other ... Culture is political because meanings are constitutive of processes that, implicitly or explicitly, seek to redefine social power. That is, when movements deploy alternative conceptions of democracy, or citizenship that unsettle dominant cultural meanings, they enact a cultural politics (Alvarez et al., 1998: 7).

Political culture, on the other hand, is understood 'as the particular social construction in every society of what counts as political', so that 'the cultural politics of social movements often attempt to challenge or unsettle dominant political cultures' (Alvarez et al., 1998: 8). Following these perspectives, the concept of 'multiple collective identity' has been utilised to analyse the unemployed movement in Argentina.

The collective identity of the unemployed movement and grassroots democracy

This thesis has tried to explore the collective identity of the grassroots unemployed movement through an examination of its formation and processes of collective action. When undertaking this endeavour, a variety of social movement theories (CB, RM, POs, NSMs) and related concepts (social exclusion, RD, SMOs, ideology, etc.) were considered. Following these different theoretical perspectives and concepts, this thesis has been shaped by three different approaches to the study of grassroots movements, ones that emphasise socio-economic factors, others that concentrate on socio-political boundaries and finally, those that focus on the socio-cultural dimensions of collective action.

As discussed in Chapter II, the concept of 'collective identity' has been employed to generate interaction and dialogue between the various social movements theories in a critical fashion. On the one hand, the predominantly US tradition (RM and POs) characterised by 'rational choice' based on 'liberal individualism', emerged from the critique of structure functionalism theory (CB). This approach initially developed to analyse the individual choices made by SMO participants by using political opportunities and strategic mobilisation to obtain resources. In contrast, the predominantly European post-Marxist approach questioned these arguments and criticised them, while also engaging in a critique of traditional Marxist sociology, being influenced by critical theory and its meditations on the consequences of the incorporation of the working class into 'late' capitalism. Despite a vigorous interchange among the different traditions in the study of collective identity in social movements over the past decade, the distinction between two more or less opposed ways of analysing social movements persists in the literature and constantly reappears in reworked forms.

With this mind, Chapter III explored some of the theoretical arguments about Latin American popular grassroots movements that have dominated academic studies on the matter since the 1960s, which seek to determine 'why' and 'how' popular organisations have been generated. These grassroots movements have not only been launched to support struggles for basic urban needs (i.e. better public service provision), in the process they also created new political arenas, voicing demands that went beyond the question of 'collective consumption'. Such initiatives showed that they were not only aware of their 'exclusion' from the benefits they expected from the state; since the early 1980s, to a backdrop of neo-liberal economic restructuring and political

'democratisation', they have consistently raised demands for political reform. To this end, they have built autonomous associations and striven to resist efforts at political cooptation, in the process devising new practices that questioned the mediation of elite politicians and created new social spaces within which previously excluded sectors demanded recognition of their presence.

With these changing circumstances, grassroots organisations mobilised to recover citizenship rights and 'deepen' democratic consolidation, which logically brought them into conflict with long-established populist practices, based around patron-client relationships between the state and the 'marginal' population. A concern with these issues has helped shape many of the major social mobilisations occurring in contemporary Latin America - the Zapatistas, the MST landless movement, the 'water wars' in Bolivia, the *cocalero* movements in the Andean countries, as well as the unemployed movement in Argentina. Another important factor driving grassroots organisation and protest throughout Latin America has been dissatisfaction with the neo-liberal free market model, which when combined with frustration at some of democracy's undelivered promises, convinced a large swathe of the populace that struggles for more a democractic society embodied with social justice needed to be played out in popular arenas. These examples of grassroots mobilisation from around the continent mark in dramatic fashion the serious disjunctures that exist between the promises of the market system and the everyday exercise of 'democracy'. Mass mobilisation also reveals that the region's dual move towards neo-liberalism and democratisation in the late 1980s and 1990s ushered in a non-authoritatian form of elite rule via 'controlled' transitions, but simultaneously provided greater openings for resistance, dissent and collective political action. This dynamic made ethnic, social, and

economic disparities more evident, and a period of disenchantment with democracy developed when it became apparent that it did not necessarily address inequality and marginalisation. In fact, by the dawn of the new millennium many Latin Americans believed that democracy was not the promised panacea – a decisive shift from the hopefulness of the early- to mid-1990s (Economist, 14 August 2004). Thus, 'Latin American society is, ironically, increasingly being defined by the very fractures, disjunctures and tensions between global capitalism and the political potency of the marginalised that globalisation leaves by the side of the road' (Murphy and Rodríguez, 2006: 271-72).

In an attempt to understand the background to the emergence of such a 'disjucture', Chapter IV traced the historical background to the rise of the unemployed movement. Given a history of 'lost opportunities' that stand in contrast to other important 'settler' societies, it was not surprising that Argentina would enter into deep crisis after passing through one of the most drastic experiments of neo-liberal economic restructuring in recent times. What made Argentina's case even more interesting was that the neo-liberal experiment was conducted at a time when the country was also trying to consolidate its nascent political democratic order. Taking into consideration its extreme nature and close conformity to the dictates of international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank), Argentina's experience is illuminating in terms of highlighting the potential and limits of neo-liberal restructuring in an era of open economic globalisation. Recent events have clearly exposed, in a dramatic manner, the inherent fragility of a development strategy based on privatisation and labour flexiblity processes, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of unemployed people coming onto the streets having lost their jobs. This failure of neo-liberal structural adjustment gave birth to the

unemployed movement and opened up new opportunities to mobilise the unemployed.

In Chapter V, the excluded collective identity of the unemployed was discussed. Long-term poverty, high unemployment rates, and social inequality all worsened significantly as a consequence of the crisis of 2001. Formal and stable employment and the social benefits tied to it were replaced by rampant unemployment, widespread job insecurity (the expansion of the 'changa') and the dismantling of established mechanisms of social pretection. To this backdrop, the urban poor became more conscious of their 'excluded' status. Their desperate situation – which also eventually embraced sectors of the middle class - indicated that Argentine democracy lacked firm socio-economic roots. The growing informalisation and social inequality via expanding income concentration starkly illustrated the contradictory nature of socio-economically exclusive formal democracies. The social-economic dimension of democracy in Argentina has not improved since the return of civilian rule. As one interviewee mentioned, economic hardship dominates everyday life:

> Today, democracy for us is about eating every day, about having a place to live, about being able to send our children to school, to have a job and a right to organise ourselves the way we want. For us, doing things differently is a matter of necessity.[327]

The deep socio-economic transformation which took place during the 1990s therefore encouraged a growing number of people to be conscious of their structurally excluded position. This collective consciousness 'from below' developed hand-in-hand with the emergence of new collective actors, new areas of struggle and a variety of forms of protest, including unorganised riots, new modes of collective behaviour in the streets and stimulated debates about multiple failings of the political status quo and state

---

[327] Interview: Peréz (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón) in Plaza de Mayo, 20 November 2003, a day when a few UMO groups commemorated the second anniversary of the fall of the De la Rúa administration.

practices. Among the themes that illustrated the innovative character of the demands advanced by the unemployed movement, figured the 'right to have rights'. This included not only 'the right to work', but also an embedding of human right to deepen and broaden the rights of all citizens. Consequently, the unemployed movement in Argentina pushed for a broadened citizenship, open to public debate on pertinent questions and to democratic negotiation over the rules of social life. This manifested itself in new forms of political participation, especially against the criminalisation of the unemployed movement.

This situation was reflected in the growing number of road blockades launched by the UMOs (Chapter VI) which signified a new way of 'participatory democracy' that aimed to go beyond the 'poverty of democracy'. The growth of unemployed organisations and street activisms at the national level was used as a form of pressure to get jobs, subsidizes and increases of social expenditure on food, health and education. In this fashion, the typical demonstrations of the large trade union organisations linked to the workplace, were replaced by new forms of protest driven by the most deprived social sectors, the victims of unemployment and economic recession during 2001-2002.

Unemployed collective resistance entered its first innovative phase in 1996 and has continued until the present (2006). Based on the RM and POs' theoretical perspective, participation in the various organisations was mainly driven by economic demands. Activism, however, did not just have narrow economic consequences. Participation in street protests and assemblies helped forge a new political identity. As the UMOs expanded to involve hundreds of thousands of people and the proliferation of hundreds of neighbourhood assemblies, it has exercised an important political impact. People moved into political protest in the public sphere (e.g. the Plaza de Mayo), taking

advantage of new political opportunities created by a collapse of legitimacy affecting the political class and state institutions. When undertaking these initiatives a strong emphasis was placed on 'autonomy' and direct democracy. Interview data illustrates the importance of these tendencies within the unemployed movement:

> To us, participatory democracy is what we call direct democracy. It is part of a whole. It is concerned with understanding the reality in which we live and how in a concrete way, through daily struggle, we will be able to build up a space for people. To us, it holds the same meaning as it has in other Latin American countries: that there is a power vacuum, a vacuum regarding representation. For us, direct action is a way of daily intervening in our lives ... the basis for participatory democracy, or direct democracy as we call it, is to think over how we ought to build new social relations. That is to say, build up new subjectivities that can break down the dominant politics that take so many different expressions. In addition, to think about how we all have a responsibility to suggest other ways of living our daily lives. So all aspects in our lives are objects for the development of new forms of participatory democracy.[328]

> Many people agree that we would rather have a regime that does not necessarily stand for very much democracy. What the worst thing is ... it couldn't contribute to people's basic social needs. I would like to say that the unemployed movement has a basic aim, namely to take back democracy again in order to eat. What is more, we are movements that want to create a well-rooted participatory democracy. That is, the unemployed movement is a very important political event today, since we are all-embracing and because of what we attempt to achieve at both the local level and over the whole country. The unemployed movement has often arisen because of concrete experiences, but because we are so similar in so many places it shows that one can set up goals for all grassroots unemployed people. The processes and developments as such may appear to be different and to be differently expressed, but the goals, to build up popular power and democracy, participatory democracy, radical democracy and integrated democracy ... these are the really important goals for the unemployed movement.[329]

Born out of frustration with the corruption and constant political compromises of the political class, in addition to the failure of political parties (especially the PJ) and traditional trade unions (CGT) to represent the unemployed, the UMOs attracted mass

---

328 Interview: Barros (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón) in Plaza de Mayo, 14 July 2004.
329 Interview: Rubén (a member of MTD Aníbal Verón) in Puente Pueyrredón, 26 August 2004.

support from politically excluded and impoverished communities in the provinces and GBA. Their members were overwhelmingly unemployed people who organised themselves in their suburban *barrios*, the neighbourhood districts which were key to many Argentine people's sense of place and collective identity. As noted, the UMOs pioneered new forms of participation democracy, practices that proved particularly attractive given the erosion of traditional political power and its old corrupt practices.

Mass participation provided the movement with a key mobilising resource: manpower. Numerical strength made their protest more effective. However, it also generated diffusion, heterogenisation, radicalisation and polarisation. Government responses to the UMOs generally have comprised inadequate palliatives (such as minor unsustainable social or job programmes) or repressive measures, none of which addressed or solved the roots of the conflict but rather reinforced it. Having witnessed at first hand these developments, a leader of the unemployed movement strongly criticised the current Kirchner regime and its hostile attitude to grassroots democracy:

> Reducing in work plans, the reemergence of client populist politics, the breakup of alliance between the middle class and the unemployed movement among excluded sectors, no plans to re-open closed factories, paralysis or criminalisation of the unemployed movement, a failure of investigation human rights violation from *'yuta puta'* ['fucking police'] ... high levels of poverty, support for free trade and privatised industries ... especially the sectors of profitable oil, electricity and energy which could finance jobs and social services. Kirchner has recomposed the national bourgeoisie, providing them with leadership and direction, while securing middle class and even some transient popular support, even among the unemployed. Kirchner as being successful in the short-term in reinforcing 'institutional politics', partially channeling politics from the streets to the Congress and Administration and thus weakening the innovative style of grassroots democracy which emerged before and subsequent to the December 2001 uprising.[330]

What were the consequences of these trends? The high level of socio-political unrest, the proliferation of diverse UMOs, the diverse means of protests and the

---

330 Interview: Martino Roberto (a group leader of the MTR), 12 May 2004.

strengthening of certain organisations, brought about concrete, but limited, achievements that benefitted, to some extent, the contenders and encouraged their activism. However, neither the state nor the mobilised UMOs seemed to have a clear or feasible strategy to include the protesters' demands as a policy priority. Indeed, even if there was a common spirit of political contention and general demands that unified the diverse groups at certain conjuctures, there were also differences inside the movement that hindered the launching of common actions. As a result of these divisions, the political impact of the movement diminished, along with its ability to force meaningful socio-political change in favour of the poor.

Of importance here were the ideological differences linked to leftist political parties (Marxists, socialists and autonomous anarchists) contained at the movement's grassroots. Their presence provided a modicum of organisational experience and backbone, as well as a layer of committed activists, but also reinforced the fragmentation of the movement, hindering the promotion of common demands and coordination. In consequence, one should not have a 'romantic' view of the process of political contention, but rather be aware of the movement's limitations. The fact that the level of mobilisation increased dramatically did not necessarily mean that a multi-class revolutionary outburst was to occur. Different groups naturally tended to fight for their own interests, which could or could not bring about benefits to the whole array of protesters. Such divisions severely limited the overall effectiveness of UMO operations. For this reason, they have on occasions failed to take full advantage of the political opportunities presented by the crisis.

Following a description of the heterogenous nature of the UMOs, Chapter VII concentrated on their socio-cultural dimensions (symbols and ideologies), which

underpinned and shaped mobilisation. These were crucial factors in building and undermining the unemployed movement. Initially, the movement understandably preoccupied itself with the material need for survival, demanding that the state deliver on what it had promised. In this process, however, a number of organisations soon realised that the problem of unemployment was endemic to the seemingly unchangeable neo-liberal capitalist structure. To this backdrop, some groups allied themselves with movements which held radical ideological repertoires of resistance, such as autonomist (anarchist) and socialist or communist ideologies. They therefore began a campaign of propaganda, refusing to accept state handouts or to fall prey to government cooptation - as had been the case with several other unemployed groups. The MTD Aníbal Verón, for example, embraced autonomy and direct participative democracy, stressing horizontal organisation. Despite these developments, account needs to be taken about how deeply-rooted Peronism remains within Argentine political culture. An understanding of this crucial factor helps explain how Peronism has managed to co-opt a section of the unemployed movement. These pro-Peronist groups soon adopted traditionally framed political and cultural practices. The FTV-CTA, for example, has been very successful at co-optation through voicing a Peronist appeal (Natanson, 2004: 112).

Even though participants in the movement shared certain ideological perspectives, such as anti-neoliberalism or anti-capitalism, the divisive and co-optive capacity of Peronism also explains why they have not realised their full potential or force fundamental social change. In part, this was also due to the obstacles imposed by collaboration with traditional trade union bureaucracies. The result of this complex amalgam of competing interests, was the failure to unite around a national level

leadership capable of organising national collective actions and struggles.

Observers have also pointed out that historically it has been difficult for the unemployed to unite and work together to build a powerful movement (see Chapter VII). It has been an obstacle that they have yet to surmount. The years spent under the dictatorship broke apart the fabric of society and traumatised an important swathe of the population. It has taken Argentines years to get back on the street and fight for a more democratic society. Another problem was that internally, particularly since the 1970s, most grassroots organisations and their movements were extremely hierarchical and often separated themselves from the people. Most of the movements that are now in the forefront of the popular protest have failed to address adequately this culture of hierarchy. In consequence, certain unemployed movement groups literally function as the arms of the state, while there are also movements like MTD Aníbal Verón that remains truly autonomous. These divisions have often been exploited by the government to set various sectors of the unemployed movement against each other. However, the vigour of the autonomous movement testified to the power of collective actions. Thus, the current situation is characterised by complexity and uncertainty. It remains to be seen whether the independent element inside the unemployed grassroots movement will be successful in transforming the politics of the future. For the present, what is evident is that Argentines are increasingly taking democratic struggles into their own hands.

In sum, the shift to a market-led economic policy, the shrinking of the state and a massive dissatisfaction with corrupt politicians, brought forth the voice of the unemployed and disadvantaged, who hoped to escape from the prevailing 'exclusive' form of democracy and move towards a participative democracy that could reflect their

new forms of autonomous ideas and actions. In this process, the movement has been struggling to redefine the meaning of received notions of citizenship rights (workers rights, human rights, etc.) and political representation and, as a consequence, democracy itself. Even though the great accomplishment of the unemployed movement was to establish countless organisations through grassroots participation by the mass of the unemployed, as noted, however, the absence of any united strategic plan of collective action, led to the dispersion of the movements along ideological and strategic lines, based on reformist, collaborationist and sectarian politics. This shortcoming helped create the current stalemate, by opening up the political space for the re-emergence of populist (clientele) politics under the 'benign' control of the Kirchner regime. Peronist inspired clientelism helped fragment the movement into many heterogeneous competing organisations. In the current deadlock, some base organisations engage in isolated direct action, while the Peronist faction supports a 'moderate' neo-liberal regime. These divisions have derailed the unemployed movement and led elements of it to abandon grassroots democracy, which comprised an alternative form of collective action to promote social change.

APPENDIX: RQM, Participant Observation and Interviews

This appendix elucidates the methodology adopted and details the research techniques undertaken. Additionally, some of the ethnical, philosophical and theoretical issues involved with social movement research related with studying urban popular grassroots movements in Latin America (especially in the Argentine context) are addressed.

Research aims and ethical approaches

This study sought to analyse the complex essence of 'collective identity' among the unemployed movement in Buenos Aires. More specifically, it explored the movement's dynamic development in various contexts: the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions of collective participation. From the outset it was attempted to avoid any tendency towards over-generalisation or an excessive emphasis on a single-strand within existing social movement theory. To this end, the thesis has followed the basic mode of social science inquiry - analysis must bring together the structures and actors in the formation of social practices. Moreover, I tried to understand the social movement on its own terms - giving precedence to participants' self-identification, what their practices are, their self-definition, values, discourse and social processes. From the analytical perspective, it was assumed that there are no 'bad' and 'good' social movements; they are all 'symptoms' of social issues and all impact on social changes, however small.[331] Bearing these principles in mind, the objective was to develop explanations on the basis of historically and contextually specific analysis. Furthermore,

---

331 In this regard, Castells incorporates Alain Touraine's classical typology that defines a social movement by three principles; the movement's identity (the self-definition of the movement of what it is), the movement's adversity (the movement's principal enemy) and the movement's vision or social model, which he regards societal goal as the movement's vision of the kind of social order, or social organization, 'it would wish to attain in the historical horizon of its collective action' (2004: 73-4).

I resolved to incorporate a rounded perspective of the activists by examining the various levels of collective action. It was also deemed essential to identify how these collective actions related to (and the extent to which they were conditioned by), changing conjunctural factors.

The research may be described as predominantly 'qualitative' in that it is broadly 'interpretivist', based on methods of data collection intended to be flexible and sensitive to the social movement context, and seeks to be 'reflexive' regarding the role of the researcher in the process (Mason, 1996: 4). At the same time, 'quantitative' data has been incorporated in order to complement qualitative material where it was perceived as being necessary.[332] Various methods of data collection were followed in order to gain a spectrum of perspectives and information bearing on the issues under study. The use of a range of sources facilitated the 'triangulation' of data in order to verify information.

Cognitive praxis

As a methodological approach in the social sciences, 'cognitive praxis' and its methodology have become increasingly popular. Eyerman and Jamison argue that 'the cognitive praxis of many social movements lies between the disparate types of knowledge: social movements create new types of knowledge as well as recombine or connect previously separate types of knowledge with each other' (1991: 59). Movements create, for a time, a space for social activity (they demonstrate

---

332 Hammersley notes the necessity of combing qualitative and quantitative research: 'we are not faced, then with a stark choice between words and numbers, or even between precise and imprecise data; but rather with a range from more or less precise data. Furthermore, our decisions about what levels of precision is appropriate in relation to any particular claim should depend on the nature of what we are trying to describe, on the likely accuracy of our descriptions' (1992: 163). Accordingly, 'qualitative and quantitative methods were employed, baring in mind the need to avoid 'the absurdity of pushing too far the qualitative/quantitative distinction' (Silverman, 2001: 35).

impermanence), a public space for interest articulation. Usually originating in protest about the established order, a social movement creates a public space that did not previously exist.

'Cognitive praxis' involves reading a social movement epistemologically, critically, or more broadly, within an interpretive or qualitative tradition of sociology where a social movement is seen to contribute to the development of human knowledge, as well as to the articulation of political and social consciousness. It asks basic questions, such as: Which new ideas are produced in social movements? How do we go about characterising those ideas? What do particular social movements contribute to social processes of knowledge production? What common processes or mechanisms of cognitive praxis can we identify in social movements from different historical periods and different countries? That is, is it possible to find common denominators within movements and among different movements in a particular time period?

Qualitative Methodologies (QMs) and Social Movements (SMs)

Research on social movements (SMs) has expanded greatly over the last thirty years and many of the important studies responsible for the advancement of social movement theory have relied on qualitative methods (QMs).[333] QMs were developed in the social sciences to enable a researcher to study political, social and cultural phenomena based

---

333 In debating the production of knowledge, political sociologists also use philosophical terms: (i) an ontological position, which refers to views about the nature of social existence and social beings; and (ii) an epistemology expresses a view about what constitutes an adequate explanation of a political and social event and process. Different broad ontological and epistemological positions inform 'different methodological orientations or preferences' (Marsh and Stoker, 1995: 13-14). However, to avoid these long debates among different methodologies for discovering the real 'logics of methodology', or 'methods for methodology', my research methodologies are primarily based on qualitative approaches.

on methodology theories, philosophical assumptions and perspectives and practices.[334]

Examples of QMs are 'action research', case study research, 'ethnography' and grounded theory. Rapoport defines 'action research' in the following way: Action research aims to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation and to the goals of social science by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework' (1970: 499). A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2002). Ethnographers immerse themselves in the lives of the people they study (Lewis, 1985: 380) and seek to place the phenomena studied in their social and cultural context. On the other hand, 'grounded theory' is a research method that seeks to develop theory that is driven from data systematically gathered and analysed. According to Martin and Turner, grounded theory is 'an inductive, theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data' (1986: 141-157). The major difference between grounded theory and other methods is a specific approach to theory development - it suggests that there should be a continuous interplay between data collection and analysis. Grounded theory research, often referred to as 'the constant comparative method', is a qualitative tradition built on compared concepts. Proponents of the constant comparative method suggest that similar data are

---

334 Under various philosophical assumptions and perspectives, e.g. positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, and constructivism, it follows that three categories, based on the underlying research epistemology: positivist, interpretive and critical, influence and guide qualitative methods: (i) positivists generally assume that reality is objectively given and can be described as independent of the observer and his or her instruments, generally attempt to test theory; (ii) interpretive; (iii) critical research focuses on the oppositions, conflicts and contradictions in contemporary society and seeks to be emancipatory in terms of Habermas' 'unfinished project of modernity'(Goode, 2005: 121).

grouped and conceptually labelled. Then concepts are categorised. Categories are linked and organised by relationship, conditions and dimensions are developed, and finally, a theory emerges (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The three basic elements of grounded theory are concepts, categories and propositions. Firstly, concepts are the basic units of analysis since it is from the conceptualisation of data, not the actual data per se, that theory is developed. On this point, Corbin and Strauss argue:

> Theories can't be built with actual incidents or activities as observed or reported; that is, from 'raw data'. The incidents, events, happenings are taken as, or analysed as, potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels ... as the researcher encounters other incidents, and when after comparison to the first, they appear to resemble the same phenomena, then these, too, can be labelled as 'pacing'. Only by comparing incidents and naming like phenomena with the same term can the theorist accumulate the basic units for theory (1990: 7).

The second step comprises a categorising process through inter-dialogue among concepts. As Corbin and Strauss point out:

> Categories are higher in level and more abstract than the concepts they represent. They are generated through the same analytic process of making comparisons to highlight similarities and differences that is used to produce lower level concepts. Categories are the 'cornerstones' of developing theory. They provide the means by which the theory can be integrated. We can show how the grouping of concepts forms categories by continuing with the example presented above (1990: 7).

The third stage relates to propositions which indicate generalised relationships between a category and its concepts and between discrete categories. The generation and development of concepts, categories and propositions is an iterative process. Strauss and Corbin suggest that grounded theory analysts work to 'uncover relationships among categories ... by answering the questions of who, when, why, how, and with what consequences ... to relate structure with process (1998: 127). In this regard, they claim that 'analysis is the interplay between the researcher and the data.' (1998: 13). A researcher espousing the constructivist grounded theory paradigm addresses the

participants' 'ecology' (McCaslin and Scott, 2003) and the meanings participants confer

on their realities. Thus, Charmaz argues:

> The researcher constructs theory from the data. By starting with data from the lived experience
> of the research participants, the researchers can, from the beginning, attend to how they construct
> their worlds. That lived experience shapes the researcher's approach to data collection and
> analysis (1994: 68).

Through methods such as participant-observation, in-depth interviewing and

documentary analysis, researchers have developed theories about why individuals

participate in movements, as well as how movements emerge, develop and decline.

QMs are therefore very useful for understanding movement dynamics, because the

researchers' own experiences, emotions and perceptions - either as a participant-

observer or as someone who interacts with movement activists when interviewing them

- are a source of data. Through their interactions with movement participants,

researchers gain first-hand understanding of social processes, such as the construction of

identities, the development of organisational structures and the creation of emotion.

Miller notes the importance of this connection:

> Acknowledgement that qualitative data are social constructions, however, does not render them
> theoretically useless and irrelevant. Rather, such an acknowledgement recasts them as aspects of
> a distinctive discourse that treats the practices of everyday life as worthy topics of analysis.
> Qualitative data provide sociologists with a shared conversational focus for managing their
> discussions, whether the data are ethnographic descriptions, transcripts of conversations or
> written texts. Such an acknowledgement also reminds qualitative sociologists that while theory is
> — by definition —abstract, it should also speak to issues that are recognizable as features of
> persons' everyday lives and social worlds (1997: 42).

The motivation for employing QMs in this thesis, as distinguished from

quantitative research, comes from the desire for participant observation through

fieldwork, which is more helpful for understanding Argentine people and society related

with the political, social and cultural contexts in which they live. Another important

reason - why QMs were selected for researching this thesis - is that there is no 'complete' social movement theoretical framework which could have guided me in Argentina. Although much has been written about social movements and collective actions, the theoretical concepts and frameworks are almost wholly derived from European and US experiences, which differ markedly to Latin American political cultures and socio-political situations.[335]

This thesis, therefore, did not begin with a clearly defined theory to test or verify, given that the existing ones developed in a First World context. When fieldwork commenced, therefore, a variety of concepts, social movement theories, various forms of collective identity and its interpretation (e.g. social exclusion, empowerment, political and cultural identity) were guiding the research. As the fieldwork progressed, 'collective identity' emerged as the most appropriate concept for analysing the unemployed movement. Multiple concepts were therefore employed during data collection and initial theorising phase in Liverpool. The thesis, thus passsed through a 'de-theorising' and 're-theorising' phase.[336] The research process approximated that outlined by Lather, who argues:

> Building empirically grounded theory requires a reciprocal relationship between data and theory. Data must be allowed to generate propositions in a dialectical manner that permits use of a priori theoretical frameworks, but which keeps a particular framework from becoming the container

335 Most researchers who have studied social movements and democratisation borrow frameworks, concepts and assumptions developed by European and North American scholars: 'little effort has been made to formulate alternative models deliberately sensitive to the unique political, social, cultural and economic developments in Latin America' in their political sociology' (Davis, 1999: 585).
336 Interpretive researchers start out with the assumption that access to reality - given or socially constructed - is only attained through social constructions such as language, consciousness and shared meanings. The philosophical base of interpretive research is hermeneutics. Interpretive studies generally attempt to 'understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them. Interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the full complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges' (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994: 45).

into which the data must poured (1986: 267, cited in Creswell, 1994: 95).[337]

However, these QMs traditions - for example, 'ground theory', are more or less 'systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 24) with a rigorous, orderly guide to theory development that at each stage is closely integrated with a methodology.

Mode of procedure: Reflexivity + QM = RQM

To complement this overtly rigorous and orderly set of procedures, recent publications have stressed the value of 'reflexivity' in the fieldwork, which embraces 'the idea that subjective experience, including impressions and (re)actions and feelings that drive from the researcher's own social location, influence the production and interpretation of research' (Tayor, 1998: 368).[338] Brown argues that the ways scientists and everyday actors construct meaning have more in common than is usually supposed: both are socially constructed and therefore 'scientific rationality' is not autonomous, but at least in part a reflexive construction of the micro processes of research (1998: 57).[339]

Additionally, 'reflexivity', according to Finlay et al.:

> ... is a defining feature of human consciousness in a postmodern world. We are aware of being aware, of performing a variety of roles ... instead of imaging ourselves as coherent, unified

---

337 This approach is endorsed by Strauss and Corbin: ... data collection, analysis, and theory should stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory, then prove it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge' (1990: 23).

338 In this regard, Staggenborg argues that: 'through their interactions with movement participants, researchers gain first-hand understanding of processes such as the construction of meaning, the development of organization structures and the creation of emotion' (1998: 353). For further debates, see Klandermans and Staggenborg, 'Methods of Social Movements Research' (2002).

339 Traditionally research has been conceived as the creation of 'true', objective knowledge, following a scientific method. From what appears or is presented as data, 'facts', or 'reality', it is possible to acquire a reasonably adequate basis for empirically grounded conclusions and, as a next step, for generalisations and theory-building. However, since the late 1960s many scholars have criticised this approach on the grounds that 'knowledge cannot be separated from the knower' (Steedman, 1991: 53; Alvesson et al., 2000: 1)

beings, a postmodern sensibility *compels us to* recognize and celebrate diverse, shifting, and often *contradictory self-fragments...research into* contemporary personhood, then, will mean an *exploration of* how people 'do' reflexivity in everyday life, how they construct and comment on multiple selves (2003:1).

Finlay and many commentators regard fieldwork as 'a journey of self-inquiry' that takes the researcher beyond the boundary of traditional QMs. When QMs meet 'reflexivity', it can produce a research map along the path outlined in Map A.1.

Map A.1:

Reflexive Qualitative Methodology (RQM)

Prepositions toward a new theory
↑

De-theorising process	Re-theorising process
↑	↑

Dialogue with conceptualised categories (collective identity and the unemployed movement)
↑

Forming concepts (broad concepts ↔ reflexive concepts)
↕   ↕

Making basic questionnaire (broad enquiries ↔ reflexive enquiries)
↑

Gathering Information – (in) formal interviews, (un) published documents and so forth.
↑

Entering the field
↑

Incompletely conceptualised and only imprecisely understood and measured with existing references

→: going forward; ↑: going up; ↕: reciprocal between up and down; ↔: reciprocal witheach other

Following my own modeling of RQM (Map A.1), my research project ran

through seven basic stages. In my first year of research, I read social movement theory.

The rationale for employing RQM in my thesis is to deepen understanding itself, so as to build reflexive enquiries and construct reflexive frameworks, concepts and categories for the further analysis and a new theory. As Powers comments, qualitative interviews offer a means to uncover how people think in the field always serve a 'dual role': (i) as a means to collect information about the 'field' or the context being studied; and (ii) as means to collect data for analysis (2001: 245). Thus, understanding field research provided me with a qualitative distinction in the analysis. The possibility of interviewing diverse actors involved in the protests and refining my observations from a local point of view, not only helped me test my arguments. It is also forced a more realistic, rather than purely theoretical approach, to the problem being studied. When looking at such a complex phenomenon as the Argentine process of social protests in the 1990s, I had to be flexible in theoretical terms and also willing to see that my analysis was bounded by a considerable degree of subjectivity and uncertainty due to proximity of the events and consequent data limitations. In that sense, I chose to prioritise my intentions of clarifying the course of the events and restrict my conclusions to observations and personal thoughts. It was not my aim to offer theoretical answers on a contemporary process or to predict the future. My goal was to contribute to current research on the latest wave of protests in Argentina and help towards its comprehension.

Qualitative data sources include participant-observation, interviews and reflexive questionnaires, documents and texts. They also include my own impressions and reactions. Consequently, adapting to reality, discarding inappropriate pre-conceptions and taking on board newly reflected research questions are standard procedures during fieldwork. Perhaps not surprisingly, then, my encounter with

Argentine social reality rapidly led to a revision of both my thinking and research project.

This thesis aims to use a descriptive approach to illustrate how the contextual environment influenced the unemployed movement and its collective action. This thesis makes special concerns about collective identity of the unemployed movement beyond a general description of the development history of the unemployed movement. In this regard, the unemployed movement started mobilising economic resources, such as the Heads of Household programmes and processed during which the programmes was negotiated. The description of the national movement concentrated on the period between 1996, when social protest erupted, until 2004, when new government was launched. During this period the number of unemployed movement organisations (UMOs) carried out by the movement peaked, which increased the pressure on the government to take action to contain the social unrest.

In order to fulfill my purpose, the study was conducted on two levels. The first, as stated above, on a socio-economic structure focusing on the main cause of rising the unemployed movement as a social movement as such. I tried to paint a picture of the interaction between the unemployed movement and severe socio-economic conditions from the early stage. Secondly, I studied how the movement evolved into current Argentine politics narrowed down my focus to a local level politics: the Greater Buenos Aires (GBA). On this level I aimed to discuss the preconditions of the poor and unemployed people's politics and the possibilities available to achieve the required resources for ones survival. I believed that this dual focus was helpful and relevant when discussing how protest became mobilised.

Material collection

For the theoretical part of the thesis I consulted authorities within studies of social movements based on the US and European schools for main theoretical concepts, however, this thesis did not forget the theories of Latin American social movements. The theoretical chapters are based on concepts introduced by many social movement theorists. I used these authors' literature works as a base and then added important material from other scholars I considered relevant to the analysis of the Argentine unemployed movement.

In writing this thesis I have used multiple sources in order to get as current a picture of the Argentine context as possible. Literature on Argentine society, political representation and the changes of the last decade is extensive, however not always coherent. I have combined printed material with articles and interviews to describe the Argentine milieu. The authors referred to are generally scholars that have performed studies of the Latin American societies in Chapter II. I turn to the result of these studies to describe specific subjects such as labour movements involved in the union system, or how the situation has changed over the last decade.

However, the material presented in this thesis derived principally from Argentina's capital city, Buenos Aires. The research project considers the conjunction between collective actions (social protests) and economic hardships during the 1998-2004. It explores newly emerging forms of collective action and the processes of their collective identity originated not only socio-economic crisis but also the engaging socio-political and socio-cultural dimensions with the motivation of social mobilisation in the current structural contexts.

Participant observation in the GBA

The bulk of fieldwork was undertaken between September 2003 and September 2004. Supplementary material was obtained via unemployed movement websites during 2004-2005. The field research evolved through various stages. During the initial period, I was concerned with acquiring a deeper knowledge of socio-economic and political conditions, which gave me fresh ideas for investigating the motives behind unemployed mobilision with precise research aims being redefined in the light of hands-on information.

Appropriate locations for more in-depth and focused research were seleted on the basis of becoming more aware of conditions on the ground. The 'Plaza de Mayo' was chosen as a principal research site for several reasons, politically and symbolically: (i) it is located at the centre of government, including the *Casa Rosada*; (ii) it is historically important for Argentine people (i.e. celebration of independence in 1810); (iii) in 1945, the Argentine working class united in the 'Plaza de Mayo' to demand Perón's liberation; (iv) a human rights group (the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo) has always protested here against state violence; and (v) through the economic crisis of 2001 and beyond, many social protests (including *cacerolazos* and *piqueteros*), concentrated in this place.

Furthermore, in the 'Plaza', many UMO members were incredibly open and happy to talk with me, readily telling me stories and repeatedly emphasised how important it was that I document their struggle and show it to the world. The diversity of the crowd astonished me.

While the 'Plaza de Mayo' constitutes the main illustrative public sphere in Buenos Aires, the geographical limits of the study are not rigidly defined. Research data was drawn from elsewhere in relation to roadblocks (and similar activities outside the

city centre). Numerous academic conferences and seminars concerned with the unemployed movement were also attended. It was possible to gather a considerable number of books, journals and articles. Unpublished documents, such as internal correspondence, memos, declarations, reports and briefings were also collected, including leaflets, newsletters and videotapes relating to the issues and events surrounding the unemployed movement. Participant observation at roadblockades was also undertaken. In particular, when participating in roadblocks, I always remembered Cortázar 's 'vision':

> Vision must necessarily be fragmentary ... I don't claim to know it all ... My goal is simply to feel the heartbeat, to be as close as possible to the bare pulse of emotions of the people (1989: 85-86);
>
> *La visión debe ser necesariamente fragmentaria. ... no pido saberlo todo. ...mi objectivo es simplemente sentir el latido del corazón, estar lo más cerca possible del pulso de las emociones del pueblo* (My translation).

Though not affiliated officially to any Argentine institution during fieldwork, I co-operated with several organisations, which assisted me during the course of the study. Published journals from all institutions comprised an important secondary data source, as they contain a wealth of information about the unemployment problem since the mid-1990s. Of especial value for understanding the unemployed movement in GBA, were the studies conducted by OSAL (*Observatorio Social de América Latina*), which published a series of journal articles on social and political protests post-June 2000. Other good sources include those published by CISET (Centro de Investigación Sociedad, Economía y Trabajo). Additionally, the 'III Coloquio de Economistas Políticos de América Latina' that they organised in the UBS's Facultad de Ciencias Económicas between 16-18 October 2003, proved extremly informative. The ASET (Asociación Argentina de Especialistas en Estudios del Trabajo), a voluntary group

which investigates employment matters, produced material that made me take a step back and remap the project, to give greater emphasis to what could be labelled 'socio-political identity', rather than a straightforward socio-economic structural analysis. In addition, one of the most important organisations is the CELS (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales), an NGO established in 1979, which is dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights and strengthening Argentina's democratic system.[340]

During fieldwork period, I stayed in the north area of Buenos Aires (No.1640 *Rodríguez Peña* nearby '*Avenidad Callao* 1600). This comprised a politically active neighbourhood, so everyday streets protests could be easily observed. Details of upcoming protests or marching plans could be gathered readily from the participants, or via independent journalists working on the streets under the name of '*piquetero* journalists' (www.anred. org)'. Another advantage of the neighbourhood was that it was convenient for reaching many local research institutes and academies, including CLASO, the UBA and the Universidad Popular y Madres de Plaza de Mayo - organisations that provided much information in the form of daily and weekly newsletters, published books which were written by social movement intellectuals and

---

340 Besides studies produce by these entities, a recent entitled 'The social protest in Argentina. Economic transformation and social crisis in the interior' (Giarraca and collaborators: 2001) that looks at changes in social protest since democratisation in the 1980s. Within the different articles of this book, Schuster and Pereyra observe that since 1983 there was a disarticulation of the union matrix as dominant protest institution and a progressive fragmentation in the protest organisations, identities and demands. Then Barbetta and Lapegna study the wave of roadblocks in the province of Salta, following a similar line of argument to the cited authors. Moreover, it is important to note that lately, several academics began to develop research on the new means of protest; Among these new studies, there is a research on elaboration by CELS, in which Capurro Robles and Itchart focus in the criminalisation and repression of the protests, stressing the dilemma of what is to be prioritised: the right to protest against situations that attempt basic rights or the right to free circulation that is affected with the mobilizations in public roads, streets and plazas. Finally, after the events of December 2001, there have been a few short books published in Argentina (Cafassi: 2002, Fontana et. al.: 2002, Oviedo: 2001) on the pickets, cacerolazos and neighbourhood assemblies. These books are mainly oral history testimony and politically biased. However, it is worth acknowledging that the flow of publications reflects the high level of mobilisation and increasing public interest on the topic.

protesters relating their own history. Video material which detailed the unemployed movement mobilisations and the history of working class resistance in Argentina was forthcoming through the 'Biblioteca Popular'.

In La Plata, I joined a grassroots organisation, called 'MUP 20', as well as befriended a member of the 'Video Alavo' group, who took me to a protest in front of La Plata's municipality. Thereafter, my network of contacts snowballed. In Quilmes, my first 'gatekeeper' at the local and academic level was Lic. Marcero Gómez from the La Universidad National Quilmes (UNQUIS), who was also investigating contemporary social problems, especially informal labour and protest. He kindly advised me about current informal labour reality. In the UBA's Social Science and Politics Faculty, I participated in many conferences and seminars on issues such as 'Peronism' and 'Sindicalismo', 2004 being the fiftieth anniversary of Perón's death. In particular, through the monthly 'Foro Ciudad Política - Praxis and Ciencia Política', it was possible to meet Peronist labour leaders, who allowed me to interview them about the unemployed movement.

The primary, and most time consuming, method of data collection was conducting participation observation of street protests and interviews in the 'Plaza de Mayo'. Many formal and informal interviews were recorded with leaders, members of the various UMOs and intellectuals related with the unemployed movement. Data collection was based on a snowball sampling approach, along with formal and informal interviews, as well as in-depth conversations. Dr. Ana Dinestein (University of Bath) kindly introduced me to many organisation leaders and academics in Buenos Aires before fieldwork started. In the field, I met the 'Group Alavio', led by Fabian (who calls himself 'Video Che'), who formed my first 'gatekeeper' and presented me to the target

group, beginning with an UMO based in La Plata (7 September 2003), called MUP20.

<div align="center">

Photo A.1:

Young Members of the MUP 20

</div>

Photo taken in La Plata, 7 September 2003.

Photo A.2:

MUP 20 and their roadblock and street march

Photo taken in La Plata, 7 September 2003.

From the MUP 20, access was gained to other affiliated organisations and leaders in La Plata and Buenos Aires. As secondary data, articles published in local newspapers, such as *'Clarín'*, *'La Nación'*, *'Página 12'*, as well as weekly journals, were utilised (including their websites). These sources helped me monitor the everyday activity of the movements over several conurbations. Many internet resources were also useful as supplementary sources: *'Poder & Sociedad'*, *'Vein-Ti-Trés'*, *'Noticias'*, *'Dia 8'* and *'Debate'*, which helped me understand the broad history of the unemployed movement and public responses to it at the local level as well.

Participant Observation in Buenos Aires

Participant observation comprised an important method of data collection, generating with numerous observation being conducted on the streets of Buenos Aires, as well as via recordings of protest music and poetry delivered at *Convocatorios* (Assemblies). The speeches and debates occurring in these fora were also observed and noted. Additionally, I regularly marched together with the *piqueteros* through the streets, from the outlying assembly points to the city centre, and then to the regular final meeting places, where speeches would be delivered.

Why the 'Plaza de Mayo'?

To borrow a metaphor from Svampa and Pereyra, now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century 'the plazas are again beginning to fill up'. What they call the 'emptying of the plaza' describes the profound change under neo-liberalism that vacated the symbolic place of encounter between the protector-state and the people; that is, the geographic heart of the nationalist-populism of previous decades: the plaza (2003: 202). Today, the plaza is filled with new protagonists, and different social and political subjects still in the process of formation. As one perceptive commentato has observed, 'these multitudes have their own reasons and symbols for mobilizing, but they have no single leader, nor are they in search of one' (Gilly, 2005: 39). In Argentina, the 'Plaza de Mayo' always has been a popular gathering spot for the unemployed movement as political assemblies in Buenos Aires. It is also a political place related with the *Casa Rosada*, which houses the executive branch of Argentine politics. Leading away from the plaza is *Avenida de Mayo*, one of the grandest avenues in the Buenos Aires, stretching for thirteen blocks, culminating in the *Congresso Nacional*. Also there is one of the founders of the *Madres*

de Plaza de Mayo, the most well-known human rights movement in Argentina, stated

that the Plaza needs to remain a symbol of freedom or human rights for the country.

Photo A.3:
'Disappeared 30,000 People are Present': Madres de Plaza de Mayo

Photo taken in Plaza de Mayo, 4 May 2004.

The Madres' clamour for '*justicia y castigo*' ('justice and punishment') for the

impunity given to those quilty of heinous crimes during the last brutal dictatorship, and

la Madres' stubborn and noble desire to keep the political struggles of their disappeared

children alive, are being cheapened by the symbols of the state being sold around them.

However, on many occasions, the repertoire of human rights became replaced by the

economic issues which affected the unemployed movement, a confederation of political

and social groups comprised of the unemployed and the poor.

Photo A.4:

'No Payment of the External Debt': Madres de Plaza de Mayo

Photo taken in Plaza de Mayo, 11 May 2004.

The unemployed movement, when undertaking its most common forms of political expression, marches and roadblocks, always reached this place and made it their finale for everyday protests. So, the Plaza de Mayo frequently became a public political sphere, which was given additional symbolism by a barricaded *Casa Rosada*.

Photo A.5:
Barricaded Casa Rosada

Photo taken in Plaza de Mayo, 2 October 2003.

The unemployed movement and their various UMOs were always here, in the middle of all of Argentina's various seats of power (nearby national Congress, Minister of Labour) asking to be heard by their continuous presence in the Plaza. While the policies they sought - attention to their plight, new jobs - were diluted in the midst of the infinite protests that had carpeted Argentina since the economic meltdown of 2001, these protesters felt they were left with no other recourse, no other space to claim.

Perhaps their occupations of the 'Plaza de Mayo' (including 'national Congress' and the 'Minister of Labour', etc.) would eventually take on the same cultural and political

force that the Madres's march had. For many destitute Argentines, these types of occupations seemed to be the only political recourse left to them. The images of barricaded fences pointed to the reactive force of the state that was much too often unleashed on the invigorated and active counterforce of the marginalised classes. These tools of state repression sharply contrasted with the peaceful determination of the Madres' campaign, or the claims for dignity and work that made up the consignas of the unemployed movement.

Photo A.6:

The Unemployed Movement in the national Congress

Photo taken in Argentine National Congress, 4 November 2003.

Photo taken at the Minister of Labour, 22 October 2003.

Observation and reflections arising during the course of fieldwork were routinely noted in a logbook. As mentioned, during the course of fieldwork a wide range of UMO meetings were attended, as well as participation taking place in their street activities. Frequent involvement (see Table A.1), facilitated the conducting of interviews and also allowed observation of the unemployed people's everyday life at close quarters, providing a useful informal context for discussing themes related to my research questions.

Table A.1:

Participant observation, September 2003-September 2004

(Plaza de Mayo, National Congress and Ministry of Labour)

Dates	UMOs	Issues (demands)
3 September 2003	BPN, PO, MTD Aníbal Verón, MIJD and workers from factories taken (Zanón)	Further increased social assistance (up to 350 *pesos*) and minimum wage 800 *pesos* (US$ 269).
7/8 October 2003	BPN, PO, MTD Aníbal Verón, MIJD, among others	Protest against hunger and demand that government sever ties with the IMF and create jobs.
3/4November 2003	Almost forty organisations, representing families of UMOs, including PO, MTL and MTR. Estimated almost 50,000 unemployed people participated	Protest against the government's decision to file charges against a group of UMOs and labour unions that had surrounded and closed off all entrances to the Labor Ministry building on 22 October
10 November 2003	MTD Aníbal Verón, MTR, Barrios de Pie and MUP	Protest at the rift between Duhalde and President Kirchner.
20 Novemebr 2003	The UMOs, labour unions and leftist groups.	To commemorate the second anniversary of the fall of the De la Rua administration.
18 December 2003	Barrios de Pie, MTD Aníbal Verón, CCC and BPN	Protest keeping police forces at a distance to avoid provoking reactions from the UMOs.
22 December 2003	MIJD, BPN and MST Teresa Vive	Protest on the second anniversary of the resignation of former President Fernando de la Rua
26 January 2004	(i) MTD Aníbal Verón; (ii) Participation of about 20,000 protesters from approximately 30 unions and social groups	(i) Demand an investigation into the killing of two protesters by police during a demonstration on 26 June 2002; (ii) demand the government investigate an explosion that occurred on 20 December during a protest at the Plaza de Mayo.
6/11 February 2004	MST Teresa Vive and MIJD	Increased social subsidies

Date	Group	Description
11 February 2004	MIJD, CCC and radical leftist groups. Estimated about 15,000 people participated.	Protest the annulment of the labour law.
12/February 2004	Barrios de Pie	Protest in front of private companies, including Hotel Sheraton, Citibank and offices of Shell.
18 February 2004	National day of the UMOs	Protest modification to the Código Contravencional, marched to Congress against reformed labour laws.
19 February 2004	BPN	Labour issues in the legislative and march on the Congress
23 February 2004	MTD Aníbal Verón and others	Demand social assistance in the Ministerio de Desarrollo Social and protest against new labour reform
26 February 2004	About 3,000 protesters, including many groups of UMOs	Protest against new labour law proposed by the President. Blocked Puente Pueyrredón in commemoration of the 20 months anniversary of state violence at the Avellaneda train station where two people were killed, then marched to the Plaza de Mayo.
8 March 2004 (International Women's Day)	MIJD, PO, MTD Aníbal Verón and others	Marched to the Plaza de Mayo in support of workers rights and to protest against payment of foreign debt.
15 March 2004	CCC	Announced a 'week of national struggle' (*semana de lucha nacional*) to be held throughout the country, protest government labour and social policies.
16 March 2004	More than 5,000 members participated in marches and road closures	Protest at governments' social policy and ask the government to provide financial assistance to the thousands of people who have been left unemployed by recession. The government continues to say that it will not give in to what it calls the UMOs' 'extortion'.
26 March 2004	MTD Aníbal Verón	Blocked the Puente Pueyrredón this morning in commemoration of the assassination of two people at Avellaneda.

13 April 2004	CCC	Massive road blockage held nationwide to protest government social and economic policies; and tried to enlist the support of other labour groups in order for protest to have maximum impact.
6 May 2004	MIJD, CCC and BPN	MIJD took over toll booths along the Panamericana, Ricchieri and La Plata-Buenos Aires highways where they allowed cars to pass through freely, thus depriving the government of significant amounts of money. CCC in Retiro to the Ministry of Labour.
10 May 2004	BPN and CCC	Protest against a government-proposed system of providing welfare payments by way of a preloaded debit card, which can be used to withdraw funds from any ATM machine or used at point of sale as a debit card*
12 May 2004	BPN, MTR and CCC Estimated 120 roadblocks as national level	Demand an increase in unemployment payments (from 150 to 350 *pesos*); an increase in the salaries of state employees; the intervention of the state in the operations of petroleum and energy companies; and the overturning of the high court ruling that determined roadblocks constitute a crime.
13 May 2004	Almost 1,000 members of MTR	Burned tyres in front of the Repsol YPF offices and threw Molotov cocktails at the building, forcing the evacuation of employees
20 May 2004	Various UMOs	Attacked private companies: Repsol YPF against an increase in the price of gas; the highway agency (ticket booths) enabling travelers to ride for free.
5 June 2004	Some 10,000 by the UMOs, including leftist militants, union members and human rights activists	Protest in front of the US Embassy, criticising US foreign policy and the sending of Argentine troops to Haiti; demonstrators burned flags and effigies.
10/June 2004	About 5,000 members of the MIJD	Marched to Repsol YPF headquarters demanding gas tanks and reducing its prices;

		obtained lots of free gas tanks for cooking as demanded.
14-20/June 2004	'Federal Week of Struggle' (*Semana Federal de Lucha*), throughout the country by various UMOs.	Weeklong protest with a march from the Rivadavia park to the three 'political powers': National Congress, Supreme Court and Plaza de Mayo.
15 June 2004	About 50 members held a protest in front of the Sheraton Hotel's convention center in Buenos Aires.	Protest directed against an IMF delegation lodging at the Sheraton; others blocked the ticket booths at the Constitución train station and allowed passengers to board trains without paying.
18 June 2004	BPN, PO and CCC. Estimated over 30,000 demonstrators	Protest before Congress, the Supreme Court and the Casa Rosada.
23 June 2004	MIJD and MTD Aníbal Verón	Took over toll booths on the highways leading into Buenos Aires, allowing drivers to pass freely into the capital. MTD Aníbal Verón blocked the Puente Pueryyedón in remembrance of the two year anniversary of the killing of two *piqueteros* at a protest
25/26 June 2004	MTD Aníbal Verón, PO, MIJD and CCC	MTD Aníbal Verón groups held a 24-hour long blockade of the Puente Pueyrredón to commemorate the second anniversary of the killing of two fellow members by police on 26 June 2002. Other UMOs marched to the Plaza de Mayo, where they also commemorated the anniversary of the killings.
14 July 2004	MIJD, CCC, BNP, MTD Aníbal Verón and others held a national day of protest	Marched along Avenida de Mayo and 9 de Julio and united at Plaza de Mayo. MIJD did not participate in the demonstration. Instead, they marched to the centre of Buenos Aires and protested in front of public buildings and offices of private enterprises.
16July 2004	500 members, street vendors and others	Stormed the legislature during a five hour-long protest against a proposed reform to the civil

		code.
22 July 2004	BPN, CCC, MTD Aníbal Verón, MTV and MTL	Protest against pending legislation and continued detention of 17 members arrested in 16 July 2004.
26 July 2004	Barrios de Pie, FTV, MTD Evita and other groups	Marched to commemorate the 52nd anniversary of the death of Eva Perón
4 August 2004	Between 10,000 and 15,000 members from the various UMOs	Demonstrated against the Contraventional Code.
6 August 2004	BPN and MST Teresa Vive	At Panamerican Energy office building, protested to demand the reinstatement of 115 unemployed workers.
13 August 2004	BPN	Marched on Congress to support Venezuelan President Chávez, who faces a recall referendum on Sunday (15 August 2004).
26/27 August 2004	BPN, FTC and MTD Aníbal Verón	BNP groups encamped in Plaza de Mayo. More than 1,200 members moved into the tents. The FTC blocked ticket booths at the Constitution train station. MTD Aníbal Verón blocked the Puente Pueyrredon bridge.
30 August 2004	MIJD	Against arrest of Castell, MIJD leader related to 16 July MIJD takeover of the Casino Gala in Resistencia
1 September 2004	About 2,000 members of protesters from various UMOs	Against visit of IMF managing director on short visit to negotiate new terms on Argentina's debt. Protesters opposed to repaying foreign debt, as they blamed IMF for country's economic woes. Elsewhere, masked protesters carrying clubs fought police in the street between the presidential palace and the Economy Ministry, where the IMF director was meeting with the Economic Minister
2 September 2004	MIJD and CCC	MIJD demanded the release of the group's leader, Raúl Castells. CCC in front of the Ministry of Labour, where they protested for better salaries

3 September 2004	CCC and MTD Aníbal Verón	Roadblock the Puente Pueyrredon and demand an investigation into the killing of two *compañeros* on 26 July 2002.
9 September 2004	Militant members who were belonging to Castell's MIJD along with other UMOs	Protest against various laws and continued detention of Castells and other labour issues.

Interviews

The interview was the principal technique used to collect data. This section details: (i) the selection of formal and informal interviews; (ii) the interview structure and information solicited; and (iii) the process of conducting the interviews.

(i) *selection of interviewees*: a total of 85 (anonymous) interviews with UMO members were undertaken during fieldwork. In-depth interviews were conducted employing a previously elaborated 'semi-structured' guide. Interviews were whenever possible taped, with questions being ommited or included as the research progressed my knowledge of the context improved.

(ii) *the interview structure*: I marched with groups through the streets in Buenos Aires, where I performed random interviews with members of the UMOs and their leaders. Initially, I chose to concentrate the interviews largely on the leaders, since they generally have more information about the organising experience and the use of protest. The leaders then introduced me to the UMOs members, unemployed people who were willing to tell us their stories. I have utilised these interviews to describe the general situation of the unemployed movement. The interviews were largely unstructured, although I had previously defined general 'themes'. Aware of the fact that unstructured interviews would leave me with the difficulty to interpret and structure the answers, I asked different members largely the same questions in order to diminish the risk of

getting false or subjective information. For example, when investigating the political

identity of the UMOs, I turned to many groups leaders as well as regular members.

Some of the information I got in a few groups proved difficult to obtain in another,

which made total comparisons impossible. However, I felt that the local study has given

me enough insight to discuss the collective identity that influences unemployed people's

politics. In-depth interviews with the UMOs members were conducted by means of a

semi-structured questionnaire - prior to proceeding with the bulk of interviews, which

was then modified accordingly. Some questions were 'closed' and sought basic

information on a respondent's socio-economic background. Most questions were,

however, of an 'open' nature and sought to gain an insight into the rationale behind a

movement's political strategies and decision-making, in addition to a deeper exploration

of respondent's thoughts and opinions on a range of related themes. The interviews

were conducted in a relatively informal manner, and in this respect possessed the

flexibility to incorporate and develop new questions and issues that emerged during the

interview process. The interview guide encompassed the following topics: i) the current

socio-economic situation; ii) political strategies and thoughts about the socio-political

system; iii) symbols, values and ideologies contained in the movements; iv) Argentina's

democratic prospects, etc. These interviews sought to provide a broad and detailed

understanding of the unemployed movement and its collective identity. My intention

was to gather as wide a range of perspectives as possible vis-à-vis the issues studied

from those actively involved in mobilisations; and

(iii) *conducting the interviews*: interviewing an unemployed protester can be both

frightening and inspiring. Some protesters blocked the road covered their faces - in

order to protect their identity - and had poles in their hands ready to fight the police

(confrontations have occurred and people have been killed by the police). Given the potential for violence, it was not always possible to interview every group to discuss the reasons for their protest, but I thought that the roadblock is also an open public sphere, both for interviewer and interviewees. It is a space to meet easily to talk about their protests. Most interviews were taped for subsequent analysis and transcription. The length of interviews varied (most were between 20 and 30 minutes). Given the ground to be covered, often it was not possible to talk about all issues in one sitting. Carrying out repeat interviews was deemed preferable to excessive extended and continuous probing over successive themes.

Documentary and statistical sources

Throughout the fieldwork period I continued to revise additional documentary material. This included publications and statistical information from local institutions (OSAL in CLACSO) and official sources (INDEC, the Minister of Labour), in addition to any relevant research that had been carried out at the academic level. News reports and similar sources were also monitored. In the course of the thesis I have made reference, in particular, to information drawn from various censuses. Census data is useful in that it allows for reference to a far wider sample frame and range of statistical material that would be feasible for an individual researcher to acquire. I have also used official statistics that could also be identified from interviews, observations or other sources and regard such material as illustrative rather than as precise and incontestable data. I also attempted to compare statistical evidence from various sources whenever this was possible (information on the numbers of the unemployed movement and related issues about social problems, for example, was available via the *Nueva Mayoría* – a source

that I concluded was likely to be more accurate, given records are updated and used year by year).

Bibliography

Index to the bibliography: (i) official publications; (ii) newspapers and periodicals; (iii) books; (iv) contributions to books; (v) articles in journals; (vi) working papers; (vii) unpublished theses; (viii) conference papers; (ix) electronic sources (statistical data, the UMOs and useful sources in the websites).

(i)   Official Publications

CELS-Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, **El Estado Frente a La Protesta Social: 1996-2002** (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2003).

CEP-Cuadernos de Educación Popular, **Cortando las Rutas del Petróleo, Memorias Piqueteras: Sistematización de la Experiencia de Lucha de la Unión de Trabajadores Desocupados de General Mosconi** (Buenos Aires: Universidad Popular Madres de Plaza de Mayo, 2003).

ECLAC-Economic Commission for Latin America and the Carribbean, **Equidad, Desarrollo y Ciudadanía** (Santiago, Chile: United Nations Publication, 2000), in http://www.clacso.org/wwwclacso/espanol/html/publicaciones/fcatalogo.html

ECLAC-Economic Commission for Latin America and the Carribbean, **Equity, Development and Citizenship** (Santiago, Chile: United Nations Publication, 2001).

HIJOS (La Plata)-Hijas e Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia contra el Olvido y el Silencio, **La Criminalización de la Protesta Social** (La Plata, Argentina: Ediciones Grupo La Grieta, 2003).

IADB-Inter-American Development Bank, **Country Program Evaluation (CPE): Argentina 1990-2002** (Washington, D.C.: Office of Evaluation and Oversight; OVE, 2004).

IILS-International Institute for Labour Studies, **Labor Standards and Informal Employment in Latin America** (Geneva: ILO, 2002), in http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/

MEP-Mesa de Escrache Popular, **Genocida en el Barrio** (Buenos Aires: Ediciones De Mano En Mano, 2002).

OSAL-Observatorio Social de América Latina 2004 (Buenos Aires: CLACSO) N° 13, January-April.

OSAL-Observatorio Social de América Latina 2003 (Buenos Aires: CLACSO) N° 11, May-August; N° 12, September-December.

OSAL-Observatorio Social de América Latina 2002 (Buenos Aires: CLACSO) N° 7, June.

OSAL-Observatorio Social de América Latina 2001 (Buenos Aires: CLACSO) N° 4, June.

SEU-Social Exclusion Unit, 'Opportunity for All: Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion', summary of the UK Labour Government's First Report on Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion, CM 4445, the Stationery Office in London (September 1999).

(ii)   Newspapers and Periodicals

Buenos Aires Herald, http://www.buenosairesherald.com/

Clarín, http://www.clarin.com/

Economist, 'Democracy's Low-Level Equilibrium', (14 August 2004), 35–6.

LA Nación, http://www.lanacion.com/

Le Monde Diplomatique, Rofman, A., 'El Estado abandona a miles de pequeños productores: destrucción de las economías provinciales', Buenos Aires: **Le Monde Diplomatique** Southern Cone edition, 6-7 August 2000.

NACLA, 'Social Movements: Building from the Ground Up', **NACLA Report on the Americas**, 38: 5 (March/April 2005), 13.

Página 12, http://www.pagina12.com.ar

Página 12, 'Un Mapa Piquetero: Internas, Posicionses y Divergencias en un movimiento multiple', **Anuario 03** (2003), 61-63.

The Guardian, 'Out of the Ordinary', by Klein, N., (25 January 2003), available in http://www.guardian.co.uk/weekend/story/0,3605,880651,00.html

World Press Review, 'Argentina's New Social Protagonists', (26 September 2002), available in http://www.worldpress.org/Americas/789.cfm

(iii)   Books

Abel, C. and Lewis, C. M. (eds). **Exclusion and Engagement: Social Policy in Latin America** (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 2002).

Abercrombie, N., Hill, S. and Turner, B. S. (eds). **The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology** (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

Alexander, R. J. **The Perón Era** (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965).

Almeyra, G. **La Protesta Social en la Argentina, 1990-2004** (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Continente, 2004).

Altimir, O. and Beccaria, L. **El Mercado de Trabajo Bajo el Nuevo Régimen Económico en Argentina** (Santiago de Chile: CEPAL, 1999).

Alvarez, S. E., Dagnino, E. and Escobar, A. (eds). **Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998).

Amin, A. **Post-Fordism: A Reader** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

Alvesson, M. and Sköldberg, K. (eds). **Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research** (London: Sage, 2000).

Amin, S., Arrighi, G., Frank, A. G. and Wallerstein, I. (eds). **Civil Democracy: Social Movements in Recent World History** (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991).

Anguita, E. **Cartoneros: Recuperadores de Desechos y Causas Perdidas** (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2003).

Assies, W., Burgwal, G. and Salman, T. (eds). **Structures of Power, Movements of Resistance: An Introduction to the Theories of Urban Movements in Latin America** (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1990).

Archetti, E. P., Cammack, P. and Roberts, B. (eds). **Latin America** (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987).

Auyero, J. **Poor People's Politics: Peronist Survival Networks and the Legacy of Evita** (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

Auyero, J. **La Protesta: Retratos de la Beligerancia Popular en la Argentina Democrática** (Buenos Aires: Libros del Rojas, 2002).

Bell, D. **The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting** (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1974).

Bell, D. **The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism** (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

Boggs, C. **Gramsci's Marxism** (London: Pluto Press, 1976).

Bombal, I. G. **Respuestas de la Sociedad Civil a la Emergencia Social** (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad; CEDES, 2003).

Bombal, I. G., Garay, C. and Potenza, F. (eds). **Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil y Políticas Sociales en la Argentina de los Noventa** (Buenos Aires: CEDES, 2003).

Bombal, I. G., Svampa. M. and Bergel, P. (eds). **Nuevo Movimientos Sociales y ONGs en la Argentina de la Crisis** (Buenos Aires: Centro de Estudios de Estado y Sociedad; CEDES, 2003).

Brysk, A. **The Politics of Human Rights in Argentina: Protest, Change, and Democratization** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

Buechler, S. **Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism: The Political Economy and Cultural Construction of Social Activism** (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Burbach, R. **Globalization and Postmodern Politics: From Zapatistas to High-Tech Robber Barons** (London: Pluto Press, 2001).

Bynner, J. **Risks and Outcomes of Social Exclusion: Insights from Longitudinal Data** (London: Institute of Education in the University of London, 2002).

Byrne, D. **Social Exclusion** (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999).

Caram, O. **Que Se Vaya Todos: Asambleas, Horizontes y Resistencias** (Rosario, Argentina: Manuel Suárez, 2002).

Castañeda, J. G. **Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left after the Cold War** (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).

Castel, R. **La Metamorfosis de la Cuestión Social: Una Crónica del Salariado** (Buenos Aires: Paidós Estado y Sociedad, 1995).

Castells, M. **City, Class and Power** (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978).

Castells, M. **The City at the Grassroots** (London: Edward Arnold, 1983).

Castells, M. **The Information Age: Vol.1, The Network Society** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

Castells, M. **The Information Age: Vol. III, End of Millennium** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

Castells, M. **The Power of Identity** (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

Casullo, N. **Sobre la Marcha: Cultura y Política en la Argentina, 1984-2004** (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2004).

Cavarozzi, M. **Autoritarismo y Democracia, 1955-1983** (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1983).

Chalmers, D. A., Vilas, C. M., Hite, K. Martin, S. B., Piester, K. and Segarra, M. (eds). **The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America: Rethinking Participation and Representation** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Clark, J. and Diani, M. A. (eds). **Sociology of the Subject** (London: Falmer Press, 1996).

Cohen, J. and Arato, A. (eds). **Civil Society and Political Theory** (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

Coleman, J. S. **Foundations of Social Theory** (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Collier, R. B. and Collier, D. (eds). **Shaping the Political Arena** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Cortázar, J. and Weaver, K. (trans). **Nicaraguan Sketches** (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989).

Corradi, J. E. **The Fitful Republic: Economy, Society, and Politics in Argentina** (Boulder: Westview Press: 1985).

Costain, A. **Inviting Women's Rebellion: A Political Process Interpretation of the Women's Movement** (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

Crawley, E. **A House Divided: Argentina, 1880-1980** (London: Hurst & Company, 1985).

Crossley, N. **Making Sense of Social Movements** (London: Open University Press, 2002).

Cubitt, T. **Latin American Society** (Essex: Longman, 1985).

Curtis, R. and Aguirre, B. (eds). **Collective Behavior and Social Movements** (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1993).

Dahrendorf, R. **Report on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion in a Free Society** (London: Commission on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion, 1995)

Darnovsky, M., Eptstein, B. and Flacks, R. (eds). **Cultural Politics and Social Movements** (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

Day, R. F. **Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements** (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

De Ferranti, D., Perry, G. E., Gill, I. S. and Servén, L. (eds). **Securing Our Future in a Global Economy** (Washington: World Bank Latin American and Caribbean Studies, 2000).

De la Balze, F. M. **Remaking the Argentine Economy** (New York: Council of Foreign Relations, 1995).

Delamata, G. **Los Barrios Desbordados: Las Organizaciones de Desocupados del Gran Buenos Aires** (Buenos Aires: Libros del Rojas, 2004).

Della Porta, D. and Diani, M. (eds.) **Social Movements: An Introduction** (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

Deutsch, S. M. **Counterrevolution in Argentina, 1900-1932** (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

Dicken, P. **Global Shift** (London: Paul Chapman, 1992).

Dietz, H. **Urban Poverty, Political Participation, and the State: Lima 1970-1990** (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998).

Di Marco, G. and Palomino, H. (eds). **Movimientos Sociales en la Argentina, Asambleas: La Politización de la Sociedad Civil** (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de San Martín and Jorge Baudino Ediciones, 2003).

Di Mauro, J. Á. **¿Que se vayan Todos?: Crónica del Derrumbe Político** (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2003).

Di Tella, G. **Argentina Under Perón 1973–1976: The Nation's Experience With a Labour-Based Government** (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1983).

Di Tella, G. and Braun, C. (eds). **Argentina, 1946-83: The Economic Ministers Speak** (London: Macmillan Press: 1990).

Di Tella, G. and Dornbudch, R. (eds). **The Political Economy of Argentina, 1946-83** (London: Macmillan Press: 1989).

Dornbusch, R. and Edwards, S. (eds). **Macroeconomic Populism in Latin America** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

Echagüe, H. L. **La Política Está en Otra Parte: Viaje al Interior de los Nuevos Movimientos Sociales** (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2002).

Eckstein, S. **Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movement** (California: University of California Press, 1989).

Eder, K. **The New Politics of Class: Social Movements and Cultural Dynamics in Advanced Societies** (London: Sage, 1993).

Erro, D. E. **Resolving the Argentine Paradox: Politics and Development, 1966-1992** (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993).

Escobar, A. and Alvarez, S. (eds). **The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Dmocracy** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

Eyerman, R. and Jamison, A. (eds). **Social Movements: A Cognitive Approach** (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991).

Fajn, G. **Fábricas y Empresas Recuperadas: Protesta Social, Autogestión y Rupturas en la Subjetividad** (Buenos Aires: Centro Cultural de la Cooperación, 2003).

Ferrara, F. **Más Allá del Corte de Ruta: La Lucha Por Una Nueva Subjectividad** (Argentina: La Rosa Blindada, 2003).

Finlay, L. and Gough, B. **Reflexivity: A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Science** (Oxford: Blackwell Science, 2003).

Flores, T. **De la Culpa a la Autogestión: Un Recorrido del Movimiento de Trabajadores Desocupados de la Matanza** (Buenos Aires: MTD Editora, 2002).

Fontana, E. **19 y 20: Apuentes para el Nuevo Protagonismo Social** (Buenos Aires: Ediciones De Mano En Mano, 2002).

Foweraker, J. **Popular Mobilisation in Mexico: The Teachers' Movement 1977- 87** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Foweraker, J. **Theorizing Social Movements** (London: Pluto Press, 1995).

Foweraker, J. and Landman, T. (eds). **Citizenship Rights and Social Movements: A Comparative and Statistical Analysis** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Freeman, J. and Johnson, V. (eds). **Waves of Protest: Social Movements Since the Sixties** (Maryland and Colorado: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999).

Galasso, N. **Del Televisor a la Cacerola: Desventuras y Replanteos de un Hombre de la Clase Media de Buenos Aires** (Buenos Aires: Astralib, 2003).

Gallie, D. and Paugam, S. (eds). **Welfare Regimes and the Experience of Unemployment in Europe** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Gamson, W. A. **The Strategies of Social Protest** (Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1975).

Gamson, W. A. **Talking Politics** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Giarracca, N. **La Protesta Social en la Argentina: Transformaciones Económicas y Crisis Social en el Interior del País** (Buenos Aires: Alianza Editorial, 2001).

Gilbert, A. **The Latin American City** (London: Latin American Bureau, 1998).

Giugni, M., McAdam, D. and Tilly, C. (eds). **How Social Movements Matter** (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

Glade, W. **State Shrinking** (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1986).

Gledhill, J. **Power and its Disguises: Anthropological Perspectives on Politics**

(London: Pluto Press, 2000).

Godio, J. **Historia del Movimiento Obrero Argentino, 1870-2000, Tomo II: La Época de Hegemonía del Sindicalismo Peronista, 1943-2000** (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2000).

Godio, J. **Argenina: En la Crisis está la Solución, La Crisis Global desde las Elecciones de Octubre de 2001 hasta la Asunción de Duhalde** (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2002).

Goode, L. **Jürgen Habermas: Democracy and the Public Sphere** (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

Gould, R. **Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

Gramsci, A. **Selections from the Prison Notebooks**. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

Haberman, J. **Legitimation Crisis** (London: Heinemann, 1973).

Habermas, J. and McCarthy, T. (trans). **The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System** (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).

Habermas, J. and Burger, T. (trans). **The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society** (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

Hammersley, M. **What is Wrong with Enthnology: Methodological Explorations** (London: Routledge, 1992).

Harvey, D. **The Condition of Postmodernity** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

Harvey, D. **The New Imperialism** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Hayden, T. **The Zapatista Reader** (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002).

Higley, J. and Gunther, R. (eds). **Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

Iriarte, A. **La Argentina Fragmentada: Aspectos de la Nueva Cuestión Social** (Buenos Aires: Proyecto Editorial, 2001).

James, D. **Resistance and Integration: Peronism and the Argentine Working Class, 1946-1976** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

James, D. **Dona Maria's Story: Life, History, Memory, and Political Identity** (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000).

Jelin, E. **State Repression and the Struggles for Memory** (London: Latin America Bureau, 2003).

Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (eds). **Social Movements and Culture** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

Jordan, G. and Weedon, C. (eds). **Cultural Politics: Class, Gender, Race and the Postmodern World** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

Jordan, T. **Activism! Direct Action, Hacktivism and the Future of Society** (London: Reaktion Books, 2002).

Kenny, M. **The Politics of Identity: Liberal Political Theory and the Dilemmas of Difference** (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).

Kirby, P. **Introduction to Latin America: Twenty-First Century Challenges** (London: SAGE, 2003).

Kirkpatrick, J. **Leaders and Vanguard in Mass Society: A Study of Peronist Argentina** (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1971).

Klandermans, B. **The Social Psychology of Protest** (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997).

Klandermans, B. and Staggenborg, S. (eds). **Methods of Social Movement Research** (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Kohan, A. ¡ **A Las Calles ! Una Historia de los Movimientos Piqueteros y Caceroleros de los '90 al 2002** (Buenos Aires: Colihue, 2002).

Laclau, E. **Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory** (London: Verso, 1977).

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (eds). **Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics** (London: Verso, 1985).

Laraña, E. L., Johnston, H. and Gusfield, J. (eds). **New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity** (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

Lash, S. and Urry, J. (eds). **The End of Organised Capitalism** (Cambridge: Polity, 1987).

Levitsky, S. **Transforming Labor-Based Parties in Latin America: Argentine Peronism in Comparative Perspective** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Levy, M. L. **We are Millions: Neo-liberalism and New Forms of Political Action in Argentina** (London: Latin America Bureau, 2004).

Lewis, C. M. and Torrents, N. (eds). **Argentina in the Crisis Years (1983-1990): From Alfonsín to Menem** (London: Institute of Latin American Studies: 1993).

Lewis, P. H. **The Crisis of Argentine Capitalism** (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

Lewkowicz, I. **Sucesos Argentinos: Cacerolazo y Subjetividad Postestatal** (Buenos Aires: PAIDÓS, 2002).

Lievesley, G. **Democracy in Latin America: Mobilization, Power and the Search for a New Politics** (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).

Linz, J. J. and Valenzuela, A. (eds). **The Failure of Presidential Democracy: The Case of Latin America** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

Lobato, M. and Suriano, J. (eds). **La Protesta Social en la Argentina** (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económia, 2003).

López, M. M. **Lucha Popular, Democracia, Neoliberalismo: Protesta Popular en América Latina en los Años del Ajuste** (Venezuela: Nueva Sociedad, 1999).

Lowe, S. **Urban Social Movements: The City After Castells** (London: Macmillan, 1985).

Lyman, S. **Social Movements: Critiques, Concept, Case Studies** (New York: New York University Press, 1995).

Maheu, L. **Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action** (London: SAGE, 1995).

Mallon, R. and Sourrouille, J. V. (eds). **Policy Making in a Conflictive Society: the Argentine Case** (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

Mann, M. **Consciousness and Action among the Western Working Class** (London: Macmillan, 1973).

Mansilla, I. S. and Conti, R. A. (eds). **Piqueteros: Una Mirada Histórica** (Buenos Aires: Cooperativa Editora Astralib, 2003).

Manzetti, L. **Privatization South American Style** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

María, J. and Moyano, P. (eds). **Asambleas Vecinales y Barriales: Futuro Poder Ciudadano** (Buenos Aires: Printher, 2003).

Marsh, D. and Stoker, G. (eds). **Theory and Methods in Political Science** (London: MacMillan Press, 1995).

Marshall, T. H. and Bottomore, T. (eds). **Citizenship and Social Class** (London: Pluto Press, 1992).

Marx, K., 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte [1852]', in Marx-Engels. **Selected Works** (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1968).

Marx, K. and Engels, F. (eds). **The German Ideology** (Moscow: Progress Publishers, [1846] 1976).

Mason, J. **Qualitative Researching** (London: Saga, 1996).

Maxwell, J. A. **Qualitative Research Design: An Integrative Approach** (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996).

Mazzeo, M. **Piqueteros: Notas para una Tipología** (Buenos Aires: Fundación de Investigaciones Sociales y Políticas; FISyP, 2004).

Mazzetti, A. **Piqueteros: Protesta Social e Identidad Colectiva** (Buenos Aires: Folios de Estudios Sociales, 2004).

McAdam, D. **Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (eds). **Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S. and Tilly, C. (eds). **Dynamics of Contention** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

McGuire, J. **Peronism without Perón: Unions, Parties, and Democracy in Argentina** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997)

McQuail, D. **Mass Communication Theory** (London: Sage, 1994).

Melucci, A. **Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society** (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

Melucci, A. **Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

MerKlen, D. **Pobres Ciudadanos. Las Clases Populares en la Era Democrática, Argentina, 1983-2003** (Buenos Aires: Editorial Gorla, 2005).

Meyer, D., Whittier, N. and Robnett, B. (eds). **Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Michels, R. **Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy,** in Paul, E. and Paul, C (Trans). (Kitchener, Canada: Batoche Books, 2001).

Morley, S. A. **Poverty and Inequality in Latin America: Past Evidence, Future Prospects** (Washington D.C: Overseas Development Council, 1994).

Moras, J. G. **La Criminalización de la Protesta Social** (Buenos Aires: HIJOS de la Plata and Ediciones Grupo La Grieta, 2003).

Morris, A. and Mueller, C. (eds). **Frontiers in Social Movement Theory** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

MTD Aníbal Verón. **Dario Y Maxi Dignidad Piquetera: El Gobierno de Duhalde u la Planificación Criminal de la Masacre del 26 de Junio en Avellaneda** (Buenos Aires: Chilavert Artes Gráficas, 2003).

MTD de Solano. **Hipótesis 891, Más Allá de los Piquetes** (Buenos Aires: Ediciones De Mano En Mano, 2002).

Munck, R. **Contemporary Latin America** (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

Nash, K. **Contemporary Political Sociology: Globalization, Politics, and Power** (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

Natanson, J. **El Presidente Inesperando** (Buenos Aires: Homo Sapiens Ediciones, 2004).

Navarro, J. C. **Community Organizations in Latin America** (Washington, D.C: The Inter-American Development Bank, 1994).

Negri, T. **Contrapoder: Una Introducción** (Buenos Aires: Ediciones De Mano En Mano, 2001).

Nochteff, H. and Abeles, M. (eds). **Economic Shocks without Vision: Neoliberalism in the Transition of Socio-Economic Systems. Lessons from the Argentine Case** (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2000).

Nouzeilles, G. and Montaldo, G. (eds). **The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics** (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002).

Offe, C. **Disorganised Capitalism: Contemporary Transformation of Work and Politics** (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1985).

O'Donnell, G. **Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism** (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies in the University of California, 1973).

O'Donnell, G. **Counterpoints: Selected Essays on Authoritarianism and Democratization** (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999a)

Ovido, L. **Una Historia del Movimiento Piquetero: de las Primeras Coordinadores a las Asambleas Nacionales** (Argentina: Ediciones Rumbos, 2001).

Pacheco, M. **Del Piquete al Movimiento, Parte 1: de los Orígenes al 20 de Diciembre de 2001** (Buenos Aires: Fondación de Investigaciones Sociales y Políticas; FISyP, 2004).

Peeler, J. **Building Democracy in Latin America** (London: Lynne Rienner, 2004).

Peralta-Ramos, M. **The Political Economy of Argentina: Power and Class since 1930**

(US: Westview Press: 1992).

Peralta-Ramos, M and Waisman, C. H. (eds). **From Military Rule to Liberal Democracy in Argentina** (London: Westview Press, 1987).

Percy-Smith, J. **Policy Responses to Social Exclusion** (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000).

Pereyra, D. **Argentina Rebelde: Crónicas y Enseñanzas de la Revuelta Social** (Spain: El Viejo Topo, 2003).

Perry, M. **Bread and Work: the Experience of Unemployment, 1918-39**, (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

Petras, J. and Veltmeyer, H. (eds). **A System in Crisis: the Dynamics of Free Market Capitalism** (New York: Zed Books, 2003).

Petras, J. and Veltmeyer, H. (eds). **Social Movements and State Power** (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

Petras, J. and Morley, M. (eds). **Latin America in the Time of Cholera: Electoral Politics, Market Economics, and Permanent Crisis** (London: Routledge, 1992).

Piven, F. F. and Cloward, R. A. (eds). **Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail** (New York: Vintage Press, 1979).

Polanyi, K. **The Great Transformation: the Political and Economic Origins of Our Times** (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

Popkin, S. **The Rational Peasant: The Political Economy of Rural Society in Vietnam** (California: University of California Press, 1979).

Portes, A., Castells, M. and Benton, L. (eds). **The Informal Economy** (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

Powers, N. R. **Grassroots Expectations of Democracy and Economy: Argentina in**

Comparative Perspective (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

Recalde, H. E. **La Protesta Social en la Argentina: Desde las Primeras Sociedades de Resistencia al Movimiento Piquetero** (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Universitario, 2003).

Reich, W. **What is Class Consciousness?** (London: Socialist Reproduction, 1973).

Roberts, K. M. **Deepening Democracy? The Modern Left and Social Movements in Chile and Peru** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

Robson, C. **Real World Research** (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 2002).

Rock, D. **Argentina in the Twentieth Century** (London: Duckworth, 1975).

Rock, D. **Argentina 1516-1987: From Spanish Colonization to the Falklands War and Alfonsín** (California: University of California Press, 1987).

Rodgers, G., Gore, C. and Figueiredo, J. B. (eds). **Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses** (Geneva: Institute of International Labour Studies, 1995).

Rojas, M. **Mitos del Milenio: El Fin del Trabajo y los Nuevos Profetas del Apocalipsis** (Buenos Aires: Fundación CADAL, 2004).

Romero, L. A. and Brennan, J. P. (trans). **A History of Argentina in the Twentieth century** (Pennsylvania: the Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

Rowlands, J. **Questioning Empowerment: Working with Women in Honduras** (UK: Oxfam: 1997).

Sartelli, E. **La Plaza es Nuestra: la Lucha de Clases en la Argentina de Siglo XX** (Bueno Aires: Ediciones RyR and Asamblea Popular Plaza Congreso, 2003).

Sawers, L. **The Other Argentina: the Interior and National Development** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

Scott, J. **Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

Seoane, J. **Movimientos Sociales y Conflicto en América Latina** (Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales; CLACSO, 2003).

Seoane, M. **El Saqueo de La Argentina** (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003).

Silverman, D. **Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction** (London: Sage, 2001).

Sidicaro, R. **La Crisis del Estado y los Actores Políticos y Socioeconómicos en la Argentina: 1989-2001** (Buenos Aires: Libros del Rojas, 2002).

Smelser, N. J. **Theory of Collective Behaviour** (London: Routledge & kegan paul, 1962).

Smith, W. C. **Authoritarianism and the Crisis of the Argentine Political Economy** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989).

Starr, A. **Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalization** (London: Zed Books, 2001).

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (eds). **Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory** (London: Sage, 1998).

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (eds). **Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques** (London: Sage, 1990).

Svampa, M. and Pereyra, S. (eds). **Entre la Ruta y el Barrio: La Experiencia de las Organizaciones Piqueteros** (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2003).

Tarrow, S. **Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Taylor, J. **Eva Perón: The Myths of a Woman** (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

1979).

Taylor, L. **After Neoliberalism: What Next for Latin America?** (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1999).

Teichman, J. A. **The Politics of Freeing Markets in Latin America: Chile, Argentina and Mexico** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

Tilly, C. **From Mobilization to Revolution** (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1978).

Tilly, C. **Roads From Past to Future** (Lanham, Mass: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997).

Tilly, C. **Stories, Identities and Political Change** (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

Touraine, A. **Critique of Modernity** (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

Tulchin, J. S. and Garland, A. M. (eds). **Argentina: The Challenges of Modernazation** (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Books, 1998).

Vallhonrat, E. C. **Piqueteros: Ruta 3 KM 26 El Crimen de las Hermanitas P. Un Hecho Real** (Buenos Aires: Nuevohacer, 2004).

Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L. and Brady, H. E. (eds). **Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

Waisman, C. H. **The Reversal of Development in Argentina: Post-War Counterrevolutionary Politics and their Structural Consequences** (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

Wilson, J. **Introduction to Social Movements** (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

Wood, E. M. **The Retreat from Class: A New "True" Socialism** (London: Verso, 1988).

Wright, A. and Wolford, W. (eds). **To Inherit the Earth: The Landless Movement and the Struggle for a New Brazil** (Oakland: Food First Books, 2003).

Wynia, G. W. **Argentina: Illusions and Reality** (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986).

Wynia, G. W. **Argentina in the Post-War Era: Politics and Economic Policy-Making in a Divided Society** (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1978).

Zald, M. N. and McCarthy, J. D. (eds). **Dynamics of Social Movements: Resource Mobilization, Social Control, and Tactics** (Cambridge, Mass: Winthrop Publishers, 1979).

Zald, M. N. and McCarthy, J. D. (eds). **Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays** (London: Translation Publishers, 1990).

Zapata, F. **Autonomía y Subordinación en el Sindicalismo Latinoamericano** (Mexico DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993).

Zibechi, R. **Genealogia de la Revuelta, Argentina: la Sociedad en Movimiento** (Buenos Aires: Letra Libre, 2003).

Zirakzadeh, C. E. **Social Movements in Politics: A Comparative Study** (New York: Longman, 1997).

(iv)   Contributions to Books

Alexander, J. 'Collective Action, Culture and Civil Society: Secularising, Updating, Inverting, Revising and Displacing the Classical Model of Social Movements', in Clark, J. and Diani, M. A. (eds). **Sociology of the Subject** (London: Falmer Press, 1996), 205-234.

Alvarez, S. E., Dagnino, E. and Escobar, A., 'Introduction: the Cultural and the Political in Latin American Social Movements', in Alvarez, S. E., Dagnino, E. and Escobar, A. (eds). **Cultures of Politics/Politics of Cultures: Re-visioning Latin American Social Movements** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 1-29.

Anderson, I. and Sim, D., 'Social Exclusion and Housing: an Introduction', in Anderson, I. and Sim, D. (eds). **Social Exclusion: Context and Challenges** (Coventry, UK: Chartered Institute of Housing, 2000), 1-21.

Anderson, J., 'From Class Society to Exclusion from Society', in Gough, I. and Olofsson, G. (eds). **Capitalism and Social Cohesion: Essays on Exclusion and Integration** (New York: St. Martin Press, 1999), Part III.

Beccaria, L.A., Carpio, J. and Orsatti, A., 'Argentina: Informalidad Laboral en el Nuevo Modelo Económico', in Carpio, J., Klein, E. and Novacovsky, I. (eds). **Informalidad y Exclusión Social** (Buenos Aires: SIEMPRO, 2000), 143-150.

Blumer, H., 'Collective Behaviour', in McClung, L. **Principles of Sociology** (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1969), 65-120.

Bourdieu, P., 'Job Insecurity is Everywhere Now', in Bourdieu, P. **Acts of Resistance** (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 81-87.

Brysk, A., 'Historical Background', in Brysk, A. **The Politics of Human Rights in Argentina: Protest, Change, and Democratization** (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 23-41.

Buechler, S., 'The Cultural: Identity, Ideology and Organization', in Buechler, S. (ed). **Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 185-211.

Calderón, F., Piscitelli, A. and Reyna, J. L., 'Social Movements: Actors, Theories, Expectations', in Escobar, A. and Alvarez, S. E. (eds). **The Making of Social Movements in Latin America** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 19-36.

Cammack, P., 'Making Poverty Work', in Panitch, L. and Leys, C. (eds). **A World of Contradictions: Socialist Register 2002** (London: Merlin Press, 2001), 193-210.

Cammack, P., 'Dependent and Disciplinary Regionalism', in Dijck, P. V. and Wiesebron, M. (eds). **Ten Years of Mercosur** (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 2002), 85-96.

Canel, E., 'New Social Movement Theory and Resource Mobilisation Theory: The Need for Integration', in Kaufman, M. and Alfonso, H. D. (eds). **Community Power and Grassroots Democracy: The Transformation of Social Life** (London: Zed Books,

1997), 189-223.

Carrera, N. I. and Cotarelo, M. C., 'Argentina, Diciembre de 2001: Hito en el Proceso de Luchas Populares', in Seoane, J. **Movimientos Sociales y Conflicto en América Latina** (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2003), 209-221.

Charmaz, K., 'Discovering Chronic Illness: Using Grounded Theory', in Glaser, B. G. **More Grounded Theory Methodology: A Reader** (Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1994), 65-94.

Charmaz, K., 'Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods', in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds). **Handbook of Qualitative Research** (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 509-536.

Di Tella, T., 'Populism and Reformism in Latin America', in Veliz, C. **Obstacles to Changes in Latin America** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), 47-74.

Evers, T., 'Identity: The Hidden Side of New Social Movements in Latin America', in Slater, D. **New Social Movements and the State in Latin America** (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1985), 43-71.

Friedman, D. and McAdam, D., 'Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices and the Life of a Social Movement', in Morris, A. and Mueller, M. C. (eds). **Frontiers in Social Movement Theory** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 156-173.

Galiani, S. and Gerchunoff, P., 'The Labour Market', in Paolera, G. D. and Taylor, A. M. (eds). **A New Economic History of Argentina** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 122-169.

Gamson, W. A., 'Political Discourse and Collective Action', in Klandermans, B., Kriesi, H. and Tarrow, S. (eds). **International Social Movement Research: Volume 1** (London: JAI Press, 1988), 219-244.

Gamson, W. A., 'The Social Psychology of Collective Action', in Morris, A. D. and Mueller, C. M. (eds). **Frontiers in Social Movement Theory** (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992a), 53-76.

Gamson, W. A., 'Constructing Social Protest', in Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (eds). **Social Movements and Culture** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 85-106.

Garner, R. A, 'Fifty Years of Social Movement Theory: An Interpretation', in Garner, R. A. and Tenuto, J. (eds). **Social Movement Theory and Research: An Annotated Bibliographical Guide** (Lanham, MD: Magill Bibliographies, Scarecrow and Salem Press, 1997), 1-58.

Garner, R. A. and Zald, M. N., 'The Political Economy of Social Movement Sectors', in Zald, M. N. and McCarthy, J. D. (eds). **Social Movements in an Organizational Society: Collected Essays** (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 293-317.

Garretón, M. A., 'Social Movements and Democratization', in Lindberg, S. and Sverrisson, A. (eds). **Social Movements in Development: the Challenge of Globalisation and Democratization** (London: Ipswich Book Company, 1997), 67-77.

Garretón, M. A., 'The New Socio-political Matrix', in Garretón, M. A. and Newman, E. (eds). **Democracy in Latin America: (Re)Constructing Political Society** (New York: The United Nations University, 2001), 220-248.

Giarraca, N., 'La Protesta Agrorrural en la Argentina', in Seoane, J. **Movimientos Sociales y Conflicto en América Latina** (Buenos Aires: CLACSO, 2003), 195-208.

Guigni, M. 'How Social Movements Matter: Past Research, Present Problems, Future Developments', in Giugni, M., McAdam, D. and Tilly, C. (eds). **How Social Movements Matter** (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), xiii-xxxiii.

Hobsbawm, E., 'Class Consciousness in History', in Linda, A. and Eduardo, M. (eds). **Identity: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality** (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 126-135.

Hunt, S. A., Benford, R. D., and Snow, D. A., 'Identity Fields: Framing Processes and the Social Construction of Movement Identities', in Laraña, E., Johnston, H. and Gusfield, J. R. (eds). **New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity** (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 185-208.

Jelin, E., 'Citizenship Revisited: Solidarity, Responsibility, and Rights', in Eric, H. and Jelin, E. (eds). **Constructing Democracy: Human Rights, Citizenship and Society in Latin America** (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 101-119.

Jenkins, J. C. and Leicht, K., 'Class Analysis and Social Movements: A Critique and Reformulation', In Hall, J. R. **Reworking Class** (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 369-397.

Johnston, H., Laraña, E. and Gusfield, J. R., 'Identities, Grievances, and New Social Movements', in Laraña, E., Johnston, H. and Gusfield, J. R. (eds). **New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity** (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994), 3-35.

Kaplan, B. and Maxwell, J. A., 'Qualitative Research Methods for Evaluating Computer Information Systems', in Anderson, J. G., Aydin, C. E. and Jay, S. J. (eds). **Evaluating Health Care Information Systems: Methods and Applications** (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994), 45-68.

Kenny, M., 'Identities in Motion: the Political Ethics of Social Movement', in Kenny, M. **The Politics of Identity: Liberal Political Theory and the Dilemmas of Difference** (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), 109-127.

Krirsi, H., 'The Organizational Structure of New Social Movements in a Political Context', in McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (eds). **Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 152-184.

Laclau, E., 'Ideology: Peronism in Historical and Comparative Perspective', in Archetti, E. P., Cammack, P. and Roberts, B. (eds). **Latin America** (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 137-147.

Machinea, J., 'Stabilisation under Alfonsín', in Lewis, C. M. and Torrents, N. (eds). **Argentina in the Crisis Years (1983-1990): From Alfonsin to Menem** (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1993), 124-144.

Madanipour, A., 'Social Exclusion and Space', in Madanipour, A., Cars, G. and Allen, J. (eds). **Social Exclusion in European Cities** (London: Jessica Kingsley, 1998), 279-288.

McAdam, D., 'Culture and Social Movements', in Laraña, E., Johnston, H. and Gusfield, J. R. (eds). **New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity** (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 36-57.

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N., 'Social Movements', in Smelser, N. J. **Handbook of Sociology** (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1988), 695-737.

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N., 'Introduction: Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes – Toward a Synthetic, Comparative Perspective on Social Movements', in McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (eds). **Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1-20.

Mead, G. H., 'The Self', in Alcoff, L. M. and Mendieta, E. (eds). **Identity: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality** (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 32-40.

Melucci, A., 'A Strange Kind of Newness: What's "New" in New Social Movements?', in Laraña, E., Johnston, H. and Gusfield, J. R. (eds). **New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity** (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 101-130.

Melucci, A., 'The Process of Collective identity', in Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (eds). **Social Movements and Culture** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 41-63.

Miller, G., 'Building Bridge: the Possibility of Analytic Dialogue between Ethnography, Conversation analysis and Foucault', in Silverman, D. **Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practices** (London: Sage, 1997), 24-44.

Mohanty, S., 'The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity', in Linda, A. and Eduardo, M. (eds). **Identity: Race, Class, Gender, and Nationality** (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2003), 392-406.

Munck, R., 'Social Exclusion: New Inequality Paradigm for the Era of Globalization?' in Romero, M. and Margolis, E. (eds). **The Blackwell Companion to Social Inequalities** (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 31-49.

O'Donnell, G., 'Delegative Democracy', in O'Donnell, G. (ed). **Counterpoints: Selected Essays on Authoritarianism and Democratization** (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 159-174.

O'Donnell, G. 'Horizontal Accountability in New Democracies', in Schedler, A., Diamond, L. and Plattne, M. F. (eds). **The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies** (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 29-51.

Oommen, T. K., 'Social Movements in the Third World', in Lindberg, S. and Sverrisson, A. (eds). **Social Movements in Development: the Challenge of Globalisation and Democratization** (London: Ipswich Book Company, 1997), 46-66.

Petras, J., 'From Popular Rebellion to 'Normal Capitalism' in Argentina', in Petras, J. and Veltmeyer, H. (eds). **Social Movements and State Power: Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador** (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 28-59.

Portes, A., 'When More Can Be Less: Labor Standards, Development, and the Informal Sector', in Rakowski, C. A. **Contrapunto: the Informal Sector Debate in Latin America** (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 113-130.

Rodger, G. 'What is Special about a Social Exclusion Approach?' in Rogers, G., Gore, C. and Figueiredo, J. (eds). **Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses** (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies; IILS and International Labour Organization; ILO, 1995), 43-56.

Ross, M. H., 'Culture and identity in Comparative Political analysis', in Lichbath, M. I. and Zuckerman, A. S. (eds). **Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42-80.

Roxborough, I., 'Populism and Class Conflict', in Archetti, E. P., Cammack, P. and Roberts, B. (eds). **Latin America** (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 119-123.

Roxborough, I., 'The Urban Working Class and Labour Movements', in Bethell, L. **The Cambridge History of Latin America, Vol: VI, Latin America since 1930, Economy, Society and Politics** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 307-378.

Roxborough, I., 'Citizenship and Social Movements under Neoliberalism' in Smith, W. and Korzeniewicz, R. (eds). **Politics, Social Change, and Economic Restructuring in Latin America** (Miami: North-South Press, 1997), 57-78.

Rubery, J., 'The Labour Market Outlook and the Outlook for Labour Market Analysis', in Crompton, R., Gallie, D. and Purcell, K. (eds). **Changing Forms of Employment: Organizations, Skills and Gender** (London: Routledge, 1996), 23-39.

Scheman, N., 'Anger and the Politics of Naming', in McConnell-Ginet, S., Borker, R. and Furman, N. (eds). **Women and Language in Literature and Society** (New York: Praeger, 1980), 174-187.

Schmitter, P. 'The Limits of Horizontal Accountability', in Schedler, A., Diamond, L. and Plattne, M. F. (eds). **The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies** (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 59-62.

Silver, H., 'Reconceptualizing Social Disadvantage: Three Paradigms of Social Exclusion', in Rodgers, G., Gore, C. and Figueiredo, J. B. (eds). **Social Exclusion: Rhetoric, Reality, Responses** (Geneva: Institute of International Labor Studies, 1995), 58-80.

Slater, D., 'Social Movements and the Recasting of the Political', in Slater, D. **New Social Movements and the State in Latin America** (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1985), 1-25.

Smear, N. J., 'The Nature of Collective Behavior', in Curtis, R. L. and Aguirre, B. E. (eds). **Collective Behavior and Social Movements** (US: Allyn and Bacon, 1993), 21-28.

Snow, D. A. and Benford, R. D., 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant

Mobilization', in Klandermans, B., Kriesi, H. and Tarrow, S. (eds). **International Social Movement Research: Volume 1** (London: JAI Press, 1988), 197-217.

Snow, D. A. and Benford, R. D., 'Master Frames and Cycles of Protest', in Morris, A. and Mueller, C. (eds). **Frontiers in Social Movement Theory** (Cambridge: Yale University Press, 1992), 133-155.

Snow, D. A. and McAdam, D., 'Identity Work Processes in the Context of Social Movements: Clarifying the Identity/Movement Nexus', in Striker, S., Owens, T. and White, R. (eds). **Self, Identity and Social Movements** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 41-67.

Steedman, P. H., 'On the Relations between Seeing, Interpreting and Knowing', in Steier, F. **Research and Reflexivity** (London: Sage, 1991), 53-62.

Stein, S., 'Social Control', in Archetti, E. P., Cammack, P. and Roberts, B. (eds). **Latin America** (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987), 125-135.

Sturzenegger, A. and Moya, R., 'Economic Cycles', in Dellas Paolera, G. and Tayor, A. M. (eds). **A New Economic History of Argentina** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 87-121.

Swidler, A., 'Cultural Power and Social Movements', in Johnston, H. and Klandermans, B. (eds). **Social Movements and Culture** (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 25-40.

Tilly, C., 'From Interaction to Outcomes in Social Movements', in Giugni, M., McAdam, D. and Tilly, C. (eds). **How Social Movements Matter** (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 253-270.

Touraine, A., 'Democracy: From a Politics of Citizenship to a Politics of Recognition', in Maheu, L. **Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action** (London: Sage, 1995), 258-275.

Turner, R. H. and Killian, L. M., 'The Field of Collective Behavor', in Curtis, R. and Aguirre, B. (eds). **Collective Behavior and Social Movements** (USA: Allyn and Bacon,

1993), 5-20.

Veltmeyer, H. and Petras, J., 'New Social Movements in Latin America: The Dynamics of Class and Identity', in Veltmeyer, H. and Petras, J. (eds). **The Dynamics of Social Change in Latin America** (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 99-121.

Vilas, C. M., 'Participation, Inequality, and the Whereabouts of Democracy', in Chalmers, D. A., Vilas, C. M., Hite, K., Martin, S. B., Piester, K. and Segarra, M. (eds). **The New Politics of Inequality in Latin America: Rethinking Participation and Representation** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 3-42.

Walton, J., 'Debt, Protest, and the State in Latin America', in Eckstein, S. **Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movement** (California: University of California Press, 1989), 299-328.

Whittier, N., 'Meaning and Structure in Social Movements', in Meyer, D., Whittier, N. and Robnett, B. (eds). **Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 289-307.

Williamson, E., 'Argentina: The Long Decline', in Williamson, E. **The Penguin History of Latin America** (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 459-484.

Zald, M. N., 'Culture, Ideology, and Strategic Framing', in McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D. and Zald, M. N. (eds). **Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 261-274.

(v)   Articles in Journals

Adelman, J., 'Post-Populist Argentina', **New Left Review,** 1/203 (January-February 1994), 65-91.

Aguilar, R., 'Models of Response Following the Argentine Economic Crisis of 2001: Los Piqueteros, and the Neighborhood Popular Assembles of Buenos Aires', **McNAIR Scholars Journal of the University of Washington,** 5 (Spring 2005), 1-20.

Aguirre, B., Quarantelli, E. and Mendoza, J., 'The Collective Behavior of Fads: The

Characteristics, Effects, and Career of Streaking', **American Sociological Review**, 53 (1988), 569-584.

Anderson, L. F., 'Of Wild and Cultivated Politics: Conflict and Democracy in Argentina', **International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society**, 16:1 (2002), 99-132.

Anderson, P., 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', **New Left Review**, No.100 (1977), 5-78.

Anderson, P., 'A Culture in Contraflow - I', **New Left Review**, 1/180(1990), 41-80.

Armony, A. C. and Armony, V., 'Indictment, Myths, and Citizen Mobilization in Argentina: A Discourse Analysis', **Journal of Latin American Politics and Society**, 47: 4 (2005), 27-54.

Assies, W. and Salman, T., 'Re-visioning Cultures of Politics: An Essay on Social Movements, Citizenship and Culture', **Critique of Anthropology**, 20 (2000), 289-307.

Auyero, J., 'The Moral Politics of Argentine Crowds', **Mobilisation: An International Journal**, 9:3 (2003), 311-326.

Auyero, J., 'The Geography of Popular Contention: An Urban Protest in Argentina', **Canadian Journal of Latin America and Caribbean Studies**, 28: 55-56 (2003a), 37-70.

Auyero, J. 'When Everyday Life, Routine Politics, and Protest Meet', **Theory and Society**, 33 (2004), 417-441.

Bambaci, J., Saront, T. and Tommasi, M., 'The Political Economy of Economic Reforms in Argentina', **Policy Reform**, 5:2 (2002), 75-88.

Benford, R D. and Snow, D A., 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment', **Annual Review of Sociology**, 26 (2000), 611-639.

Bessis, S., 'From Social Exclusion to Social Cohesion: a Policy Agenda', **MOST**

Policy Paper, 2 (1995), 1-56, available in http://www. unesco.org/most/besseng.htm

Bhalla, A. and Lapeyre, F., 'Social Exclusion: Towards an Analytical and Operation Framework', **Development and Change**, 28 (1997), 413-433.

Biekart, K., 'Exploraciones/Explorations - Seven Theses on Latin American Social Movements and Political Change: A Tribute to André Gunder Frank (1929-2005)', **European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies**, 79 (2005), 85-94.

Blumer, H., 'Social Problems as Collective Behavior', **Social Problems**, 18 (1971), 298-306.

Bonner, M. D., 'Defining Rights in Democratization: the Argentine Government and Human Rights Organizations, 1983-2003', **Latin American Politics and Society**, 47: 4 (2005), 55-76.

Bourdieu, P., 'Utopia of Endless Exploitation: The Essence of Neo-liberalism', **Le Monde Diplomatique** (December 1998), available in http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08%20bourdieu

Bowring, F., 'Social Exclusion: limitations of the Debate', **Critical Social Policy**, 20: 3 (2000), 307-330.

Breton, M., 'Relating Competence: Promotion and Empowerment', **Journal of Progressive Human Services**, 5:1 (1994), 27-45.

Buscaglia, M. A., 'The Political-Economy of Argentina's Debacle', **The Journal of Policy Reform**, 7:1 (2004), 43-65.

Galasso, E. and Ravallion, M., 'Social Protection in a Crisis: Argentina's Plan Jefes y Jefas', **The World Bank Economic Review**, 18:3 (2004), 367-399.

Calvo, E. and Murillo, M. V., 'Who Delivers? Partisan Clients in the Argentine Electoral Market', **American Journal of Political Science**, 48:4 (2004), 742-757.

Camarero, H., Pozzi, P. and Schneider, A., 'Unrest and Repression in Argentina', **New**

Politics, *7:1 (1998), available in* http://www.wpunj.edu/~newpol/issue25/camare25.htm

Cammack, P., 'The Resurgence of Populism in Latin America', **BLAR**, 19:2 (2000), 149-161.

Cammack, P., 'What the World Bank Means by Poverty Reduction and Why It Matters', **New Political Economy**, 9:2 (2004), 189-212.

Carey Jr, D., 'Shades of Peace and Democracy: Social Discontent and Reconciliation in Central America', **LARR**, 40:1 (2005), 251-267.

Carroll, W. and Ratner, R. S., 'Sustaining Oppositional Cultures in Post-socialist Times: A Comparative Study of Three Social Movement Organizations', **Sociology**, 35:3 (2001), 605-629.

Cieza, D., 'Argentine Labor: A Movement in Crisis', **NACLA Report on the Americas**, 31: 6 (May/June 1998), 20-25.

Cleaver, H., 'The Zapatista Effect: The Internet and the Rise of an Alternative Political Fabric', **Journal of International Affairs**, 51 (1998), 621–632.

Cohen, J., 'Rethinking Social Movements', **Berkeley Journal of Sociology**, 28 (1983), 97–114.

Cohen J., 'Strategy or Identity: New Theoretical Paradigms and Contemporary Social Movements', **Social Research**, 52:4 (1985), 663–716.

Colmegna, P., 'The Unemployed Piqueteros of Argentina: Active Rejection of an Exclusionary form of Democracy', **THEOMAI Journal**, 7 (2003), available in http://www.revista-theomai.unq.edu.ar/numero7/artcolmegna7.htm

Consuelo, I. C. and Patruyo, T., 'Trade Unionism and Globalization: Thoughts from Latin America', **Current Sociology**, 50:1 (2002), 57–74.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A., 'Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria', **Qualitative Sociology**, 13 (1990), 3-21.

Cross, C. and Gorbán, D., 'Formas de Organización y Acción Colectiva de Desempleados y Recicladores en el Conurbano Bonaerense', Maracaibo: **Revista Venezolana de Gerencia**, 9: 26 (2004), 201-228.

Davis, D. E., 'The Power of Distance: Re-theorizing Social Movements in Latin America', **Theory and Society**, 28 (1999), 585-638.

Dinerstein, A. C., 'Roadblocks in Argentina', **Captal & Class**, 74 (2001), 1-7.

Dinerstein, A. C., 'Beyond Insurrection: Argentina and New Internationalism', **The Commoner**, 5 (2002), 1-18.

Dinerstein, A. C., '¡Que Se Vayan Todos! Popular Insurrection and the Asambleas Barriales in Argentina', **BLAR**, 22:2 (2003a), 187-200

Dinerstein, A. C. 'Power or Counter Power? The Dilemma of the Piquetero Movement in Argentina Post-Crisis', **Captal & Class**, 81 (2003b), 1-7.

Dinerstein, A. C., 'A Silent Revolution: the Unemployed Workers Movements in Argentina and the New Internationalism', **Labour Capital and Society**, 34: 2 (2003c), 166-183.

Elízaga, R. S., 'Social Exclusion and Knowledge', **Current Sociology**, 50:1 (2002), 89-98.

Epstein, B., 'Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement', **Monthly Review**, 53:4 (2001), 1-14.

Epstein, E., 'The Piquetero Movement of Greater Buenos Aires: Working Class Protest during the Current Argentine Crisis', **Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies**, 28:55/56 (2003), 11-36.

Escudé, C., 'From Captive to Failed State: Argentina under Systemic Populism, 1975-2006', **The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs**, 30:2 (2006), 125-147.

Fassin, D., 'Exclusion, Underclass, Marginalidad', **Revue Française de Sociologie**, 37:1 (1996), 37-75.

Fisher, K., 'Locating Frames in the Discursive Universe', **Sociological Research Online**, 2:3 (1997), available in http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/2/3/4.html

Fitzgerald, K. J. and Rodgers, D. M., 'Radical Social Movement Organizations: A Theoretical Model', **The Sociological Quarterly**, 41:4 (2000), 573-592.

Foley, M. W. and Edwards, B., 'The Paradox of Civil Society', **Journal of Democracy**, 7:3 (1996), 38-52.

Fotopoulos, T., 'Globalisation and the Multi-Dimensional Crisis: The Inclusive Democracy Approach', **THEOMAI Journal**, 4 (2001), available in http://revista-theomai.unq.edu.ar/numero4/arttakis4.htm

Freeman, J., 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness', **Berkeley Journal of Sociology (BJS)**, 17 (1970), 151-165.

Galafassi, G., 'Social Movements, Conflicts and a Perspective of Inclusive Democracy in Argentina', **Democracy & Nature**, 9:3 (November 2003), 393-399

Geithner, T., 'Lessons from the Crisis in Argentina', The Policy Development and Review Department, **IMF**, 8 (October 2003), 1-87.

Geras, N., 'Post-Marxism?' **New Left Review**, 163 (May/June 1987), 40-82.

Gezerlis, A., 'Latin America: Popular Movements in Neoliberal Modernity', **Democracy & Nature**, 8 (2002), 87-116.

Gilly, A., 'The Emerging "threat" of Radical Populism', **NACLA Report on the Americas**, 39:2 (September/October 2005), 37-45.

Gindling, T. H., 'Poverty in Latin America', **LARR**, 40:1 (2005), 207-222.

Gurney, J. N. and Tierney, K. J., 'Relative Deprivation and Social Movements: A

Critical Look at Twenty Years of Theory and Research', **Sociological Quarterly**, 23 (1982), 33-47.

Hale, C. R., 'Cultural Politics of Identity in Latin America', **Annual Review of Anthropology**, 26 (1997), 567- 590.

Halevi, J., 'The Argentine Crisis', **Monthly Review**, 53:11 (2002), 15-23.

Harman, C., 'Argentina: Rebellion at the Sharp End of the World Crisis', **International Socialism Journal**, 94 (2002), 1-50.

Hoffmann, F., 'Perón and After: A Review Article', **Hispanic American Historical Review**, 36:4 (1956), 510-528.

Hubert, E. and Solt, F., 'Successes and Failures of Neoliberalism', **LARR**, 39:3 (2004), 150-164.

Iranzo, C. and Patruyo, T., 'Trade Unionism and Globalization: Thoughts from Latin America', **Current Sociology**, 50:1 (2002), 57–74.

Jelin, E., 'Cultural Movements and Social Actors in the New Regional Scenarios: The Case of Mercosur', **International Political Science Review**, 22:1 (2001), 85–98.

Jenkins, J. C., 'Resource Mobilization Theory and the Study of Social Movements', **Annual Review of Sociology**, 9 (1983), 527-553.

Johnston, H. and Oliver, P. E., 'Mobilization Forum: Reply to Snow and Benford', **Mobilization: An International Journal**, 5:1 (2000), 61-63.

Kingston, P., 'After the Washington Consensus: The Limits to Democratization and Development in Latin America', **LARR**, 41:1 (2006), 153-164.

Knight, A., 'Inclusion through Autonomy: Zapatistas and Dissent', **NACLA Report on the Americas**, 39:2 (2005), 8–12.

Koopmans, R. and Statham, P., 'Political Claims Analysis: Integrating Protest Event

and Political Discourse Approaches'. **Mobilization**, 4 (1999), 203-221.

Kriesi, H., 'New Social Movements and the New Class in the Netherlands', **American Journal of Sociology**, 94 (1989), 1078-1116.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C., 'Post-Marxism without Apologies', **New Left Review**, 166 (November/December 1987), 79-106.

Lehmann, D., 'Special Issue: Social Movements and Religious Change', **BLAR**, 18:2 (1999), 139-144.

Levitsky, S., 'Institutionalization and Peronism: The Concept, the Case and the Case for Unpacking the Concept', **Party Politics**, 4 (1998), 77-92.

Levitsky, S., 'An "Organised Disorganisation": Informal Organisation and the Persistence of Local Party Structures in Argentine Peronism', **Journal of Latin American Studies**, 33:1 (2001), 29-61.

Levitsky, S., 'From Labor Politics to Machine Politics: The Transformation of Party-Union Linkages in Argentine Peronism, 1983-1999', **LARR**, 38:3 (2003), 3-36.

Little, W., 'Political Corruption in Latin America', **Corruption and Reform**, 7 (1992), 41-66.

Little, W., 'Corruption and Democracy in Latin America', **IDS Bulletin**, 27:2 (1996), 64-69.

Mair, P., 'Political Parties and Democracy: What Sort of Future?' **Central Europe Political Science Review**, 4:13 (2003), 6-20.

Manzetti, L. and Blake, C. H., 'Market Reforms and Corruption in Latin America: New Means for Old Ways', **Review of International Political Economy**, 3:4 (1996), 662-697.

Martin, P. Y. and Turner, B. A. 'Grounded Theory and Organisational Research', **Journal of Applied Behavioural Science**, 22 (1986), 141-157.

Mattiace, S. L., 'Representation and Rights: Recent Scholarship on Social Movements in Latin America', **LARR**, 40:1 (2005), 237-250.

Mayer, M., 'Social Movement Research in the United States: A European Perspective', **International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society**, 4 (1991), 459-480.

McAdam, D. and Roberto, F., 'Microstructural Bases of Recruitment in Social Movements', **Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change**, 12 (1990), 1-33.

McAdam, D. and Paulsen, R., 'Specifying the Relationship Between Social Ties and Activism', **American Journal of Sociology**, 99 (1993), 640-667.

McCarthy, J. and Zald, M. 'Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory', **American Journal of Sociology**, 82 (1977), 1212-1241

McCaslin, M. L. and Scott, K. W., 'Method for Studying a Human Ecology: An Adaptation of the Grounded Theory Tradition', **The Researcher**, 17:1 (2003), 26-32.

McGuire,J. 'Strikes in Argentina: Data Sources and Recent Trends', **LARR**, 27:3 (1996), 127-150.

Melucci, A., 'The Symbolic Change of Contemporary Movements', **Social Research**, 52 (1985), 781-816.

Merx, C. W., 'Sectoral Clashes and Political Change: the Argentine Experience', **LARR**, 4:3 (1969), 89-116.

Meyer, D. S. and Minkoff, D. C., 'Conceptualizing Political Opportunity', **Social Forces**, 82:4 (2004), 14-57.

Montero, A., 'From Democracy and Development: the Political Economy of Post-neoliberal Reform in Latin America, **LARR**, 40:2 (2005), 252-267.

Moreno, M., 'Interview with Alejando Kaufman', **Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies**, 11:2 (2002), 137-142.

Munck, R., 'Argentina, or the Political Economy of Collapse', **International Journal of Political Economy**, 31:3 (2001), 67-88.

Murphy, P. D. and Rodríguez, C., 'Between Macondo and McWorld: Communication and Culture Studies in Latin America', **Global Media and Communication**, 2:3 (2006), 267-277.

Naím, Moisés., 'Latin America: The Morning After', **Foreign Affairs,** 74 (1995), 45-61.

Nash, K., 'The 'Cultural Turn' in Social Theory: Towards a Theory of Cultural Politics', **Sociology**, 35:1 (2001), 77-92.

North, P. and Huber, U., 'Alternative Spaces of the "Argentinazo"', **Antipode**, 36:5 (2004), 963-984.

O'Donnell, G., 'State and Alliances in Argentina, 1956-1976', **Journal of Development Studies**, 15:1 (1978), 3-33.

O'Donnell, G., 'Delegative Democracy', **Journal of Democracy**, 5:1 (1994), 55-69.

Offe, C., 'New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics', **Social Research**, 52:4 (1985), 817-868.

Ollier, M. M., 'Argentina: Up a Blind Alley Once Again', **BLAR,** 22 (2003), 170-186.
Olmedo, C. and Murray, M. J., 'The Formalization of Informal / Precarious Labour in Contemporary Argentina', **International Sociology,** 17:3 (2002), 421-443.

Öni, Z., 'Varieties and Crises of Neoliberal Globalisation: Argentine, Turkey and the IMF', **Third World Quarterly**, 27:2 (2006), 239-263.

Overmyer-Velázquez, M., 'Tracking the Fugitive City: Recent Works on Modern Latin American Urban History', **Latin American Perspectives**, 29:4 (2002), 87-104.

Oxhorn, P., 'The Social Foundations of Latin America's Recurrent Populism: Problems of Popular Sector Class Formation and Collective Action', **Journal of Historical**

Sociology, 11:2 (1998), 212-246.

Oxhorn, P., 'The Ambiguous Link: Social Movements and Democracy in Latin America', **Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs**, 41:3 (1999), 129-146.

Oxhorn, P., 'From Human Rights to Citizenship Rights? Recent Trends in the Study of Latin American Social Movements', **LARR**, 36:3 (2001), 163-82.

Pearce, J., 'Debate: Collective Action or Public Participation? Complementary or Contradictory Democratisation Strategies in Latin America?' **BLAR**, 23:4 (2004), 483-504.

Pearson, R., 'Argentina's Barter Network: New Currency for New Times?' **BLAR**, 22:2 (2003), 214-230.

Peruzzoti, E., 'The Nature of the New Argentine Democracy: The Delegative Democracy Argument Revisited', **Journal of Latin American Studies**, 33 (2001), 133-155.

Petras, J. 'The Unemployed Workers Movement in Argentina', **Monthly Review** 53:8 (2002), 32-45.

Pichardo, N. A., 'New Social Movements: A Critical Review', **Annual Review of Sociology**, 23 (1997), 411-430.

Plotkin, M., 'New Approaches to Peronism and to Argentine Urban Political Culture', **Journal of Urban History**, 29:4 (2003), 494-503.

Polletta, F., 'Culture In and Outside Institutions', **Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change**, 25 (2004), 161-183.

Portes, A., 'Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and Change During the Last Decades', **LARR**, 20:3 (1985), 7-39.

Portes, A. and Hoffman, K., 'Latin American Class Structures: Their Composition and

Change during the Neoliberal Era', **LARR**, 38:1 (2003), 41-82.

Powell, F., 'Citizenship and Social Exclusion', **Administration**, 43:3 (1995), 23-35.

Powers, N. R., 'The Politics of Poverty in Argentina in the 1990s', **Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs**, 37:4 (1995), 89-137.

Pozzi, P., 'Popular Upheaval and Capitalist Transformation in Argentina', **Latin American Perspective**, 27:5 (2000), 63-87.

Roberts, K., 'Neoliberalism and the Transformation of Populism in Latin America: The Peruvian Case', **World Politics**, 48:1 (1995), 82-116.

Roberts, K., 'Social Inequality without Class Cleavages in Latin America's Neoliberal Era', **Studies in Comparative International Development**, 36 (2002), 3-33.

Robinson, W. I., 'Global Crisis and Latin America', **BLAR**, 23:2 (2004), 135-153.

Rock, D., 'Racking Argentina', **New Left Review**, 17 (2002), 55-86.

Rossi, F. M., 'Aparición, Auge y Declinación de un Movimiento Social: Las Asambleas Vecinales y Populares de Buenos Aires, 2001-2003', **European Review Of Latin American and Caribbean Studies**, 78 (2005), 67-88.

Sitrin, M., 'The Shock of the New: An Interview with Colectivo Situaciones', **Perspectives**, 7:2 (2003), 8-11.

Sanchez, O., 'Argentina's Landmark 2003 Presidential Election: Renewal and Continuity', **BLAR**, 24:4 (2005), 454 - 475.

Scott, K. W., 'Relating Categories in Grounded Theory Analysis: Using a Conditional Relationship Guide and Reflective Coding Matrix', **The Qualitative Report**, 9:1 (2004), 113-126.

Seoane, J. and Taddei, E., 'Movimientos Sociales, Conflicto y Cambios Políticos en América Latina', **OSAL**, 9 (2003).

Sheehan, J., 'Changing Social Programes and Economic Strategies: Implications for Poverty and Inequality', **LARR**, 33:2 (1998), 185-196.

Smith, M., 'Postmodernism, Urban Ethnography and the New Social Space of Ethnic Identity', **Theory and Society**, 21:4 (1992), 493-531.

Snow, D. A., Rochford, B. E., Worden Jr, S. K. and Benford, R. D., 'Frame Alignment Processes, Micro-Mobilization and Movement Participation', **American Sociological Review**, 51:4 (1986), 464-481.

Solt, F., 'Success and Failure of Neoliberalism', **LARR**, 39:3 (2004), 150-164.

Staggenborg, S., 'Qualitative Methods and Social Movement Research: Introduction', **Qualitative Sociology**, 21:4 (1998), 353-355.

Szusterman, C., 'Carlos Saúl Menem: Variations on the Theme of Populism', **BLAR**, 19 (2000), 193-206.

Tarrow, S., 'National Politics and Collective Action: Recent Theory and Research in Western Europe and the United States', **Annual Review of Sociology**, 14 (1988), 421-440.

Tayor, V., 'Feminist Methodology in Social Movements Research', **Qualitative Sociology**, 21:4 (1998), 357-379.

Tedesco, L., 'Argentina's Turmoil: The Politics of Informality and the Roots of Economic Meltdown', **Cambridge Review of International Affairs**, 15:3 (2002), 469-481.

Tedesco, L., 'The Crisis in Argentina: Contrasting Perspectives', **BLAR**, 22:2 (2003), 165-169.

Teubel, M., 'Structural Adjustment and Social Disarticulation: the Case of Argentina', **Science and Society**, 64:4 (2001), 460-488.

Thompson, E.P., 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', **Past and Present**, 50 (1971), 76–136.

Tilly, C., 'Models and Realities of Popular Collective Action', **Social Research**, 52:4 (1985), 717-747.

Touraine, A., 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements', **Social Research**, 52 (1985), 749-787.

Touraine, A., 'Beyond Social Movement', **Theory, Culture and Society**, 9 (1992), 125-145.

Treisman, D., 'Cardoso, Menem, and Machiavelli: Political Tactics and Privatization in Latin America', **Studies in Comparative Internal Development**, 38:3 (2003), 93-109.

Usami, K., 'Transformation and Continuity of the Argentine Welfare State: Evaluating Social Security Reform in the 1990s', **The Developing Economies**, 12: 2 (2004), 217-240.

Waisgrais, S., 'Wage Inequality and the Labour Market in Argentina: Labour Institutions, Supply and Demand in the Period 1980-99', International Labor Organization; **ILO**, (2003), 4-8.

Walton, J., 'Urban Conflict and Social Movements in Poor Countries: Theory and Evidence of Collective Action', **International Journal of Urban and Regional Research**, 22: 3 (1998), 460-481.

Wendt, A., 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', **American Political Science Review**, 88 (1994), 384-396.

Weyland, K., 'Assessing Latin American Neoliberalism: Introduction to a Debate', **LARR**, 39:3 (2004), 143-149.

Whitehead, L., 'The Alternatives to Liberal Democracy: A Latin American Perspective', **Political Studies**, 40 (1992), 146-159.

Williamson, J., 'What Should the World Bank Think about the Washington Consensus?' **The World Bank Research Observer**, 15:2 (2000), 251-264.

Zapata, F., '¿Crisis del Sindicalismo en América Latina?', Mexico DF: **Cuadernos del Cendes**, 18:47 (2001), 1-24.

Zibechi, R., 'Los Movimientos Sociales Latinoamericanos: Tendencias y Desafíos', **Revista del Observatorio Social de América Latina** (OSAL, Buenos Aires: CLACSO), 9 (Enero 2003), 185-188.

(vi)   Working Papers

Arthurson, K. 'Social Inclusion and Housing: Developing Research and Policy Agendas', **AHURI Southern Research Centre Occasional Paper**, Adelaide: Flinders University (2002).

Bebczuk, R. and Gasparini, L., 'Globalisation and Inequality: The Case of Argentina', La Plata, Argentina: Departamento de Economía, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Documento de Trabajo, No. 32 (2001), available in www.econo.unlp.edu.ar/depeco

Cerruti, M., 'Latin American Urbanization in the Late 20th Century: A Comparative Study (Report on Argentina)' Center for the Study of Urbanization and Internal Migration in Developing Countries (CSUIM) Working Paper No. 02-ARG-01 (2003), Texas: The University of Texas at Austin

Chebez, V. and Salvia, A., 'Empleo, Desocupación y Seguro de Desempleo en la Argentina: Propuestas de Políticas para su Mejoramiento' Buenos Aires: Centro Interdisciplinario para el Estudio de Politicas Públicas (CIEPP), 2001.

Chrabolowsky, L., 'Engendering Trade Unions and Social Movements: New Proposals of Social Inclusion in Argentina', School of Industrial and Labor Relations, Cornell University, November 21-23. 2003.

Collier, R. B. and Handlin, S. P., 'Shifting Interest Regimes of the Working Classes in Latin America', Institute of Industrial Relations Working Paper Series, Paper iirwps-122-05 (2005), (Berkeley: University of California), 1-32.

http://repositories.cdlib.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1120&context=iir

Dain, S., 'Conceptual and Operational Framework on Exclusion in Social Protection for Health', Washington: **Pan American Health Organization** (2003), 1-38. http://www.opas.org.br/servico/Arquivos/Sala5461.pdf

Damill, M and Frenkel, R., 'Argentina: Macroeconomic Performance and Crisis', a working paper for the Macroeconomic Policy Task Force of the International Policy Dialogue (IPD) in Barcelona, Spain (2-3 June 2003), 1-36. Available in http://www0.gsb.columbia.edu/ipd/pub/4.4_Frenkel_SV_12_1_03.doc

De la Escosura, L. P. and Sanz-Villarroya, I., 'Institutional Instability and Growth in Argentina: a Long-run View', Madrid: Working Paper 04-67 (2004), Economic History and Institutions Series, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid.

Delamata, G., 'The Organizations of Unemployed Workers in Greater Buenos Aires', Policy Paper, No.4 (March 2004), (Berkeley: University of California, Center for Latin American Studies; **CLAS**), 1-26.

Espinal, R., 'Torn Between Authoritarianism and Crisis-Prone Democracy: the Dominican Labor Movement', Holland: the University of Notre Dame, Working Paper. No.116 (1988).

Filgueira, C., 'La Actualidad de Viejas Themáticas: Sobre Los Estudio de Clase, Estratificación Y Movilidad Social en América Latina', Oficina de Montevideo, Uruguay: **CEPAL**, LC/R.2034 (2000).

Forstater, M., 'Unemployment', The Center for Full Employment and Price Stability (CFEPS), Paper, No. 20 (2002), in http://www.cfeps.org/pubs/wp-pdf/WP20-Forstater.pdf

Foweraker, J., 'Grassroots Movements, Political Activism and Social Development in Latin America: A Comparison of Chile and Brazil', United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD): Civil Society and Social Movements Programme Paper, No. 4 (August 2001).

Franceschelli, I. and Ronconi, L., 'Clientelism, Workfare and the Emergence of the Piqueteros in Argentina', a working paper, Universidad de San Andres in Argentina (2005).

Galasso, E. and Ravallion, M. 'Social Protection in a Crisis: Argentina's Plan Jefes y Jefas', Development Research Group, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3165, Washington DC: World Bank (November 2003), in http://econ.worldbank.org

Galiani, S., 'Labor Market Reform in Argentina: Where Do We Stand?' Stanford University: **Center for Research on Economic Development and Policy Reform**, a working paper, No, 133 (2002), 1-37.

Gasparini, L., 'Argentina's Distributional Failure: The Role of Integration and Public Policies, a working paper in IADB, Brasilia (2003).

Giugni, M. and Statham, P., 'The Contentious Politics of Unemployment in Europe: Political Claim-making, Policy Deliberation and Exclusion from the Labour Market', Chapter 1, EU: **The 5th Framework Programme of the European Commission** (June 2005), in Project website: http://ics.leeds.ac.uk/eurpolcom/unempol/

Hopenhayn, H. A., 'Labor Market Policies and Employment Duration: The Effects of Labor Market Reform in Argentina', New York: **IADB**, Research Network Working Paper- R: 407 (2001), in http://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu

Kikeri, S., 'Privatization and Labor: What Happens to Workers When Governments Divest?' Washington, D.C: **World Bank** Technical Paper, No. 396 (1998).

Kritz, E., 'Poverty and Labor Market in the Argentine Crisis', **Argentina: Crisis and Poverty 2003**, Poverty Assessment, Background Paper, No. 4 (2002).

O'Donnell, G., 'Poverty and Inequality in Latin America: Some Political Reflections', Working Paper No.225 in the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame, Netherlands (1996).

Panigo, D., Feliz, M. and Perez, P., 'Macro and Microeconomic Persistence in Regional Unemployment: The case of Argentina', Buenos Aires: CEIL-PIETTE-MECOVI-

Project, N° 2004-03 (2004), in http://www.cepremap.cnrs.fr

Powell, J., 'Petty Capitalism, Perfecting Capitalism Or Post-Capitalism? Lessons from the Argentinian Barter Network', The Hague: **Institute of Social Studies (ISS),** Working Paper Series, No.357 (2002).

Roberts, B. and Portes, A., 'Coping with the Free Market City: Collective Action in Six Latin American Cities at the End of the Twentieth Century', **CMD Working Paper,** No. 05-06 (2005), in http://cmd.princeton.edu/papers/wp0506.pdf

Rodgers, D., 'Subverting the spaces of invitation? Local Politics and Participatory Budgeting in Post-Crisis Buenos Aires', LSE: Crisis States Programme Working Paper, No. 72 (November 2005).

Sen, A., 'Social Exclusion: Concept, Application and Scrutiny', **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** (2000), available in http://www.adb.org/Documents/Books/Social_Exclusion/social_exclusion.pdf

Slater, D., 'New Social Movements and Old Political Questions: some problems of socialist theory with relation to Latin America', Amsterdam's ICA- paper (1988).

Suárez, S. M., 'Right to Food in Argentina', **Report of the International Fact Finding Mission to Argentina,** Germany: FIAN and EED (2003).

World of Labor Institute Research Department, 'The Argentinean Labor Market in 2004', 19 October 2004, in http://www.gpn.org

Zibechi, R., 'Latin America's Social Movements Gain New Ground', **International Relations Center (IRC):** IRC Americas Program Discussion Paper (2005), in www.americas.irc-online.org

(vii)   Unpublished Theses

Anderson, C. F., 'The Emergence of New Politics in Argentina: December 2001 and the Neighborhood Assembles', **MA Thesis** in the Graduate School of the University of Notre Dame, Indiana (June 2004).

Bayón, M. C., 'Coping with Job Insecurity: the Experience of Unemployment in Contemporary Argentina', **PhD Thesis** in the University of Texas Austin, US. (2002).

Briones, C. and Mendoza, M. (eds). **Urban Middle-Class Women's Responses to Political Crisis in Buenos Aires**, PhD Thesis in the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina (2003), 1-16.

Cramér, M. and Sjöström, T. 'Protest – Politics of the Poor: A Study of the Piquetero Movement in Buenos Aires', **BA Thesis**, Uppsala University in Spain, Minor Field Study, No.115 (Fall 2003).

Ostiguy, P. 'Peronism and Antiperonism: Class-Cultural Cleavages and Political Identity in Argentina', **PhD Thesis** in the University of California at Berkeley (1998).

Pandit, N. R. 'Towards a Grounded Theory of Corporate Turnaround: A Case Study Approach', **PhD Thesis** in the University of Manchester, UK (1995).

Spieczny, M. C. 'When Workers Take Over: Reclaimed Factories in Argentina', **BA Thesis,** Department of Sociology in Princeton University (April 2004), in http://cmd.princeton.edu/papers/Thesis%20Molly%20Spieczny.pdf

Villalón, R. J. 'Piquetes, Cacerolazos y Asambleas Vecinales: Social Protests in Argentina, 1993-2002', **MA Thesis** in the University of Texas at Austin (August 2002).

Webb, P. 'New Forms of Popular Protest in Post-Transitional Argentina: the Roots and the Dynamics', **BA Thesis,** Institute of Latin American Studies in the University of Liverpool, (May 2006).

(viii)   Conference Papers

Adamo, S. and Vasquez, T., 'Report on Urban Governance and Intra-Urban Population Differentials in Latin American Metropolitan Areas', a conference report with Population Research Center (PRC) in the University of Texas at Austin, 15-16 November 2002.

Cerrutti, M. and Grimson, A. 'Buenos Aires, Neoliberalismo y Después. Cambios Socioeconómicos y Respuestas Populares', Texas: Population Research Center in the

University of Texas Austin. Austin Meeting (5-6 March 2004).

Davis, C. A. 'FASINPAT: Zanon es del Pueblo: the struggle of the Fábrica Sin Patrón in Neuquén, Argentina', the 13th Annual Latin American Studies Symposium at Birmingham-Southern College, Minnesota (8-9 April 2005), 1-32.

Franceschelli, I. and Ronconi, L., 'Clientelism, Workfare and the Emergence of the Piqueteros', Presented at the LACEA Conference, October 2005, France. http://wwwtest.aup.edu/lacea2005/system/step2_php/papers/ronconi_ronc_000.pdf

Hellman, J., 'The Study of New Social Movements in Latin America and the Question of Autonomy', **LASA Forum 21**(1990), 7-12.

Kenney, C. D., 'Reflections on Horizontal Accountability: Democratic Legitimacy, Majority Parties and Democratic Stability in Latin America', Kellogg Institute for International Studies, University of Notre Dame (May 8-9, 2000), 1-36, in http://kellogg.nd.edu/events/pdfs/Kenney.pdf

Lodola, G., 'Popular Mobilization and Geographic Distributive Paths: the Case of Argentine Plan Trabajar', Paper prepared for LACEA-PEG Fifth Annual Meeting, Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), 25-26 September 2003, 1-38.

Pastore, M., 'Las Nuevas Formas Políticas: ¿Legitimidad Constructora de Una Nueva Legalidad?, in the conference of 5 to Congreso Nacional de Ciencia Política in Córdoba, Argentina (November 2001).

Pereira, L. and Bresser, C., 'State Reform in the 1990s: Logic and Control Mechanisms', Hong Kong: Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group and IMF (1997).

Peruzzotti, E., 'Reshaping Representation: Argentine Civil and Political Society in the 1990s', in a conference of 'Rethinking Dual Transitions: Argentine Politics in the 1990s in Comparative Perspective' in the University of Harvard (22-23 March (2003), in http:// www.wcfia.harvard.ed/conferences/argentinepolitics/papers/asp)

Roberts, B. and Portes, A., 'Urban Collective Action in Latin America: 1980-2000', **Austin Meeting** in the Population Research Center in the University of Texas Austin

(5-6 March 2004).

Roever, S., 'Informal Governance and Organizational Success: The Effects of Noncompliance among Lima's Street Vending Organizations', prepared paper for the Cornell-SEWA-WIEGO Workshop in Ahmedabad, India, (Berkeley, CA: University of California at Berkeley, 2005).

Szwarcberg, M. L., 'Feeding Loyalties: Political Clientelism in Argentina, an Analysis of the Case of the Manzaneras', The Comparative Politics Workshop, No. 12 (Chicago: Department of Political Science in the University of Chicago, Autumn 2003).

Teunissen, J. J. and Akkerman, A., 'The Crisis That Was Not Prevented: Lessons for Argentina, the IMF and Globalisation', The Hague: Forum on Debt and Development in FONDAD (2003).

(ix)   Electronic Sources

Alberto, M., 'Argentina and Parecon: Michael Alberto Interviews Ezequiel Adamovsky', ZNET (4 August 2003), available in http://www.zmag.org

Altamira, J., 'Piqueteros: From Vanguard of the Struggle to Mass Movement', Prensa Obrera, No. 832 (9 January 2004), available in http://www.po.org.ar/english/832edito.htm

Auyero, J., 'The Dynamics of Collective Violence: Dissecting Food Riots in Contemporary Argentina', (2003), available in http://www.sunysb.edu/sociol/faculty/Auyero/Food%20Riots%203.pdf

Briscoe, I., 'Argentina: How Politicians Survive While People Starve', Open Democracy, (17 April 2003), available in http://www.opendemocracy.net/debates/articleId=1167

Cockcroft, J. D., 'The Argentinazo One Year On', Online Magazine IV, No. 347 (Febrary 2003), available in http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article264

Corrales, J., 'Killing me softly with each shock: explaining Argentina's Depression' (2002), available in http://www. amherst. edu/~jcorrale

Dain, Sulamis. 'Conceptual and Operational Framework on Exclusion in Social Protection for Health', Washington: Pan American Health Organization (OPAS), (2003), available in http://www.opas.org.br/servico/Arquivos/Sala5461.pdf

Harvey, D., 'Neo-Liberalism and the Restoration of Class Power', (2004), in www.sum.uio.no/research/changing_attitudes/humanism/harvey080604.pdf

Felix, D., 'After the Fall: The Argentine Crisis and Repercussions', Policy Report Foreign Policy in **Focus** (August 2002), available in http://www.fpif.org/pdf/reports/PRargentina2.pdf

Green, D., 'Report on Visit to Argentina', Catholic Agency for Overseas Development; **CAFOD,** (January 2003), available in http://www.cafod.org.uk/archive/policy/argentina200301.shtml

Group Alavio, 'El Rostro de la Dignidad: Memoria del MTD de Solano', **Group Alavio,** (2002), in http://www.revolutionvideo.org/alavio/englishhome.html

James, N., 'A long Climb: An energized Argentina Democracy is Holding its Own Against the IMF, but for how long?' available in http://www.inthesetimes.com/site/main/article/1747/

Katz, C., 'A Strategic Discussion', **International Viewpoint (IV) Online Magazine,** No. 337 (January/February 2002), available in http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article515

Katz, C., 'Strategies for the Latin American Left: Problems of Autonomism', **International Socialist Review,** 44 (November–December 2005), in http://www.isreview.org/issues/44/autonomism.shtml

Korol, C., 'Wars and Emancipations in the Lands of Oil: A Review of the General Mosconi Union of Unemployed Workers' (UTD) Experience', (October 2004), in http://www.cubanow.cult.cu/global/loader.php?secc=3&cont=list.php

McCabe, P., 'Argentina's New Forms of Politics', (19 December 2002), in

http://sf.indymedia.org/news/2002/12/1552517.php

MTD Solano, 'Argentina: the Piqueteros' of the Unemployed Workers Movement', (21 November 2003), available in http://www.solidaridadesrebeldes.kolgados.com.ar/article.php3?id_article=24

Neumann, R. 'The New Radicalism', **Alternet**, (22 July 2004), available in http://www.alternet.org/story/19308.

Nucleo Comunista Internacional (NCI), 'The Mystification of the Piquetero Movement', **International Review**, (2004), available in http://en.internationalism.org/book/print/287

Pandit, N. R., 'The Creation of Theory: A Recent Application of the Grounded Theory Method', **The Qualitative Report**, 2:4 (1996), available in http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-4/pandit.html

Petras, J., 'Empire and Labor: U.S. and Latin America', (10 January 2003), in http://www.rebelion.org/petras/english/030327empire_labor.pdf

Petras, J. and Veltmeyer, H., 'Argentina: Between Disintegration and Revolution', **Rebelión** (June 2002), available in http://www.rebelion.org/petras/english/argentina200602.htm

Ransom, D., 'I am the Other in Rebel Argentina', **New Internationalist**, No. 356 (May 2003), in http://www.newint.org/issue356/iam.htm

Rauber, I., 'Piquetes y piqueteros: en la Argentina de la crisis y cerrar el paso abriendo caminos', (2002), in www.rebelion.org/otromundo/irauber010203.pdf

Romero, A. A., 'Argentina: Interview to Luis Zamora', **Revista Herramienta**, No. 19 (2003), available English version in http://www.herramienta.com.ar/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=37

Straub, J., 'Argentina's Piqueteros and Us', **Zmag**, (2 March 2004), in

http://www.zmag.org/content/print_article.cfm?itemID=5077&sectionID=40

Zibechi, R., 'Latin America's Social Movements: Preparing for New Offensives', Americas Program, Interhemispheric Resource Center; IRC, (14 June 2005), in www.americaspolicy.org

Statistical Data
INDEC-National Institute of Statistics and Censuses:
http://www.indec.gov.ar/indec/ingles.asp
La Nueva Mayoría-el Portal Sociopolítico Iberoamérica:
http://nuevamayoria.com/ES/

The UMOs in the Websites
http://www.cta.org.ar/: the CTA-FTV.
http://www.solidaridadesrebeldes.kolgados.com.ar/: MTD Allen.
http://www.elteresa.org.ar/: MTR and MTR-CUBa Movimiento Teresa Rodríguez
http://www.barriosdepie.org.ar/: El Movimiento Barrios de Pie since 2001
http://www.asambleasociales.org/: Neighbouhood assembles
http://www.po.org.ar/: Polo Obrero.
http://www. leftparty. org. ar/
http://www.situaciones.org/

Useful Website Resources
http://www.aset.org.ar/
http://alainet.org/
http://www.correpi.lahaine.org/
http://www.lafogata.org/
http://www.rebelion.org/
http://clajadep.lahaine.org/
http://www.hommodolars.cl/
http://www.argentina.indymedia.org/
http://www.lavaca.org/
http://www.luver.org/argentina.html:
http://www.nodo50.org/colectivosituaciones/enlaces.htm
http://www.zmag.org/LAM/zargentina.html
http://argentinanow.tripod.com.ar/articles.html

http://www.ciudadpolitica.com/

http://www.crisisstates.com/associated/CAW/index.htm: Crisis in Argentina Website (CAW) with LSE (London).

http://kanalb.org/: the archive of the 4 week video coverage about the uprising of the popular protests in December 2001.

http://dominionpaper.ca/features/2003/09/27/the_piquet.html: the unemployed build direct democracy for basic needs

http://www.ipsnews.net