SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AND POLITICAL DECAY IN ARGENTINA

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DEDICATION:

To the memory of

LEWIS GRAY MYERS

a poet always following the sun.

Thanks to Darby, Mr. Melding, Rich & Judy,

and my parents for their encouragement

and kind support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the interaction of socio-economic and political variables that have contributed to Argentina's instability using Samuel P. Huntington's theory of political institutionalization.

This analysis outlines the destabilizing patterns emerging from the Radical and Peronist periods in Argentine history and considers the implications of these processes for the current government of President Raúl Alfonsín.

The degree of political instability linked with the mass movements during these two periods appears to be positively associated with: electoral strategies using populistic appeals to the mobilized masses, the informal and personalistic character of the state, and the lack of widespread acceptance of a single set of political rules to govern behavior.

The results of this study point to the relevance of Huntington's concept of political decay for explaining the chronic instability plaguing Argentina. It is suggested that the most important task confronting President Alfonsín is the establishment of adaptable, complex, autonomous, and legitimate political institutions and practices.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AND POLITICAL DECAY IN ARGENTINA

INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes the impact of modernization on Argentina's political processes. Specifically, it is a study of the factors which have contributed to Argentina's political instability. One school of thought argues that rapid socio-economic transformation created pressures which by their intensity simply overwhelmed the political system. According to this view, large-scale immigration, sudden economic growth, urbanization, and the onslaught of industrialization gave rise to social forces which have been locked in a continuous struggle with each other for power.[1]

Another school of thought stresses the importance of the political system's institutional capacity. According to this view, politics failed. The actions of political leaders and institutions in meeting certain crises led to the demise of the system.[2] To understand Argentina's climate of instability, it is therefore necessary to study the sources of political weakness.

The central questions to be answered in this thesis focus on the relationship between rapid social change and the political processes in Argentina. One important area of investigation is the impact of new social groups on the Argentine political process. Another deals with the

political institutions themselves: how much did they contribute to their own demise?

To reach some conclusions about these matters, it is necessary to understand how the interaction of socio-economic forces and political structures can produce instability. The first chapter provides a theoretical framework that explains how and why social mobilization, economic development, and the strength of political institutions affect the level of instability in a given country. The second chapter applies this approach to the Radical period in Argentine politics. The third chapter examines the Peronist period from the same perspective. The fourth chapter then suggests some implications, based on this analysis, for the current administration of President Raúl Alfonsín. Finally, the conclusion highlights the destabilizing processes that have contributed to Argentina's political instability.

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NOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

1 See: Gino Germani, Política y sociedad en una época de transición (Buenos Aires: Editorial Paidos, 1962).

2 Peter H. Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy: Conflict among Political Elites, 1904-1955 (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p. 89.

CHAPTER I

THEORY AND PROPOSITIONS

This chapter seeks to explain how social mobilization, economic development, and the strength of political institutions affect the level of political stability in Argentina. First, the concepts are defined and clarified. Second, the relationships between these independent variables and political stability are examined.

I. Independent Variables

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

Karl Deutsch defines social mobilization as:

> The process in which major clusters of old social, economic, and psychological commitments are eroded or broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization of behavior.[1]

This is what occurs to a large number of people in areas undergoing modernization. Deutsch suggests that social mobilization can be measured according to the percentage of the population:

(1) that is exposed to important aspects of modern life,

(2) that is exposed to mass media,

(3) that has changed its residence location,

(4) that is living in towns (or cities of a certain size),

(5) that is employed in non-agricultural occupations,

(6) that is literate, and

(7) by changes in the per capita gross national product.[2]

According to Deutsch, a "threshold of criticality" is attained when these social factors begin to produce changes in the social structure.[3]

One of the most important analyses of the implications of social mobilization with regard to Latin America is Gino Germani's study of Argentine society. Following Deutsch, Germani defines social mobilization as the psychosocial process in which passive, traditional groups acquire their own norms and aspirations separate from those established by the previous rules.[4] This analysis of social transition highlights the resulting increase or change in the nature of political participation. Germani posits that high levels of social mobilization lead to increased levels of participation. The political pressures are greatest after social mobilization reaches a threshold of significance, but before the political structures adjust to the new demands. In sum, when mobilized groups become aware of new needs, and traditional political structures are unwilling or unable to process rising demands, instability often results.

Anne L. and Peter R. Schneider argue that high rates of change in social mobilization may not have a significant correlation with political instability. Their data

concerning ten West European nations indicate that, the social mobilization process is significant, but its importance is due to "its relationship with economic development and institutionalization and not because of any direct impact on political disorder."[5] The Schneiders conclude that political instability is more likely to occur when social mobilization takes place faster than institutionalization or when social mobilization outruns economic development. Thus, for a fuller understanding of the relative importance of social mobilization, these authors recommend an approach that distinguishes between rates of change for different variables.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development refers to the productive capacity of a nation. Higher levels of economic development have traditionally been associated with a moderate degree of societal tensions. Seymour M. Lipset and others argue that, as economic development increases, democracy increases and so does political stability.[6] In their study of political instability, Hayward R. Alker, Jr. and Bruce M. Russett find evidence to support Lipset's claim. They point out that both an increase in the level of per capita income and a rise in the growth rate are associated with domestic stability.[7]

This view fails to take into account how economic development may cause disruptions in the social system. In his study of the French Revolution, Alexis de Tocqueville

argued that real economic conditions improved slightly before the revolution. In response to these improved conditions, the nobility, already weakened by the third estate's growth in economic power, attempted to retain its medieval privileges. The ensuing "feudal reaction" led to revolution as "*the French found their position the more unsupportable in proportion to its improvement.*"[8]

James C. Davies combines de Tocqueville's idea of frustrated expectations in a period of improving economic conditions with Marx's notion of misery associated with economic decline to build a theory of revolution. He argues that:

> Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal. . . The crucial factor is the vague or specific fear that ground gained over a long period of time will be quickly lost.[9]

According to this perspective, economic and social progress is usually a necessary condition for violent political change.

In order to assess the extent of societal frustration within this framework, it is useful to examine the distribution of income. Changes in income distribution may be unrelated to overall growth or decline of GNP. Even in an expanding economy, for the majority, economic development may still be a zero-sum game. Shifts in income distribution that represent an improvement for one group may be seen as a decline by other groups. Therefore, economic satisfactions or dissatisfactions may become political variables.

Bruce M. Russett, in "Inequality and Instability: The

Relation of Land Tenure to Politics," operationalized instability by aggregating across nation units the number of violent political deaths occurring between 1950-1962.[10] He assessed the degree of the inequitable distribution of land for each of these nation units with a measure of the total inequality of a distribution known as the Gini Index.[11] The Gini Index calculates over the whole population, the difference between an "ideal" cumulative distribution of land and the actual distribution. The higher the Gini Index, the greater the inequality. In his correlational analysis, Bruce Russett illustrated the positive association between inequality and instability.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

John A. Booth and Mitchell A. Seligson define political participation as "behavior influencing or attempting to influence the distribution of public goods."[12] This definition rests on the notion of collective and public goods. According to the writers, collective goods consist of "goods that when supplied to one member of a collectivity cannot easily be denied to others of the same group."[13] Here, public goods refers to a collective goods provided by governments through governmental expenditure. Streets, national security, and monetary systems provide examples of public goods.

A further example of the application of this definition in Latin American societies will more fully illustrate its implications. The stability of a regime in power is a public good to certain citizens since stable government can ensure

particular economic, social, or political arrangements beneficial to certain sectors of society. Thus, showing political support through attending pro-government rallies or voting in elections constitutes participation. Similarly, such acts as casting an invalid ballot in an election (a form of protest) or engaging in an anti-regime movement, rally, strike, or riot are also participation. Such actions attempt to influence the public good through either collective support or opposition.[14]

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Samuel P. Huntington argues that the stability of a modernizing political system depends on the strength of its political organizations and procedures. The strength of political institutions depends on their level of institutionalization and their scope of support. Institutionalization is "the process by which organizations and procedures acquire value and stability," and scope of support refers to "the extent to which the political organizations and procedures encompass activity in the society."[15]

The level of institutionalization of any political system can be defined by the adaptability, complexity, coherence, and autonomy of its organizations and procedures.[16] If development occurs, then so does regression. Institutions decay and lose their effectiveness as they become more rigid, simple, disorganized, and subordinate.[17]

1. ADAPTABILITY-RIGIDITY

The more adaptable an organization or procedure is, the

more highly institutionalized it is; the more rigid it is, the lower its level of institutionalization.[18] Adaptability is a function of environmental challenge and age. As environments change with time, they offer new challenges to organizations. As Huntington points out, success in adapting to one environmental challenge strengthens an institution's capacity to deal with subsequent challenges.[19] For example, the strength of a party is reflected in its ability to survive its founder or the charismatic leader who first brings it to power. Adaptability refers to a political system's ability to meet challenges and survive.

2. COMPLEXITY-SIMPLICITY

The more complicated an organization is, the more highly institutionalized it is.[20] Complexity involves the establishment of organizational sub-units both hierarchically and functionally. The greater the number and variety of the sub-units the greater the ability of the system to maintain the support of its members.[21] For instance, parties in modernizing societies need supporting organizational links in order to develop mass appeals. Linkages between the party and socio-economic organizations such as labor unions are particularly valuable.[22] Relatively simple political systems and institutions without supporting organizational links, on the other hand, are usually over-whelmed in the modernization process. The simplest political system is that which depends on one individual; it is also the least stable.

3. COHERENCE-DISUNITY

The more unified and coherent an organization is, the

more highly institutionalized it is.

> An effective organization requires, at a minimum, substantial consensus on the functional boundaries of the group and or the procedures for resolving disputes which come up within those boundaries.[23]

This capacity for coordination and discipline is essential in the field of politics. As an organization or procedure produces a sense of group identity and morale, it increases in coherence. The greater the disunity of an organization or system, the lower its level of institutionalization.[24]

4. AUTONOMY-SUBORDINATION

A final indicator of institutionalization is autonomy, or the extent to which political organizations exist independently of other social groupings. Huntington argues that, in a highly developed political system, organizations are "insulated" from the direct influence of nonpolitical groups and procedures.[25] Institutions are autonomous to the extent that they have interests and values independent from other institutions and social forces. Political systems containing organizations and procedures that are subordinate to the interests of one group are less likely to withstand the pressures of modernization.

LEGITIMACY

In the political arena, trust in institutions rests on a cultural foundation in which ideals and expectations and institutional practices are mutually reinforcing.[26] When beliefs are widely shared, institutions are better equipped to deal with the tensions of group conflict. As a gap develops

between the beliefs in a society and government practices, doubt in the effectiveness of authority increases, and the political system loses its capacity to mobilize consent and to respond effectively to basic problems.

In an often quoted definition of legitimacy, Seymour M. Lipset states:

> Legitimacy involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society.[27]

Here, legitimacy is both affective and evaluative. According to Lipset, "Groups will regard a political system as legitimate or illegitimate according to the way in which its values fit in with their primary values."[28]

According to Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, when the frequency of affective and evaluative orientations toward the political structure are high, the congruence between culture and structure promotes high levels of allegiance, or legitimacy. This cultural approach suggests that, as political systems move toward "allegiant" orientations, they tend to become more stable; when the frequency of positive feeling and attitudes approaches indifference, instability is likely to result. As Almond and Verba point out:

> Long-run political stability may be more dependent on a more diffuse sense of attachment or loyalty to the political system -- a loyalty not based specifically on system performance.[29]

In Argentina populist impulses challenged the legitimacy of the traditional norms and practices in society. According to José Luis Romero, the modernization process in Argentina spawned new, popular, and democratic attitudes among the

masses that, in part, coincided with the ideals of the established elites and, in part, conflicted with them. As he points out, "Two antagonistic political lines were drawn, and their conflict had repercussions on the stability of the institutional system."[30] This conflict of modern values with traditionalism is thus the basis for Argentina's continuing crises of legitimacy.

II. Dependent Variables

POLITICAL STABILITY

Contemporary studies carry varied labels for political stability: political order, integration, nation-building, homeostatic equilibrium, government performance, etc. A consensus exists among those who use these terms that societies may differ in the degree in which their members cooperate together in collective action. According to Charles Tilly, collective action consists of people acting together in pursuit of common interests.[31] In its ideal form, the stable polity would be able to make collective decisions and have them obeyed without the application of coercion.[32]

Although stability implies a lack of change, societies must move forward in order to meet changing circumstances. Developmental change is gradual and orderly. A polity is evolving -- hence remains stable -- if changes are taking place in the direction of increased harmony among its components.[33] Such change results from regularized contests for power and from continued incremental adjustments in the allocation of benefits.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

A polity is unstable if it neither develops toward increased social cohesion nor functions according to precepts widely shared by society. Political instability in its most extreme form leads to violence. The sources of political violence can be collective as well as elitist. Mass violence is a manifestation of social disintegration directed in opposition to the society or to parts of it. Instances of collective violence include: rebellions and riots, assassinations of public officials, guerrilla warfare, bombings and terrorist acts, and other armed attacks. In general, Charles Tilly defines collective violence as any interaction that leads to the seizure or damage of persons or objects, so long as resistance occurs.[34]

Elite violence is often related to mass violence. Elite repression may precede or follow collective violence; and elite coups d'etat may also be associated with the occurence of violent collective action. According to D.A. Hibbs Jr., elite repression consists of "actions taken by political authorities to neutralize, suppress, or eliminate a perceived threat to the security and stability of the government, the regime, or the state itself."[35] Coups, on the other hand, are illegal attempts to overthrow the government by a particular segment of the population, coalitions and factions of disaffected individuals within the administration or ruling party, and (commonly in Latin America) the military.[36]

III. Toward a Framework for Analysis

HUNTINGTON'S SYNTHESIS

Samuel P. Huntington provides one of the most balanced development theories dealing with questions of political stability. In Political Order in Changing Societies, he argues that the domestic violence and instability of the 1950s and the 1960s, "was in large part the product of rapid social change and the rapid mobilization of new groups into politics, coupled with the slow development of political institutions."[37] His theory is appealing in its examination of three factors -- rapid social change, mobilization, and political institutionalization.

For Huntington, the focus of political change is the interaction between rapid mobilization and institutionalization. The impact of modernization on political stability is determined by the relationships between social mobilization and economic development, social frustration and non-political mobility opportunities, and political participation and political institutionalization. Huntington expresses these relationships in a series of ratios:[38]

(1) $\frac{\text{Social mobilization}}{\text{Economic development}} = \text{Social frustration}$

(2) $\frac{\text{Social frustration}}{\text{Mobility opportunities}} = \text{Political participation}$

(3) $\frac{\text{Political participation}}{\text{Institutionalization}} \rightarrow \text{Political instability}$

Huntington thus integrates elements of both the socio-

economic and the political systems into a single framework seeking to explain how political instability occurs.

Keeping these two broad areas of concentration in mind, his general theory can be simplified into two ratios:

(1) $\frac{\text{Social mobilization}}{\text{Satisfaction}} = \text{Political participation}$

(2) $\frac{\text{Political participation}}{\text{Institutionalization}} \rightarrow \text{Political instability}$

The processes expressed by these ratios read as follows: To the extent that demands generated by social mobilization are not satisfied in the socio-economic realm, they will generate political participation or demands placed on the political system. If the system is sufficiently institutionalized to handle these demands, order will be maintained. If demands exceed the system's management capacity, instability will result.

MODIFYING HUNTINGTON'S THEORY

In his study testing the theory's relevance to Latin America, J. Mark Ruhl questions Huntington's assumption that higher economic development produces satisfaction. As he points out, "The economic development level may be less important than the degree to which economic benefits are distributed equally."[39] Taking this point into account, a revised version of Huntington's theory might introduce an alternative measure of socio-economic satisfaction, labeled "distribution." The modified theory would read: political participation demands are created to the extent that social mobilization pressures are not diffused by more equitable

income distribution.

Huntington's operationalization of political institutionalization must also be revised to describe with precision the political institutions most "appropriate" for handling the socio-cultural changes occurring in Argentine society. A strong or appropriate political system would be characterized by:

(1) ADAPTABILITY (flexibility to articulate and aggregate new demands),

(2) COMPLEXITY (institutional linkages to socio-economic groups and organizations),

(3) AUTONOMY (independent structure of national government), and

(4) LEGITIMACY (as perceived by society).

In constructing this index of institutionalization, one of Huntington's indicators (coherence) is dropped from consideration because of problems in operationalizing the concept with respect to Argentina's political development. The coherence of political institutions might be estimated by determining the percentage of positions in the Senate held by the majority party, the total of different parties represented in the Senate, the number of parties in the Chamber of Deputies, and the percentage of seats held by the largest party. Nations scoring high on coherence are usually those in which a smaller number of parties hold stronger control of the upper and lower legislative bodies.[40] However, Argentina during the Radical and Peronist periods under consideration in this study moved politically toward becoming a one-party state. Consequently, the extremely high scores on

coherence during these periods would result in a distortion of the relationship between this indicator and the other indicators of institutionalization.

The index of institutionalization involves four separate factors: the adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and legitimacy of political institutions. Following Huntington, an important aspect of adaptability is the percentage of the vote gained by "surge" parties -- parties which appear suddenly and appeal to a particular group or have rather specific or limited issue appeals.[41] An adaptable party system should be able to aggregate the interests represented by these surge parties, thus inhibiting their appearance.

Complexity of government is the second indicator on the institutionalization index. The extent of decentralization of government in the society is used to estimate complexity. This measure represents a comprehensive governmental structure which provides citizens with more possibilities for inputs. The extent of decentralization is estimated by examining the strength of linkages between the central government and important groups and organizations in society.

Autonomy is estimated by examining the independence of national government institutions from control by outside organizations or groups. Additionally, this indicator measures the ability of these structures to guide and direct members of society rather than their being manipulated by powerful individuals. An organization that is sufficiently autonomous to orient the roles of its members will have a life of its own greater than the sum of its parts; it will be

institutionalized.[42]

Legitmacy is estimated by using Robert Dahl's concept of opposition.[43] Opposition to the structure of government, rather than to policies or personnel, is considered to represent the perception that the structures are not legitimate. The mobilization of groups and parties which oppose the system is used to indicate the onset of a crisis of legitimacy.

By adding these elements to the theory, the equations would read:

(1) $\frac{\text{Social mobilization}}{\text{Distribution}} = \text{Participation}$

(2) $\frac{\text{Participation}}{\text{Institutionalization}} \rightarrow \text{Instability}$

The process expressed by these relationships would translate as: To the extent that demands generated by social mobilization are not satisfied by the distribution of economic benefits, they will stimulate political participation. If adaptable, complex, autonomous, and legitimate institutions exist, order will be maintained. As institutions become more rigid, simple, subordinate, and people no longer value or utilize them, instability is likely to result.

SOME PROPOSITIONS

The relationships presented in this revised version of Huntington's theory provide a basis for generating propositions about political instability in Argentina.

However, a major problem with this approach is its lack of any precise definitions for political instability. Huntington chooses instead to treat terms like "instability" and "violence" in summary fashion without specifying what these terms entail. As Charles Tilly points out:

> To accept the Huntington theory confidently, one would also want clear distinctions among radicalism, instability, violence, extent of protest, and propensity to revolution not to mention a specification of their relationships to each other.[44]

Huntington never clears this difficulty.

Taking into account this caveat concerning Huntington's theory, it is necessary to designate the forms of instability that may result from the interaction of the main variables. This analysis of instability in Argentina will make distinctions about political instability based on the discussion of dependent variables earlier in this chapter. Political violence can be collective as well as elitist.

Drawing from these modifications to Huntington's theory, this study considers the following propositions:

> (1) Rapid economic development unevenly distributed, accompanied by high levels of social mobilization, led to the participation of new groups in Argentine politics.
>
> (2) The participation of new groups in politics coupled with the decay of institutions led to outbreaks of elite violence.

In order to evaluate these propositions, it is necessary to set forth a framework for analysis to apply to the two periods of major social and political upheaval in modern Argentine history. To facilitate this examination of the interaction of independent variables during each period,

this framework places developments in the socio-economic realm (economic distribution and social mobilization), under the heading of "Operational Environment." Developments in the political arena (adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and legitimacy), are grouped as part of the "Institutional Environment." This focus on the roles and relationships of the developmental variables should help identify the major forces contributing to Argentina's political instability.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

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38 Ibid., p. 55.

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42 Duff and McCamant, pp. 96-97.

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CHAPTER II

THE RADICAL PERIOD, 1916 - 1930

In an effort to explain the failure of Argentina's experiment with democracy during the Radical period, this chapter considers, first, the socio-economic underpinnings of the Argentine political system and, second, the system's internal or structural characteristics that have contributed to instability.

I. Operational Environment

From the seventeenth until the late nineteenth century, livestock provided the main products and exports of the Pampas region. The economy developed from the hunting of wild cattle and horses for their hides (1600-1750), to the formation of larger herds of semi-tamed animals (1700-1850), to the production of fats and salted meat (1800-1890), and finally to sheep raising (1830-1900).[1] At each stage, James R. Scobie observes, the rift between the interior and the coast widened, until the coast achieved dominance.

As developed in the coastal region during the late nineteenth century, the rural economy prospered under an extensive land tenure system. The acquisition and maintenance of land required financial resources and political

influence. Wealthy merchants developed the estancias or cattle ranches in the eighteenth century. These owners generally obtained land for prestige and income but left the administration and labor to foremen and gauchos.[2]

With the establishment of the saladero, or meat-salting plant, in Buenos Aires and at ports along the Uruguay and Parana rivers, the landowning and cattle interests of the coast began to consolidate their wealth and position through world trade.[3] In the decade following 1810, the revenues from the export of hides tripled. The introduction of the saladero increased the yearly slaughter of cattle for salted meat from 7,000 head in the 1790s, to 60,000 in 1822, and to 350,000 by 1827.[4] To reinforce their prestige and power, those benefiting from these developments advocated:

> . . . further expansion of large landholdings; rejection of immigrants, crops, livestock, or any variation from the formula of animals and land; access to and control of ports and commerce; creation of rural peons from the vagabond gaucho element; and subordination of government to its control.[5]

Juan Manuel de Rosas became the leading proponent of this cattle civilization. After becoming governor of Buenos Aires in 1835, he contributed to the estancia-saladero interests with a massive land give-away program. The military received large grants for service in the Indian wars, holders of public bonds took over large areas, and sales favored political supporters.[6] These policies made the coast a land of ports, estancias, and animals, while increasingly alienating the economic interests of the interior.

With the fall of Rosas in 1852, the economy shifted away

from the estancias and saladeros toward sheep raising. Wool exports rose from an average of 6,000 tons annually in the 1840s to 11,000 in the 1850s, 50,000 in the 1860s, 80,000 in the 1870s, and 120,000 in the 1880s. By the latter decade, wool comprised 50 to 60 percent of the value of Argentina's exports.[7] The sheep economy marked the transition from the colonial estancia and saladero to the modern estancias that emerged on the coast in the late nineteenth century.

The export sector dominated Argentina's economy and society between 1890 and 1914. Argentina's principal exports were agricultural products, including wheat, maize, linseed, hides, wool, and beef.[8] Between 1880 and 1910, the value of exports increased sixfold. After 1860, total production expanded to an annual average of 5 percent, population by 3.4 percent, the crop area by 8.3 percent, and the railway system by 15.4 percent.[9] Alongside various European countries and the United States, Argentina appeared to be on the verge of becoming one of the great nations of the world.

Some archaic characteristics of the Argentine economy persisted into the twentieth century as large landholdings remained intact. Despite sporadic attempts to change traditional arrangements, few among the elite wanted to modify the status quo. By the mid-nineteenth century, concentrated distribution of land ownership became an institutional norm.[10] Powerful landed oligarchs emerged as a dominant force in the political and economic life of the nation. Some 400 families linked by clubs and private associations formed the core of the elite. As David Rock states, "It has been estimated that

less than 2,000 persons in Argentina owned as much land as the total areas of Italy, Belgium, Holland and Denmark added together."[11]

Because of this concentration of economic and political power, the years between 1880 and 1912 are frequently referred to as the period of the "oligarchy." The elite used its leverage to control the state which served as a major source of credit and contacts with foreign investors. To maintain its control over the state apparatus, the oligarchy set up a system of "disguised repression" to restrict the access of other groups to political office.[12] The resulting political structure, which emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, was based on organized fraud. This process perpetuated the myth of constitutional liberties, while removing any threat posed by an expanding electorate. Coupled with fraud, the oligarchy resorted to the widespread use of rewards for political loyalties. With its distribution of government offices, the state became a source of political patronage.

The European immigrants to the Río de la Plata after 1870 had little chance to acquire land. Given high real estate values in the province of Buenos Aires, the controlling cattle and sheep interests had no intention of subdividing and selling their property.[13] Therefore, in the Buenos Aires region, the immigrant became a tenant farmer. Landowners accepted the European immigrants with the expectation that they would be employed as laborers. With the ownership of land out of their reach, the immigrants opted to travel to

Argentina's port cities to establish themselves in rapidly-increasing urban service occupations.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

Between 1857 and 1916, 4,758,729 immigrants entered the country.[14] The flood of immigration during this period contributed to the rapid growth of urban areas. The growth of urban society during these years was in many respects as politically significant as the transformation of Argentina under the landed elites. By 1914 foreigners made up 30 percent of Argentina's population.[15] The majority of the new arrivals settled in the urbanizing province of Buenos Aires. (See Table 2.1).

These immigrants rapidly integrated into society. European customs easily blended with the Hispanic traditions of Argentina. Both cultures shared many things in common. According to one account:

> Like the colonial Spaniard, they (the immigrants) placed particular emphasis on dignity, outward appearance, and dress, and displayed a fatalistic attitude toward life along with their fondness for gambling.[16]

The receptive attitude of Argentines toward the newcomers promoted their absorption. The nation's constitutions, treaties, and laws gave preferential treatment to European immigrants. By the early twentieth century, the culture appeared to be "Italianized Hispanic" as the population increasingly asserted its "Argentinism."[17]

The geographical and occupational concentration of foreigners affected the balance of the social system. The

TABLE 2.1

PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGNERS IN TOTAL POPULATION OF EACH CATEGORY OF COUNTIES CLASSIFIED * ACCORDING TO SIZE OF URBAN CENTERS, 1869-1914

ZONE	1869	1895	1914
Greater Buenos Aires	47	50	49
Other Cities of 100,000 or more	9	34	35
Urban Centers of 50,000 to 99,999	8	18	22
Urban Centers of 20,000 to 49,999	12	23	26
Urban Centers of 2,000 to 19,999	7	19	23
Urban Centers of less than 2,000 and Populations outside of Urban Centers	3	9	19

* Counties classified according to size of major urban center, taking the population existing in 1947 (uniform areas).

Source: Gino Germani, Authoritarianism, Fascism, and National Populism (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1978), p. 138.

large influx of immigrants to the central areas created a new society composed of groups with different native origins who nonetheless considered themselves to be Argentines. The new immigrant culture dominated Buenos Aires and the littoral, while creole Argentina remained in the interior and isolated sectors of the littoral.[18]

The high rate of upward social mobility was an important factor contributing to the ready absorption -- through non-political channels -- of the two-thirds of the population residing in developed regions. According to Gino Germani, the usual pattern was for second generation immigrants to discard their old ways in favor of a new Argentine identity. Mobility opportunities reinforced this tendency, as sons of immigrants emerged into a different class than that of their fathers.[19]

The explosion in the size of the urban middle class was an important phenomenon. This group -- concentrated in Buenos Aires -- grew from 50,000 in 1869 to 660,000 in 1914, making it a strong political force in Argentina before World War I.[20] The Buenos Aires middle class was divided into white collar workers and entrepreneurs, on the one hand, and professionals and administrative officials, on the other. The former represented the lower middle class, with moderate economic means and virtually no social prestige. The latter represented the upper middle class, prosperous but not prestigious, which increased rapidly during the 50 years before 1914. The growth rate of this sector multiplied from 4.1 percent in 1869, to 6.6 percent in 1895, and to 12.4

percent in 1914.[21]

Native Argentines, not immigrants, constituted the majority of these urban professionals and administrative officials.[22] When the second generation Argentines appeared, they began to compete for positions in the professions and state administration. Broadly speaking, these career patterns meant that the elite-controlled state managed the mechanisms of middle-class mobility: it could increase spending and widen access to the middle-class groups in high-status positions, or it could restrict them.[23]

ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION

The high proportion of exports in Argentina's total output conditioned economic development during the period from 1860 to 1930. Fluctuations in the terms of trade exerted a major influence on the functioning of Argentina's primary-export economy. Aldo Ferrer asserts that the Argentine economy was vulnerable at three different but interdependent levels: employment and domestic income, balance of payments, and public finance.[24]

During the late nineteenth century, the agricultural and livestock sector employed 35 percent of the labor force and 25 percent of existing capital.[25] Wages, rents, profits, and interest (income accruing to workers, proprietors, and rural entrepreneurs) depended directly on the value of exports. An expansion of exports not only raised the level of employment and income of the population involved with

agriculture but also determined the growth of the economy as a whole through the multiplier effect of the initial increase in income.[26] This higher income of agricultural workers and entrepreneurs was spent partly on imports and partly on consumption and investment in the domestic market. The proportion of income spent in Argentina generated employment of labor and capital which translated into wages and profits for workers engaged in the domestically-oriented sectors.

When exports declined, the farm producers received less income and reduced their purchases of both imports and internally-produced goods and services. This resulted in the unemployment of capital and labor in the sectors supplying the domestic market and produced a subsequent drop in incomes and expenditures in these sectors.

A decline in exports brought about a balance-of-payments deficit. Yet, with the introduction of a system of inconvertible paper currency in 1885, the money supply became independent of the net balance of transactions with the rest of the world.[27] The banks increased the money supply by issuing currency to the government in exchange for bonds. However, from this followed an inflationary cycle of increased paper circulation to meet government expenditures and to stimulate further economic growth. As James R. Scobie notes, "the Juárez Celman administration in 1890 even resorted to clandestine printing of banknotes."[28]

During the forty years of inconvertibility within the primary-exports economy, fluctuations in the exchange rate

and price instability affected income distribution. When currency depreciated, the export sector increased its peso income in proportion to the depreciation. The depreciation raised domestic prices, first of agricultural and livestock products, which were a major item of expenditure by lower-income groups, and second of manufactured and imported commodities, which represented a significant share of total consumption.[29] Consequently, inflation intensified the structural factors that conditioned income distribution and the level of wages. It discouraged the entrance of immigrants into Argentina and even led to the emigration of those who had arrived earlier.[30]

During the latter years of the 1880s, popular dissatisfaction emerged over the worsening economic conditions and the lack of government responsiveness. The severe inflation initially benefited the exporter and the estanciero, who paid their local costs in depreciating paper and received pounds sterling for their products.[31] Yet, these conditions brought economic hardship to the small merchant, the worker, and the immigrant farmer. Indicative of the severity of the inflation and the rapid decline in value of the paper peso; the salary in gold or gold equivalent for a skilled worker in Buenos Aires dropped from an average of 1.95 pesos in 1885 to 81 centavos in 1891.[32] Nonetheless, the governments of the period maintained close ties to the cattle export interests and promoted policies favored by those interests. The policies of the "order and progress" administration of Julio A. Roca (1880-1886) and Juárez Celman

(1886-1890) laid the foundations for disaster.[33]

The economic crisis which emerged in 1890 took its name from the banking firm of Baring Brothers of Great Britain. Baring was the first international banking firm to raise money for Argentina in Europe, and in 1890 it faced bankruptcy. It had undertaken to pay the contractors who had built the large port works in Buenos Aires. In return it received bonds from the Argentine government with a value of approximately 25 million dollars. Unfortunately, Baring discovered that it could not market these bonds. Confidence in the capacity of the Argentine government to pay had vanished.[34]

The failure of the loan caused a panic; new British investment halted, and Argentina's prices on the world market declined (export earnings fell by approximately 25 percent). A commercial depression in Argentina ensued as unemployment grew and real wages in Buenos Aires fell almost 50 percent.[35] Throughout 1890 thousands of new immigrants were unemployed in Buenos Aires. Severe distress affected importers and artisans; public employees were dismissed as the government attempted to cut back on its expenditures. Years of breakneck economic expansion followed by financial and commercial collapse produced the Revolución de la Noventa.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

In 1890, 1893, and 1905 three significant armed uprisings occured in reaction to the continuing economic crisis and institutional grievances. The first of these -- known as

"La Noventa" -- was important both in its demonstration of the depth of discontent and in its catalytic effect on the movement which was to become the Unión Cívica Radical.[36]

Disillusioned by the escallating inflation and corrupt government, the middle classes began to damand a voice in politics. Mainly composed of university students and professional men, a protest movement formed in Buenos Aires. On September 1, 1889, a group of about 3,000 persons met to establish the Unión Cívica de la Juventad. According to its statement of principles, this group stood for civil liberties, free and fair suffrage, guaranteed autonomy for the provinces and municipalities, more honest administration, and an effort to improve the performance of public duties. On April 13, 1890 a specific political group -- the Unión Cívica -- was organized under the leadership of Leandro N. Alem.[37]

Protests among immigrant farmers for better conditions of tenure and for harvest payment in gold rather than the devaluing paper peso began in the 1880s, while the financial crisis of 1890 ruined many small and medium manufacturers, swelling the opposition to the Juárez Celman government. The military had its own complaint against the administration. Dissident junior officers and generals joined the protest activity.

After the revolt began, military elements supported civilians in street fighting in Buenos Aires that lasted for three days. However, the lack of coordination between the civilians and military men permitted national authorities to bring in reinforcements from garrisons in Rosario and

Córdoba.[38] The insurgents failed in their attempt to overthrow the government, but the revolt was put down only after a promise of total amnesty to the participants, leading to the resignation of President Juárez Celman.[39]

The Unión Cívica gained its first electoral victory in March 1891 when Leandro N. Alem and Aristóbulo del Valle were elected national senators from the federal district. Acrimony followed as internal dissension dominated a meeting of the Unión Cívica's national committee on June 26, 1891. A faction headed by Bartolomé Mitre adopted the name Unión Cívica Nacional and sought an accord with the governing groups. Adopting the title of the Unión Cívica Radical under the leadership of Alem, the remaining members called for "relentless struggle" against the governing oligarchy. Speaking at a mass meeting in December 1891, Alem said: "They have called us intransigent radicals and we have accepted this name with pride; and with pride our program is intransigent."[40]

A schism developed within the Unión Cívica Radical between Alem and his nephew Hipólito Yrigoyen. In 1893 this rivalry resulted in two revolutionary plots -- Yrigoyen's insurrection in the province of Buenos Aires and Alem's uprising in Santa Fe. Both failed and the movement remained divided. However, Alem's suicide in 1896 put Yrigoyen in command.

After a period of generally improving economic conditions, the revolt of 1905 did not draw the popular support which went to the earlier two uprisings.[41] Nonetheless, it caused the

government to declare a state of siege in which the police closed labor unions and arrested labor leaders. It also caused some of the members of the governing elite to begin thinking seriously about the need to adjust politics to the changing social structure of the nation.

II. Institutional Environment

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

To Yrigoyen, Argentina needed a regeneration in public morality. His slogans -- national reparation, the cause, morality -- often sounded more religious than political. He once characterized Radicalism as a "civic religion."[42] Free elections and compliance with the constitution were about the only things on the U.C.R. political agenda during the years before 1916.

Yrigoyen's intransigence was twofold -- electoral abstention and refusal to participate in coalition governments. Since 1892 Yrigoyen repeatedly refused offers for official preferment. Similarly, he was at the forefront of the movement's boycott of elections on the ground that the balloting was fraudulent. However, not all Radicals agreed with Yrigoyen that the movement's only road to power was through revolution.

Internal conflict developed between those who wanted the U.C.R. to look and act like a political party and those who considered it a movement destined to reform the nation through revolution. Several provincial Radical parties went against

Yrigoyen and prepared to enter elections. After the passage of the Sáenz Peña electoral reform in 1911-12, the party's national committee authorized limited political participation against the leader's views.[43]

In spite if U.C.R. skepticism about the enforcement of the new law, the Radicals won the 1912 election for national deputies in the capital and in the province of Santa Fe and secured minority representation in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Entre Ríos. The Radical bloc in the Chamber of Deputies grew to 28 in 1914 with further victories in Entre Ríos and Santa Fe and minority representation from the capital, Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Corrientes, and Mendoza.[44]

In the April 2, 1916 presidential election, the U.C.R. received a larger popular vote than all the other parties combined. The Radicals maintained or improved their positions in the capital, Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Corrientes, Entre Ríos, Mendoza, and Santa Fe. They simultaneously obtained first-time victories in Santiago del Estero and Tucumán. This election increased the U.C.R. bloc in the Chamber of Deputies to more than one-third of the Chamber.[45]

Although Yrigoyen attracted a large popular vote, he did not gain the 151 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. The so-called Dissident Radicals of Santa Fe held the key to the election. This group controlled that province, and their 19 electoral votes could have given the victory to Yrigoyen. Great suspense and back-stage dealing ensued, and when the electoral college met on July 20 the Santa Fe dissidents cast their 19 votes for Yrigoyen.[46]

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION

ADAPTABILITY

President Roque Sáenz Peña promoted an electoral reform in 1911-12 which called for universal male suffrage, the secret ballot, and compulsory voting. In spite of its democratic guise, this plan sought to fortify the traditional system. Assuming the middle classes were committed to existing economic and political structures, cooptation of the Radicals appeared to be an appropriate solution to ease the tensions in society.

The extension of the franchise brought changes to the Argentine political system. First, the popular base expanded. All Argentine males over 18-years-old could vote. Second, Argentine elections became closely contested events -- with winners rarely capturing more than 60 percent of the vote.[47] Expanded participation and the possibilities for political opposition helped to strengthen the legitimacy of governmental structures.

Nonetheless, the Sáenz Peña reform only opened up the political system in a limited way. To vote, Argentine males still had to be citizens. At the time of its first application, the electoral law offered voting rights to only 40 or 45 percent of the adult male population.[48] Since immigrants made up approximately one-half of the expanding middle class and an even greater share of the working class (approximately 60 percent in the urban areas), Peter H. Smith argues that suffrage extended only "from the upper-class to

selected segments of the middle-class."[49]

The electoral reform and consequent redistribution of political strength were meant -- at least by the conservatives -- to sustain the longstanding rules of the Argentine political game.[50] As Smith observes, central to this arrangement was the idea of a balance of power and government by consensus or acuerdo. In spite of the influx of new groups, political conflict would retain traditional features including:

> (1) Fluid patterns of alignment, and in particular fluid patterns of party allegiance;
>
> (2) Disregard for class background; and
>
> (3) Continued dependence of the distribution of political power upon the distribution of economic power.[51]

To many aristocratic conservatives, the maintenance of these norms was essential to the legitimacy of the new electoral politics. Thus, the inherent inflexibility that was a part of the political system demonstrates its lack of adaptability.

COMPLEXITY

Yrigoyen began his tenure as President in 1916 with a minority in the Chamber of Deputies; only one representative in the Senate; and provincial control limited to Santa Fe, Córdoba, and Entre Ríos.[52] The Radicals made slow progress outside the coastal cities. In the interior regions elements of the population remained insulated from the impact of immigration, urbanism, and the rising middle class. In these areas, conservatives continued to dominate the provincial

governments. This powerful influence in the provinces assured conservative sovereignty in Congress, especially in the Senate whose members were chosen by provincial legislatures.[53]

Yrigoyen's subsequent intervention in the provinces aroused the ire of many conservative interests. Intervention is the constitutional method by which the national government temporarily assumes control of the affairs of any or all of the provinces. In a state of intervention, the national government replaces the governing body with an appointive official who boasts complete power.[54] Critics of the president's policy pointed out that Yrigoyen intervened in the provinces more often (twenty times) during his first term than had any two previous presidents.[55] These voices of dissent argued that the president was attempting to enlarge his own power and that of the Radical Party at the cost of provincial autonomy.

In the congressional elections of 1918, the U.C.R. gained 16 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, thereby giving it a slight majority in that house. The interventions combined with free elections helped the Radicals to gain control of the government in the capital, as well as in the provinces of Mendoza, San Juan, La Rioja, Catamarca, and Buenos Aires.[56] Despite the movement's success at the polls, Yrigoyen failed to amass a majority in the Senate. This lack of support endangered the passage of Yrigoyen's legislative reform package. In addition to the conservative opposition, the president and his movement faced hostility from the

Socialists, who thought the Radical's social program was insufficiently reformist, and from the Progressive Democrats, who were simply anti-Yrigoyen.[57]

In an effort to gain the support of the emergent working class, Yrigoyen's labor policy included plans for protective social legislation support by charity and patronage.[58] Between 1916 and 1919, the president backed several strikes, particularly those against the railway and maritime sectors which were dominated by foreign capital. This support was tantamount to intervention, as the government refused to deploy the police to break strikes. On some occasions, Yrigoyen used the power of the presidency to urge employers to comply with the demands of labor.

Middle and upper classes resented what they perceived as government capitulation to labor. Consequently, few of the government's proposals for reform became law. The Radical's failure to implement even modest proposals for industrial development or tariff protection embittered the urban lower sectors. With the downturn in the economy in 1913 and depressed conditions until 1918, the government faced growing social unrest. In the city of Buenos Aires, labor strife culminated in the January 1919 "Tragic Week," when the government ordered military intervention to restore order.[59]

In many ways Yrigoyen's labor policy proved counter-productive. It contributed to an upswing in labor activity and unionization between 1916 and 1920. But the relationship between the Radical government and labor remained tenuous at best, and the protective role of the state failed to become

institutionalized.[60] By its incapacity to bridge the regional and social divisions in society, the Radical government failed Huntington's test of complexity.

AUTONOMY

The political success of the Radicals depended heavily on Yrigoyen's personal leadership and a system of local party bosses and their machine organizations. The Radicals took over the patronage network that the landowning elite used so effectively to buy off their opposition. Yrigoyen's political strategy combined machine politics with populist appeals in an attempt to build a mass movement.[61]

Yrigoyen's personality traits facilitated the process of mass political organizing. Argentine essayist and social critic Ezequiel Martínez Estrada wrote of Yrigoyen that he "embodied (a) transcendental and magic reality in his person, in his mentality and in his acts as apostle and martyr."[62] This man of mystery with his paternal aloofness was not far removed from the Rosas tradition of oligarchic populism.[63]

In 1922 tensions surfaced over the selection of Yrigoyen's successor. These strains subsided when Yrigoyen announced that Marco T. de Alvear was his choice. Problems reemerged in 1924 when the Party split along social lines into two camps: the middle class pro-Yrigoyen personalists and the patrician pro-Alvear anti-personalists. Analyzing electoral data, Smith finds that, "the higher the Status, the more Antipersonalist (or less Personalist) the stance."[64]

Smith's data point to the relevance of regional conflict in the Radical Party split. The dispute reflected the cleavage between Buenos Aires (both city and province), where Yrigoyen had most thoroughly developed his political machine, and the rest of the country. This division pitted the coast against the interior. Yrigoyen's subsequent efforts to subordinate interior interests to those of the littoral further antagonized the Party's provincial supporters. In Mendoza and San Juan, for example, local populist leaders who had originally supported the Radicals, broke away from the movement.[65]

It is important to note that for groups organized according to class or regional loyalties, the party machine was incapable of performing many direct personal services. What these groups would be likely to be interested in was government "policy responsiveness" to their interests rather than handouts of jobs and sinecures. Thus, while the machine organization proved invaluable for electoral purposes, it limited the government's capacity to engage in autonomous policy formulation.

LEGITIMACY

The implementation of the Sáenz Peña law precipitated changes in voting patterns. Instead of the old acuerdo system, officials arrived at political decisions in a more open manner. In particular, Smith points to the increasing number of contested roll calls in the Chamber of Deputies as evidence of the decline in the political power-sharing

arrangement.[66]

After the split between the middle-class Yrigoyen wing and the upper-class Alvear faction of the Radical Party in 1924, the Yrigoyenist U.C.R. held two-thirds of the seats in in the lower chamber by 1930. Similarly, in the upper chamber the Yrigoyenist Radicals made inroads into the power base of the conservatives. Smith finds that partisan ballots jumped from low levels before the electoral reform to high and moderate levels after 1916.[67] By 1928, deviations from the party line manifested themselves only rarely as the Yrigoyenist U.C.R. formed an effective voting bloc in both houses of the legislature.

Party conflict assumed an air of social conflict. Upper-class elements which figured prominently in both the Radical and the conservative contingents elected to the lower chamber from 1916 to 1918 decreased significantly during the 1920s. The break between Yrigoyen and the Alvear factions virtually eliminated the patrician elements from the legislature after 1924. By 1928-30, only 19 percent of the U.C.R.'s partisans were from the upper class.[68]

A new generation of Radical Party professionals firmly entrenched themselves in influencial positions within the bureaucracy. This displacement of the conservative elites became a source of major contention. As one contemporary observer complained:

> The Congress was full of rabble and unspeakable hoodlums. The parliamentary language used up to then had been replaced by the coarse language of the outskirts of the city and the Radical's committees.[69]

Synonymous with this internal subversion of the political system was the remodeling of the patronage mechanism to suit middle-class interests.

Just as the parliamentary apparatus fell under the control of middle-class interests, Yrigoyen continued to extend his personal power through the centralized presidency. Receiving almost total compliance from the legislature from 1926 to 1929, Yrigoyen moved to implement popular programs. Difficulties in achieving these reforms encouraged the president to resort to more interventions in the provinces to enforce order and compliance with his programs. Of 93 such actions from 1862 to 1930, 34 took place during the 14-year period of Radical rule.[70] The distribution of political power thus became concentrated in the Radical camp.

When Yrigoyen returned to the presidency in 1928, his government was thoroughly middle class. Government patronage expanded to its limits as Yrigoyen attempted to maintain his political support in the midst of an economic decline. Rock observes that, "By June 1929, it was reported that jobs were being sold on the open market."[71] Yrigoyen's attempt to turn the Army into a source of patronage proved disastrous. Many officers resented this move to instill partisan loyalties among the top ranks of the military. In response to the government's departure from traditional norms and Yrigoyen's intervention into military affairs, these officers, like the conservatives, lost confidence in the Radical government.[72]

From the mid-1920s to their fall from power, the Radicals violated the long-standing rules of the political game.

Partisan politics replaced fluid party allegiances as the Radicals became the dominant voice in the decision-making process. Through their steady growth in power, the Radicals gradually transformed the economic and social bases of government. To halt this process, the conservatives had to rely on help from the disloyal opposition within the ranks of the military.

Yrigoyen's popular appeal was his main source of power when the economic crisis of 1929 began. Yet, the inability of his government to deal effectively with the crisis excited the wrath of the economic elites. In addition, the urban middle class turned against the government because its income, tied to foreign trade, plummeted. As the crisis deepened, public confidence in the government's legitimacy eroded, and the Radicals lost the March 1930 legislative elections in their former stronghold -- Buenos Aires.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Two important elements came to view Argentine democracy as illegitimate: conservative civilians and segments of the military. On August 9, 1930, legislators from the opposition parties published the "Manifesto of the Forty-four," protesting Yrigoyen's "arbitrary and despotic" rule and calling for the need to "save Argentina's democratic institutions and prevent the ruin of the country."[73] On August 13, military members led by General José F. Uriburu made a pledge to overthrow the Yrigoyen government. At subsequent public rallies for the Manifesto of the Forty-

four, Antipersonalist leaders in Buenos Aires and Entre Ríos urged the population to rise up in alliance against the government.[74]

As the possibilities for a coup materialized, Yrigoyen fell ill. His Minister of War, General Luis Dellepiane, called for the president to take decisive action against the conspirators. Yet, Yrigoyen failed to respond -- perhaps because of his illness. Dellepiane quit on September 2. Two days later, the Dean of the Buenos Aires Law School asked Yrigoyen to resign for the good of the nation. Yrigoyen complied that same afternoon, but it was too late to stop the coup.[75]

On September 6, a group of cadets from the Campo de Mayo garrison, led by General José F. Uriburu, marched into the capital and easily assumed control. Many groups in society greeted the news with satisfaction. The parties called for a return to the constitution and for new elections.

III. Conclusion

This examination of the interaction of socio-economic variables during the period from 1880 to the First World War indicates that growing political instability was associated with the onset to economic decline after a period of improving conditions. Reflecting the frustrations of the emergent middle class, the revolts of 1890 and 1893 occurred during periods of poor economic performance. This turmoil notwithstanding, the economic elites were largely successful in their bid to coopt the emergent middle class into the

traditional political system.

However, the mobilization of middle-class groups into politics challenged the rigid structure of the system. Yrigoyen's government did not uphold the traditional acuerdo methods balancing the distribution of power. Instead, the president relied on his personal leadership skills to organize a popular movement. Yrigoyen's uncompromising stance and the machine character of Radicalism militated against policy responsiveness on behalf of different groups and interests in society. Neglecting to establish any coherent rules or structures, Radicalism eventually succumbed to a backlash reaction to restore the traditional political order.

The Conservatives wanted democracy to uphold the traditional rules of the game, but the pursuit of democracy led to the violation of those rules. This was the rational behind the coup that removed Yrigoyen from power. According to the analysis of this study, it appears that the conjunction of high participation and low institutionalization increases the inclination of disaffected elites to resort to illegal power seizures. Perhaps this is because in such situations the burdens created by mass mobilization have outrun the capabilities of political institutions, and elites see coups as alternative means to restore order.

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Ibid., pp. 19-20.

75
Snow, p. 45.

CHAPTER III

THE PERONIST PERIOD, 1946-1955

This chapter examines some of the factors behind the rise of Peronism. The analysis, which builds on the discussion of the Radical period, centers on the role of rapid economic and social changes in fostering the growth of this popular movement. It focuses on the political behavior which contributed to the demise of the Peronist government in 1955.

I. Operational Environment

The conservative successors of the Radical governments bypassed and manipulated constitutional rules to stay in power during the 1930s. The coalition of conservatives, anti-personalist Radicals, and Independent Socialists, calling itself the Concordancia, placed General Agustín Justo in the presidency. In the 1931 elections, the Concordancia captured 63 percent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 87 percent of those in the Senate.[1] The newly-formed coalition soon returned to the conventional practice of excluding opponents from the initiation and formulation of policy.

During the Depression, the collapse of foreign trade forced the authorities to adopt economic measures to

stimulate industrial growth. The Justo administration's exchange controls and multiple exchange rates, coupled with higher tariffs, benefitted the industrialists.[2] More important perhaps than government policies, the growing demand of Argentine consumers combined with reduced imports increased the value of Argentine manufacturing by 54 percent between 1935 and 1945.[3]

By the late 1940s light industry had significantly expanded so that the proportion of GNP generated by manufacture outstripped that by agriculture and cattle breeding.[4] (See Table 3.1). Gilbert Merkx provides further evidence of industry's growth. Between 1935 and 1939 the GDP grew by 15 percent, but agriculture's contribution increased by only 2 percent, while that of industry grew by 24 percent.[5]

Nevertheless, both the industrial and landowning sectors were economically intertwined. As Gustavo Polit argues, the vague boundaries that separated them were attenuated through the investment of agrarian rent in industry and the investment of industrial profit in agriculture.[6] The industrialists approved of the latifundia, or the large estate system, which provided industry with a cheap labor force of displaced tenant farmers. Describing this situation in 1943, Torcuato Di Tella pointed out:

> Much has been said about the idyllic life in the country. But what is actually seen of it in our wide territory does not agree with what is said about it; the farmer leaves the farm at the first opportunity and heads for the urban centers, in spite of the city's unhealthy housing conditions, promiscuity, and insecurity of daily work.[7]

TABLE 3.1

PROPORTION OF GNP GENERATED BY MANUFACTURE AND BY AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE BREEDING, 1930-1954

YEARS	MANUFACTURE	AGRICULTURE AND CATTLE BREEDING
	(PERCENT OF GNP)	
1930	18.6	21.4
1935	19.3	27.5
1940	20.6	24.5
1945	22.8	20.1
1950	23.4	15.5
1954	22.1	17.2

Source: Gino Germani, "Social Modernization and Economic Development in Argentina," Report prepared for the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1970, p. 63.

Thus, the symbiosis between industrialists and land holders worked to the disadvantage of the provincial lower class.

SOCIAL MOBILIZATION

The influx of immigrants, which had continued for half a century, declined sharply in the 1930s, partly because Argentina was no longer the land of opportunity and partly because the government restricted immigration. As immigration declined, migration from the rural interior contributed to urbanization. Although there is no census data between 1914 and 1947, Gino Germani asserts that growing internal migration, beginning in the mid-1930s, coincided with the shift from agriculture, the great jump in the demand for industrial labor, and the end of overseas immigration.[8]

By 1936 approximately 83,000 domestic migrants arrived annually in the greater Buenos Aires area. During the following decade, this total increased to more than 96,000 annual arrivals.[9] Germani estimates that, from 1936 to 1947, internal migrants to the Buenos Aires area surged from 400,000 to 1.5 million. Most migrants who travelled to the urban centers were from the less developed regions of the interior. The previous experience of these individuals reflected a rural, non-industrial life style. Thus, the great migration fused immigrant and creole Argentina; it linked the littoral with the interior.

This transformation and displacement affected the entire country. Table 3.2 indicates that these newcomers began to rival the foreign-born population in the principal urban

TABLE 3.2

POPULATION OF THE BUENOS AIRES METROPOLITAN AREA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SOURCE OF ITS COMPOSITION (1869-1957)

YEAR	TOTAL POPULATION	% BORN ABROAD	% BORN INTERIOR	AV. ANNUAL NO. MIGRANTS FROM INTERIOR
1869	250,000	47	3	
1895	783,000	50	8	8,000
1914	2,035,000	49	11	
1936	3,430,000	36	12	83,000
1947	4,720,000	26	29	
1957	6,370,000	22	36	96,000

Source: Gino Germani, "Transformation of the Social and Political Structure," Why Perón Came to Power: The Background to Peronism in Argentina ed. Joseph R. Barager (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 124.

areas. Gino Germani finds that, "In 1947 between one-half and 70 percent of the [preexisting urban workers] had been replaced by new workers in the Buenos Aires area."[10] Economic change measured by industrial growth thus served to alter radically the social and political landscape. In his analysis of Peronist electoral support, Lars Schoultz finds that areas undergoing industrial change tended to have a rapidly growing population, working class in social composition, that exhibited relatively little economic satisfaction. His statistical findings indicate that the size of an area's working-class population and its rate of industrial growth explain a large percentage (84 percent) of the vote for Peronism.[11]

ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION

An examination of the wage share of national income reveals why many Argentines experienced economic dissatisfaction. Table 3.3 presents some measures of the share of wages in the national income. Column (1) shows the wage and salary share of national income if capital consumption allowances are estimated at original cost. Column (2) displays the wage and salary share of national income if capital consumption allowances are estimated at replacement cost. The trend is the same in both cases. Column (1) indicates that the wage share remained within the 43 to 47 percent range from 1935 to 1947.[12]

While the wage share of national income remained relatively constant during these years, the number of people

TABLE 3.3

WAGE SHARE OF NET DOMESTIC INCOME

YEAR	(1)	(2)
1935	46.8	46.1
1936	46.9	46.0
1937	44.4	43.9
1938	46.6	46.2
1939	46.3	46.3
1940	46.0	46.4
1941	45.3	45.7
1942	43.1	43.5
1943	44.1	44.4
1944	44.8	45.2
1945	45.9	46.7
1946	45.2	46.8
1947	46.6	47.9

(1) Capital consumption allowances estimated at original cost.

(2) Capital consumption allowances estimated at replacement cost.

Source: Clarence Zuvekas, Jr., "Economic Growth and Income Distribution In Postwar Argentina," Inter-American Economic Affairs 20 (Winter 1966): 25.

employed in industrial-related activities exploded. Table 3.4 reveals that the number of employees and workers in industry increased 130 percent between 1935 and 1946. During these years the total industrial labor force rose 12 percent annually. Table 3.5 indicates that by 1946 there were over one million persons working in industry, concentrated in the Buenos Aires area. This industrial labor force accounted for more than 17 percent of the economically-active population.

The leaders of the nation's dominant labor organization, the Confederación General del Trabajo (CGT), protested the government's disregard for labor's problems. These complaints grew louder as real wages leveled off and unemployment increased. Real wages for industrial workers -- which doubled during the 1920s -- remained about the same throughout the 1930s, declining somewhat after 1935. By 1933 approximately 334,000 workers, or 7 percent of the work force, were unemployed.[13] These economic problems underlay the mounting social frustration.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

The industrial working class, which approached one-fifth of the economically-active population at the outbreak of the Second World War, could no longer be overlooked. This unorganized group represented a potentially powerful political bloc, as native Argentine workers entered an expanding pool of eligible voters. Yet, they had virtually no political representation. For example, only the Socialists stood up for

TABLE 3.4

GROWTH OF THE INDUSTRIAL LABOR FORCE, 1935-1946

GROUP	1935	1943	1946	% INC. 35-46	ANNUAL % INC.
Employees	49,295	87,778	135,484	176	16
Workers	418,020	756,222	938,387	124	11
Total Industrial Labor Force	467,315	844,000	1,073,870	130	12

TABLE 3.5

RELATIVE SIZE OF THE INDUSTRIAL LABOR FORCE: 1895-1946

YEAR	INDUSTRIAL LABOR FORCE	ECON. ACTIVE POP.	I.L.F. AS % E.A.P.
1895	118,835	1,601,826	7
1914	389,716	3,119,148	12
1946	1,073,871	6,267,313	17

Source: Gilbert Wilson Merkx, "Political and Economic Change in Argentina from 1870 to 1966," (mimeog. Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1968), p. 191.

working-class interests in the Chamber of Deputies, but they were far too small a group to gain significant support for legislation.[14] Thus, before Perón's rise to power, attempts by leaders of the urban lower class to promote urban mass interests were continually frustrated by the established constitutional institutions and procedures.

The Conservative rulers' traditional practices discredited party politics and constitutional government in the eyes of many Argentines. In particular, the military lost confidence in the ability of the politicians to maintain stable political order. When President Ramón Castillo attempted to secure military support behind Robustiano Patrón Costas (President of the Senate and leader of the Conservatives), as his successor in 1943, several key officers resisted. The movement against Castillo expanded in 1943 as economic growth came to a standstill. Finally, on the morning of June 4, troops under the command of General Arturo Rawson moved through Buenos Aires toward the Casa Rosada. The ensuing fall of Castillo meant the end to the Conservative restoration in Argentine politics.

Colonel Juan Domingo Perón did not lead the coup, but he was an active participant in it as a member of a nationalist, pro-Axis faction of young officers. He immediately set out to establish a place for himself in the new regime. Through his contacts with the elite, Perón received a post as head of the Department of Labor and Social Security. From this position he organized thousands of workers and built a loyal following by rewarding unions that supported him with

favorable collective bargaining settlements and social security benefits while punishing those who refused to accept his leadership.[15] After years of receiving poor service from socialist and anarchist leaders who could not secure better wages and social services, Argentine laborers quickly fell in step with Perón's juggernaut.

Perón's status as the spokesman for labor produced distrust among his rivals in the government. On October 9, 1945, a group of officers led by General Avalos forced the government to oust Perón. His subsequent arrest and exile to Martin Garcia Island in the Plate estuary was greeted with unprecedented public outcry. In fear of an uprising, the government called back Perón to control the situation.

In his triumphant return, Perón resigned his commission and announced his candidacy for the presidency. His victory in the 1946 elections with 54 percent of the popular vote and Peronist majorities in both houses of Congress represented a mandate.

II. Institutional Environment

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Perón's government immediately concerned itself with satisfying the workers' demand for dignity and equal status in Argentine society. He proclaimed that the workers were the essence of the new Argentine nation and that his administration represented a government of the masses. He defined the new regime to be one with a profoundly proletariat and worker base where the acts of government would

be inspired by the masses.[16]

The workers' support for Perón came from a perception of their interests rather than simply from their admiration of his special leadership style. For instance, Perón initiated new campaigns to increase the workers' feeling of dignity, equal status, and communal identity. This drive led to the incorporation of labor's rights into the Constitution of 1949. Article 37 of the Constitution specifically enumerated the rights of the worker.[17] Labor's response was overwhelmingly favorable. As Samuel Baily notes, "Because of Perón, the law and the government finally guaranteed the workers a meaningful identity as part of society."[18] In satisfying some of the economic and social needs of all sectors of the labor movement, Perón's political changes brought the workers increasingly under the influence of the state.

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONALIZATION

ADAPTABILITY

An adjustment in the political order did not accompany the rapid changes which occurred during Argentina's economic modernization in the years before World War II. Instead, the severe conditions under which the political system functioned after 1930 inhibited its ability to absorb new levels of participation. The attempt to reestablish a "limited democracy" based on power-sharing between the conservative elites added new rigidities precisely at the moment when

maximum flexibility was required.

In order to accomodate the recently mobilized groups within the political system, Gino Germani argues that either the existing political parties had to be altered or a new one had to be created. In practice Argentine political parties offerred no outlet for the needs of urban labor. As Germani observes:

> The political elite was unable to understand the economic and social changes that were occurring so rapidly and the Socialist Party, especially, as well as the unions, did not effectively take advantage of the political potential offered by the new industrial workers.[19]

Thus, the political system's lack of adaptability indirectly contributed to the rise of Juan Perón.

COMPLEXITY

Perón's charismatic appeal helped to build a populist coalition composed of three main groups:

> (1) The original (anti-status quo) elite, . . . drawn from the marginal industrialists, Radical Right intellectuals, traditional Church groups, and armed forces with a Falangista inclination.
>
> (2) The new masses, made up mostly of the recent arrivals from the countryside and those lower sectors of the urban working class that had never been organized before, but also comprising many old trade unionists who joined the coalition once its populist character was apparent.
>
> (3) Some of the impoverished middle classes from the interior of the country, who had been excluded by the previous oligarchic system. Many of them were represented by old Radical Party leaders, and some Conservative caudillos who joined forces with Perón.[20]

The Peronist multi-class coalition thus shifted the balance

of electoral power in Argentina. Perón's initial power-sharing arrangement called for the creation of a corporate state organizing society according to functional groups. As the chief mediator of political conflicts, the state would also ensure social harmony.

According to Eldon Kenworthy, to rule in Argentina during the late 1940s required something like the coalition that Perón forged. Kenworthy further asserts that keeping such a coalition together required the economic policies that Perón adopted.[21] Perón's economic approach relied on some of the same techniques that the industrial countries in Europe and North America had employed in their post-depression recoveries. Argentina's economic decision-makers hoped that deficit spending would restore prosperity. This strategy relied on developing import-substitution industries while simultaneously stimulating demand for the items produced internally. Central to this plan was the redistribution of income and power from rural producers to urban consumers and industrialists through fiscal, price, wage, and credit measures.[22]

As Argentina's external position worsened, especially after the droughts of 1950 and 1951, the protected industries could no longer be propped up with profits from the export sector. In announcing the Emergency Economic Plan of 1952, Perón asked the industrialists for patience while the government restored the country's capacity to import fuels and raw materials.[23] Perón succeeded by 1953 in restoring a positive payments balance and an increase in the gross

national product. But this period also witnessed an acceleration in the decapitalization of the private sector and growing uncertainty which sapped entrepreneurial confidence. Although production increased impressively, it still fell 50 percent below the record levels of the war years.[24] Perón's economic measures proved insufficient for maintaining the support of Argentine industrialists.

The leaders of the rural sector were among the first to denounce Perón's policies. The cattlemen of the Rural Society and the Confederation of Rural Associations of Buenos Aires and La Pampa (CARBAP) protested their sudden eviction from the agricultural policy-making process as well as their loss of income through controlled prices. Tenant farmers, on the other hand, supported Peronist legislation which extended the rent controls adopted by the military government in 1943 for another five years, with a three-year renewal option. Still, Peronist reforms eventually led to complaints from both the landowners and the tenant farmers because commodity price control measures hurt large and small farmers alike, especially after 1948.[25]

This loss of upper-middle-class support impaired the Peronist coalition's ability to mobilize the masses in the interior. These unorganized groups returned to supporting local Conservative or Radical caudillos. With the widening rift developing between the city and the countryside, Perón's coalition lost its other non-working-class sector: the provincial middle-class.[26] With support declining from the other two legs of the populist triad, the complexity of

Perón's government decreased significantly. Thus, Perón was forced to rely on the continued loyalty of organized labor.

AUTONOMY

Personalism was the cement that held Peronism together between 1946 and 1955. From 1946 to 1948, ideological conflict was rife within Peronist ranks between the autonomously-inclined unionists and a variety of opportunist and nationalist factions. The mounting discord provided Perón with a convenient rationale for centralizing the party under his personal control. On May 23, 1946, Perón declared the electoral coalition dissolved. His call to unity meant the end of previously independent parties and factions, assuring the defection of prominent political leaders to the Peronist camp. He then ordered the formation of a new group, the Partido Unico de la Revolución.[27]

The organization of a single party began in January 1947. The new Partido Peronista remained divided. Two areas of controversy persisted: the competition among various local interests; and the struggle between Peronists and those favoring union autonomy.[28] Walter Little stresses the importance of the latter schism between the unions and the politicians. Perón frowned on the unions, which continued to demand the right to participate equally and directly in party affairs. In the Peronist political organization, there was no room for alternative sources of power.

Perón demanded that independent labor groups subordinate themselves to his state-run political organization. Under

this pressure, the independent labor list finished a distant second in the December 1947 elections with 3,591 votes compared to the first-place finish of the official list with 14,591 votes.[29] Support for union autonomy virtually disappeared by the end of the following year.[30] The eclipse of internal opposition led the party to reorganize along strict Peronist lines.

It appeared that nothing was beyond Perón's grasp. In his attempt to revise the Constitution of 1853, Perón flaunted his power after winning clear control of the constitutional convention of 1948 (the Peronist Party elected 109 delegates while the U.C.R. won only 48 delegates).[31] The convention amended 53 articles of the Constitution, repealed nine articles as obsolete, and added six new articles.[32] An important clause against presidential succession was one of the articles repealed, thereby allowing Perón to remain in power. Through these measures, Perón became the dominant political force in the country.

Walter Little argues that, given this accumulation of power, subsequent developments involving the party can best be understood in terms of Perón's personal vision. Because of his distrust of the common people, Perón insisted on rigorous codes of unity and discipline to increase the effectiveness of the party's organization. Perón sought to mold public attitudes in keeping with the <u>doctrina nacional</u> or Justicialism. Pursuant to this ideology, the Peronist Party would guide the country toward a political position lying somewhere between capitalism and socialism.

Perón's autocratic leadership style eventually undermined the prestige and autonomy of the Peronist Party. The Peronists' unwillingness to compromise with the other interests in society nullified their initial popular appeal. As Little observes:

> The Peronists sought a revolution in political culture without any serious changes in structure, and this contradiction accounts for their failure to transcend personalism and create and effective party.[33]

Perón attempted to retain personal power by strengthening his Partido Peronista. In place of the traditional political institutions, the party was to become the sole source of political authority. Nevertheless, Walter Little concludes that one of the most important characteristics of the Peronist movement was its lack of an effective political party.[34] Likewise, the personalism in the political organization of Peronism undermined the autonomy of national political institutions.

LEGITIMACY

Peronist policies led not to harmony, but to increased political conflict. Perón's design for a corporate society allowed few opportunities for the expression of dissent. The Chamber of Deputies became the scene of intense partisan rivalry as the Peronist delegates used roll-call votes to demonstrate their solidarity and to intimidate the opposition. The effort of Radicals to resist the Peronist onslaught at times appeared futile. For example, in April 1953, the pro-government deputies temporarily expelled opposition elements

from the chamber. Not surprisingly, Congress remained consistently compliant to the demands of the executive, as the Peronist deputies acted with near-unanimity on most issues.

With the ineffectiveness of the mechanisms of political opposition, open confrontations erupted between social groups, especially after the onset of economic decline in the early 1950s. The upper and middle classes mobilized against the government's favoritism toward labor interests. In this environment of mounting social tensions, Perón tried to demonstrate his political strength. First, he consolidated his control over the armed forces. A majority of Peronists in Congress empowered him to promote, demote, or retire officers at will. Second, an act of Congress authorized him to create a new martial law, referred to as the "state of internal war," which called for the death penalty to deter rebel activity.[35]

The Church was one of the first groups to disassociate itself from the regime. Demonstrating its independence, it began training labor leaders outside the officially sanctioned Peronist institutions. In December 1954 Perón responded with a congressional act that made divorce legal for the first time in Argentina; in May 1955, the government removed religious instruction from the schools. The Church reacted with mass demonstrations against the government. Perón retaliated by expelling two of the organizing priests from the country. Within days of this action, the Vatican excommunicated those involved in ordering the expulsions, including Perón and his cabinet.

Elements of the armed forces bristled under Perón's requirement that they take an oath of loyalty to the constitutionally-sanctioned national doctrine. This perceived insult was made worse when Perón required them to receive instruction in the doctrine. The armed forces felt threatened by these challenges to its professional autonomy. Some accounts suggest that the cause of the revolt of June 1955 may have been connected to an order making the study of the doctrine obligatory in the Navy, the service least loyal to the regime.[36] These instances of opposition to Peronist political prescriptions culminated in a crisis of legitimacy for Peronism.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

At 12:45 p.m. on June 16, 1955, Navy planes attacked the Casa Rosada, and Marine troops advanced on the capital. Civilian conspirators seized a radio station and proclaimed a "democratic revolution."[37] Despite these events, the Army remained loyal to Perón and put down the revolt. In the aftermath, Perón began an erratic course marked by indecision and actions that alienated supporters in the unions and the Armed Forces.

Among the officers who subsequently rebelled, some, like General Eduardo Lonardi, were right-wing Catholics who worked closely with a civilian conspiratorial group of Catholic-nationalists led by Mario Amadeo. Two other groups of officers -- conservative democrats led by General Pedro Aramburu and liberal democrats led by Admiral Isaac Rojas --

joined the Lonardi-Amadeo group in opposition.[38]

The resistance also included middle and upper-middle-class elements -- a liberal opposition formed partly in reaction to Perón's repression of the universities and the Church. The U.C.R. became the principal voice of the alienated civilian elements calling for Perón's resignation. The U.C.R.'s support for the military coup made the difference between a rerun of the abortive effort of June 1955 and the successful action in September.

On September 16, 1955, the Córdoba Army garrison, most of the Navy, and segments of the Air Force revolted. Army units from Buenos Aires moved to quell the rebellion, and they succeeded in retaking most of Córdoba within 24 hours. The rebels, however, held on for two more days. During this period, other small garrisons joined the rebellion. Threats mounted against the regime as the fleet, after shelling Mar de Plata, set sail for Buenos Aires.

Although Perón's position was strong -- he still had the support of a major part of the Army and the labor movement and the acquiescence of the general population -- he gave in to mounting pressure. On September 19 he turned the presidency over to a group of loyalist generals. Boarding a Paraguayan gunboat, Perón made a temporary exit from Argentine politics.

III. Conclusion

The economic expansion and industrialization between 1935 and 1946 spurred a major internal migration in

Argentina. Policies increasing consumption, expanding employment of the urban working class, and broadening possibilities for upward mobility initially provided adequate channels for offsetting the strains of rapid social mobilization. Nevertheless, lack of improvement in real wages and in political representation for the urban workers under Conservative administrations during the 1930s contributed to new demands on government.

The rigidity of the political system to working class needs stimulated the growth of the Peronist movement. Between 1946 and 1949, Perón utilized his personal popularity and the powers of the presidency to consolidate his control over the political system. However, the personalism inherent in the operation of Peronism discouraged the formation of working relationships between different socio-economic interests. The subordination of party and state structures to the loose organization of Peronism failed to produce a more durable system of government. Perón never gave his rules and practices the firm institutional foundation needed to sustain them.

Peronism opened up the political process to many who had been disenfranchised in the past. Yet, this movement failed to produce strong new structures to regulate political conduct. Perón's use of personal authority in an attempt to regulate the behavior of all the other interests proved destabilizing in the longrun. Hence, the Peronist experience provides evidence to support Huntington's notion of the destructive capabilities of political decay.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

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38 Whitaker, p. 144.

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CHAPTER IV

IMPLICATIONS FOR ALFONSÍN

According to Samuel P. Huntington, revolution is most likely to occur in societies which have experienced some social and economic development and where, "the processes of political modernization and political development have lagged behind the processes of social and economic change."[1] During the Radical and Perón periods, Argentine society underwent two incomplete revolutions. In both cases, an explosion of political participation occurred. Yet, in both periods a second phase was missing: the creation and institutionalization of a new political order. As Eldon Kenworthy remarks, "Were Samuel Huntington analyzing Argentina, he would say that the political system was definitely modern, yet imperfectly developed."[2]

I. Institutionalization of the Reformist Alternative

ADAPTABILITY

The victory of Raúl Alfonsín in the 1983 elections signalled a movement away from Argentina's authoritarian politics. Three processes were apparent during the popular mobilization of the 1983 electoral campaign. First,

polarization of support occurred between the two major parties. Second, the Radicals made significant advances with their mass rallies in the federal capital and in the principal cities. Alfonsín, himself, played an important role with his anti-dictatorial and often anti-militarist stance. The third, related process was the decline in support for the Peronists. For the first time in the 40-year history of the movement, the Argentine people as well as the industrial working-class voted against Peronism. October 1983 ushered in a new era.[3]

Alfonsín won by a margin of 52 percent of the popular vote to 40 percent for the Peronist candidate, former Senate president Italo A. Luder. Alfonsín won 57 percent of the votes in the electoral college, and the Radicals won a clear majority in the Chamber of Deputies, capturing 129 of the 254 seats. The Peronists won 111 seats.[4]

Yet, while the opportunity for establishing stable constitutional government has never been better, the problems facing the administration are very severe. In addition to a $43 billion foreign debt, Alfonsín must handle increased union protests fueled by the depressed economy and popular demands for justice concerning the crimes committed by past military leaders. The fate of Alfonsín's experiment with democracy will depend much on his ability to control the labor movement and the Army in the context of economic decline.

In a country that once chose between movements and the military, these changes represent a shift toward greater system adaptability. The election was a rejection of extremes

and suggests that the political system may be stabilizing around two major parties. The politics of national reconciliation currently replace the antiquated Peronist/ anti-Peronist dialogue.

COMPLEXITY

In his drive to reestablish political democracy in Argentina, Alfonsín must further open the policy-making process to permit competitors to influence decisions. This is especially important with regard to economic policy-making. The competitors are more likely to accept policy decisions achieved through a process of mutual accomodation.[5] Institutionalizing competitive pluralism within the policy-making arena is essential to expanding the political system's support.

Ironically, Alfonsín's goals of modernizing the country's industrial base by attracting foreign investment and by turning public companies over to the private sector run up against a general distrust of the state as a vehicle for economic planning. The tradition of using state authority for narrow partisan purposes complicates effective management of the nation's economy. Gary W. Wynia perceptively argues that the failure of past governments to overcome this widespread mistrust was due to the apparent contradiction between:

> The desire [of Argentina's presidents] to create an independent state capable of arbitrating economic conflicts, on the one hand, and a need to dictate economic policies with highly partisan effects on the other.[6]

Alfonsín must work to end perceptions of the state

as a purely partisan instrument. Instead of simply adopting the role of dedicated enforcer of unpopular policies, Alfonsín must assume the more controversial role of arbitrator between the conflicting classes and sectors in society. Crucial to the success of Alfonsín's chosen management style is the creation of what Wynia terms:

> Linkages between policy makers, administrators, and the owners of land, labor, and capital that will enable the first two to lead the last in the pursuit of societal goals.[7]

The continued failure of Argentine leaders to win the cooperation of the private sector in the implementation of their economic programs reflected structures which inhibited dialogue between policymakers and their constituents.

Alfonsín is making progress in his relations with agricultural and business groups. According to one prominent businessman, "Every four months or so we go to see Alfonsín . . . he is very pluralistic. This is how he has gained the good will of so many of us."[8] These efforts to foster good relations between the country's entrepreneurs and public officials may expand the government's capacity to achieve its policy objectives. Yet, this dialogue must extend beyond mere personal relationships to allow structural access to decisionmakers.

Alfonsín's administration also needs the support of organized labor; this will be a major challenge. With the death of Juan Perón on July 1, 1974, and the self-exile of the third Mrs. Perón on July 6, 1981, the Peronist Party lacked leadership to mediate between its many factions.

The union leaders assumed de facto leadership positions of the Peronist Party following the 1983 primary elections. Despite losing the gubernatorial race, Herminio Iglesias, a trade union politician, controls the Peronist vote in the Buenos Aires province. Lorenzo Miguel, head of the powerful metalworkers union and chief of the "62 Organizations," the political arm of the General Confederation of Labor, won internal elections to become party first vice president. The title, however, is misleading. He runs the party in the absence of Isabel Perón, who remains the party's elected president.[9]

In his initial relations with the union structure, Alfonsín set out to limit the autonomy of the powerful labor hierarchy. As he stated in one interview, "Without democracy in the unions there cannot be democracy in the country."[10] Alfonsín's bill to democratize the unions required court-controlled elections of union officers and representation of the losing factions on union boards. In reaction to the proposed legislation, the Peronist-dominated Senate rallied in March 1984 to defeat the bill. Three independent ballots supported the Peronists, demonstrating the continuing strength of the union bosses.

This failure convinced Alfonsín to adopt a more conciliatory approach. In April 1984, he dismissed Labor Minister Antonio Mucci, who had antagonized unionists by intervening in the affairs of two major unions. Opting for negotiation rather than confrontation, Alfonsín renewed his calls for national unity. "Without reconciliation and

dialogue," he cautioned Congress, "the tendencies to fragmentation could appear and grow."[11]

While the Peronist bureaucracy within the labor movement will try to maintain its position by pummeling the government with extravagant economic demands, Alfonsín must work to keep this sector at the bargaining table. Yet, in view of the strong Peronist loyalties and the unpredictable economic conditions in Argentina, Alfonsín will have great difficulty in accomplishing this task. Nevertheless, it is essential that government authorities establish an acceptable forum for dialogue with the labor movement. To promote such a dialogue, Alfonsín's government has currently called together employers, political and union representatives, and specialists to discuss a new system of labor relations. The government plans to submit the conclusions of this discussion to Congress so it can determine the scope and the final content of the reform.[12]

By excluding their political adversaries from the decision-making process, past governments succeeded only in provoking the kind of disobedience that threatened policy implementation and undermined nation cohesion. By setting up and maintaining a more complex "environment of choice," in which economic problems can be identified, alternative courses of action evaluated, and appropriate measures implemented in an open manner, Alfonsín will be better able to manage the strains which inevitably accompany economic fluctuations.[13]

AUTONOMY

During his first two years in office, Alfonsín has responded quickly and decisively to challenges to the fragile democratic order. As New York Times correspondent Lydia Chavez points out:

> Many times during his first two years Mr. Alfonsín's dreams have confronted an inhospitable reality. At times his response has been belated, confused or even reactionary, reaching back to the legal traditions of despots. It has never been weak.[14]

In response to public outrage following the humiliating defeat in the South Atlantic War and revelations of military atrocities committed during Argentina's internal "dirty war" against urban guerrillas, Alfonsín purged the top ranks of the armed forces. Less than one month after taking office, he removed one-half of the Army generals. Similarly, he retired elements of the Air Force and the Navy. In the subsequent budget-cutting process, he reduced military expenditures from 6 percent of the gross national product to less than 4 percent. He terminated the armed forces' 50-year control over Fabricaciones Militares, ("a military-industrial complex that produces everything from plowshares to bullets and has been a nexus for coup-prone industrial and union leaders").[15]

In contrast to previous civilian administrations, Alfonsín's government prosecuted the military elites for spreading "terror, pain and death throughout Argentine society."[16] True to an election pledge, Alfonsín voided an amnesty law granting armed forces personnel immunity from

punishment for acts committed during the "dirty war." The government then put on trial for mass murder nine prominent members of the first three military juntas which ruled after 1976. The government also arrested retired Army chief and former president, General Leopoldo Galtieri, along with the chiefs of the other two services, for their roles in the South Atlantic War.

Human rights groups complained that the government was not doing enough to bring the armed forces to justice. By the summer of 1984, the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights and other groups, including the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo and the Center for Legal and Social Studies, had filed over 50 individual cases against military men in relation to disappearances which occurred during the "dirty war."[17] In pressing their cause, Luis Lorenzano and Alejandro Dabat of the Argentine Human Rights Coordinating Committee argue:

> Since no serious attempt will be made to uproot the terrorist structures within the top and middle echelons of the three armed forces, a crucial role will be played by the human rights organizations and the working-class and popular movement. However much it may be accused of destabilizing the situation, the latter will have to stick to its demands and go well beyond the actions of the government.[18]

Although Alfonsín was a human rights advocate during the days of repression, as President, he and his advisors must worry that extended court inquiries into individual officer's responsibility could undermine the military as an institution. By allowing the military courts to handle these cases, the government argues that the possibility of a civilian-led witch hunt is checked. Moreover, Alfonsín's military reforms have removed civilians from the jurisdiction

of military tribunals and have made armed forces personnel liable for prosecution in civilian courts for common crimes.[19]

Alfonsín's position reflects the dilemma of responding to popular demands while protecting the autonomy of institutions. As he points out:

> We have to realize that to make the country we want, we have to count on the military . . . What we have to put an end to are the differences that make no sense.[20]

When the public trials of the nine former military rulers ended in October 1985, Buenos Aires became the site of numerous bomb threats and explosions. President Alfonsín promptly arrested six officers and six civilians. When legal complications threatened to thwart the president's actions, he declared a state of siege to keep the suspects in custody. His forceful action effectively eliminated the frequent bombing incidents.

Nevertheless, an ailing economy threatens the government's efforts at national reconciliation. Since 1960 Argentina has had only two years of less than double-digit inflation. The idea that runaway inflation can coexist with prosperity and political stability is a carry over from the first Peronist administration. The notion that governments can stimulate expansion by spending has resulted in inefficient investment and huge inflation-producing government deficits. High rates of inflation indicate a breakdown of effective government. As Robert J. Samuelson puts it, "Instead of making choices, the government prints money."[21]

As his first step against inflation, Alfonsín announced on June 14, 1885, a wage-price freeze that is to stay in

effect until society and its institutions are convinced that inflation will not return. In addition, he promised to limit monetary expansion and to cut the federal deficit.[22] The government's economic reforms also called for a reduced role of the state in industry. In direct opposition to some in his own party, Alfonsín argues that such steps are necessary because the private sector is more efficient than the state in handling most forms of enterprise. The Alfonsín government, by holding down inflation and reducing the role of the state in the economy, hopes to restore investment and promote economic growth.

Alfonsín initially succeeded in gaining broad public support for his economic policies. But the unions resisted. Real wages declined over 30 percent, and the labor movement attacked what it considered the government's lack of attention to social welfare concerns.[23] Although the powerful union leaders criticized Alfonsín's program, demonstrable progress was being made. Inflation fell to about 2 percent a month at the close of 1985, prompting favorable predictions for the current year. The traditional Peronist leaders received little popular support in the 1985 by-elections.

Under Alfonsín's direction, the government has managed to mobilize popular support behind military reforms and neo-orthodox development policies. Through consensus-building measures, Alfonsín has "tamed" the aspirations of many Argentines.[24] His drive for the decentralization of political, economic, and social power has helped to restore much needed autonomy to national political institutions.

LEGITIMACY

Argentina's chronic political instability is in part a product of recurring crises of legitimacy. These crises took place as groups in power pursued their own interests with little regard for the interests of the nation. As participation expanded, Argentine political conflict polarized around two opposing sets of interests -- conservative and populist. The classically liberal forces of traditionalism faced a challenge from the populist forces represented by Yrigoyen's Radicals and the Peronists. With increases in participation, the pendulum of power shifted toward the populists; with the rising exclusiveness of the regimes that followed, however, the pendulum swung back toward the conservatives.

Robert A. Dahl's typology classifying participation and public competition as independent dimensions of political conflict is useful for understanding Argentina's political dilemma.[25] In Argentine politics, these two dimensions tended to exist independently of each other, not only historically, but also as beliefs.

In power, the Radicals and the Peronists after them attempted to alter the rules of the political game by emphasizing increased participation at the expense of opportunities for effective opposition. During the latter half of the 1920s, the Radicals benefitted greatly from the increase in the middle class around the turn of the century. The Peronists similarly maintained their grip on power by mobilizing the support of the newly-enfranchised working

class. As participation levels peaked during both periods of populist rule, political oppositions were increasingly suppressed.

Alfonsín's interest in further liberalizing the political system necessarily entails the creation of an arrangement which balances mass participation with opportunities for effective opposition. The task is to convince Peronists and anti-Peronists alike to abide by the rules and to work through the institutions of political democracy. The acceptance of free and fair elections as a basic norm in Argentine politics is a necessary first step toward increased stability.

One useful way of determining the legitimacy of the new system is to observe the succession process. As elections approach, Alfonsín too must demonstrate his willingness to abide by their results. This is a particularly critical step toward institutionalizing the system of government, since:

> . . . individuals within the system are forced to decide whether their loyalties are confined to those who, up to that point, have exercised authority or to the system of government itself.[26]

The results of the November 1985 off-year elections indicated that a new political outlook is gaining acceptance in Argentina. Although Alfonsín polled favorable ratings of 73 percent, his Radical Party won only 43 percent of the vote in the elections. In the past, such a popular leader would have insured his party a sweep. However, as Lydia Chavez points out:

> . . . Argentines showed restraint. They rejected making Mr. Alfonsín the leader of a new movement, as many had predicted, and instead spread their votes among the different parties.[27]

A test of the system will take place when Alfonsín must transfer power to another leader. This problem of transferring leadership from one individual to another is especially acute in Argentine politics where charisma plays such an important role. The attention given by Alfonsín to the institutionalization of his administration may be the most important factor in determining the legitimacy of democratic government in Argentina.

II. Conclusion

A sign of maturity in modernizing states is the institutionalization of political organizations based on consensual political norms. In Argentina's development, crises of participation have led to the decay of traditional rules and institutions. In the ensuing polarization, two broad political factions, each unwilling to share power and reach decisions by consultation and compromise, have produced political turmoil.

Alfonsín's reformist alternative offers a potential synthesis of these two extreme approaches to governing. By offering opportunities for both participation as well as effective opposition, Alfonsín may lay the basis for a lasting democratic political order. With the institutionalization of adaptable, complex, autonomous, and legitimate structures and procedures, Argentina will be better able to escape its type casting as victim of a recurring war between competing

political factions for a new role in shaping its own destiny.

The challenge for President Alfonsín is to use his personal popularity to foster the institutionalization of a more open political system. This means that he must work to overcome the problem of transferring authority from charismatic to non-charismatic leaders. In effect, Alfonsín must learn how to "exercise power without charisma."[28] Future stability in Argentina hinges on the establishment of accepted procedures for the transfer of power within the governing system.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1 Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 265.

2 Eldon Kenworthy, "The Function of the Little-Known Case in Theory Formation or What Peronism Wasn't," Comparative Politics 6 (October 1973): 44n.

3 Alejandro Dabat and Luis Lorenzano, Argentina: The Malvinas and the End of Military Rule, trans. Ralph Johnstone, (London: Verso Editions, 1984), pp.162-164.

4 Edward Schumacher, "Argentina and Democracy," Foreign Affairs 62 (Summer 1984): 1078.

5 Gary W. Wynia, Argentina in the Postwar Era: Politics and Economic Policy Making in a Divided Society (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1978), p. 246.

6 Ibid., p. 255.

7 Ibid., p. 245.

8 Lydia Chavez, "Alfonsín's One-Man Show," New York Times Magazine, December 15, 1985: 83.

9 Schumacher, p. 1082.

10 Ibid., p. 1081.

11 Ibid., p. 1082.

12 Daily Report - Latin America, "Alfonsín Speech Opens Congressional Session," Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Vol. VI, May 5, 1986: B 5.

13 See Anderson's study on how well the institutions and processes of Spanish authoritarianism provided an "environment of choice." Charles Anderson, The Political Economy of Modern Spain: Policy-Making in an Authoritarian System (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1970).

14 Chavez, p. 70.

15 Schumacher, p. 1080.

16 Ibid., p. 1079.

17 Ibid., p. 1081.

18 Dabat and Lorenzano, pp. 167-168.

19 Martin Anderson, "Dateline Argentina: Hello Democracy," Foreign Policy 55 (Summer 1984): 161.

20 Chavez, p. 75.

21 Robert J. Samuelson, "Alfonsín's Experiment," Washington Post 6 November 1985: F1.

22 James L. Rowe Jr., "Alfonsín Leads Argentines into War Against Inflation," Washington Post 1 September 1985: M6.

[23] Chavez, p. 77.

[24] Ibid., p. 75.

[25] Robert A. Dahl, Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), pp. 1-16.

[26] Myron Weiner and Joseph LaPalombara, "Conclusion: The Impact of Parties on Political Development," Political Parties and Political Development, eds. Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 411.

[27] Chavez, p. 84.

[28] Weiner and LaPalombara, p. 412.

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CONCLUSION

Samuel Huntington argues that, when traditional political institutions are weak in modernizing countries, authority frequently passes to charismatic leaders.[1] Historical circumstances place these individuals in a unique position to pursue institutional development. A conflict often arises between the interests of the individual leader and the interests of institutions. As Huntington puts it: "The would-be institution-builder needs personal power to create institutions but he cannot create institutions without relinquishing personal power."[2]

The weakness of political institutions under Yrigoyen and Perón demonstrated the limits of popular mass movements. These anti-status-quo movements were loosely organized, lacked coherent ideologies, and relied primarily on the political skills of their leaders and the enthusiasm of the mobilized masses. The personalism which dominated both movements ultimately permeated and debilitated government structures. The contribution of these movements to Argentine politics was therefore self-limiting. As Jacques Lambert points out with characteristic hyperbole: both Radicalism and Peronism, "destroyed a great deal but did not rebuild anything."[3] Nevertheless, they broke the rural Conservatives' monopoly

on public office and forced their compatriots to reconsider the practices of the traditional political game.

As a mass movement, Radicalism was akin to a moral crusade seeking the spiritual rebirth of Argentine society. U.C.R. partisans addressed one another as spiritual bretheren, termed the movement "the cause," and viewed Yrigoyen as their spiritual leader.[4] Beneath this exterior, however, the U.C.R. was a system of local party bosses and their machine organizations. The lack of unity between Yrigoyen's populist line and the personalism inherent in the operation of government culminated in instability.

Peronist populism, which glorified the native creole culture and proclaimed the dignity of the common worker, provided a ready vehicle for the political integration of the Argentine masses. Denouncing the evils of personalism, Perón set out to organize a broad-based political party. Yet, the organization he created was completely personalistic, and this quality eventually blocked the transformation of the Peronist movement into an effective political party.

During both periods political instability was positively associated with: electoral strategies based on populistic appeals to the masses, the informal and personalistic character of the state, and the lack of widespread acceptance of a single set of political rules. Opposition mounted when both the Radicals and the Peronists demonstrated that they had no intention of sharing power or reaching decisions through consensus measures.

The Radicals and Peronists violated the traditional rules of the political game. The legitimacy crises that arose in 1930 and again in 1955, resulted in the political restoration of traditional elites.[5] The failure of these populist movements to institutionalize enduring political structures permitted the reemergence of traditional rules and practices. The Peronist/anti-Peronist conflict, like the Radical-Conservative conflict which preceded it, reflected the ongoing debate between populist attitudes and traditional institutions.[6]

The current popular support for the Radicals marks the latest chapter in Argentina's political drama. Raúl Alfonsín, the standard-bearer of Yrigoyen's Radicals, must contend with a highly differentiated but poorly integrated political system. The Alfonsín administration must finish the job left behind by the two previous populist regimes. That is, Alfonsín must shape institutions that reflect the changes in norms and values brought about by Argentina's rapid modernization.

As the experiences of the Radical and Peronist periods suggest, the conjunction of high political participation and low institutionalization seems to increase the inclination of of disaffected elite groups to resort to attempts at "irregular" government change, or coups. Alfonsín must take steps to ensure that his government does not follow this pattern. The lesson for Alfonsín: the existence of strong and well-developed civilian socio-political institutions diminishes the frequency of coups.

The process of political institutionalization offers a method for coping with mass demands for greater social, economic, or political equality and with traditional concerns for political order. A necessary step in this direction would include the full incorporation of the Peronists into the decision-making process. In this way, Alfonsín may begin to increase the adaptability and complexity of the Argentine political system. Alfonsín must use his personal prestige and the power of his office to mobilize consent behind pluralistic political institutions without detracting from their autonomy. In sum, Alfonsín must overcome the division of society by closed political or sectional interests dedicated to pursuing their own exclusive goals.

This study points out that political decay -- or the atrophy of political institutions -- was a major cause of Argentina's instability during the two periods reviewed. As both Yrigoyen and Perón pursued their personalist strategies to retain power, they inhibited the growth of strong political institutions. Alfonsín must acknowledge the major lesson of Argentina's political experience: a charismatic leader may successfully retain wide popular support while failing to take steps to institutionalize the political system. The fundamental task before Alfonsín is therefore to strengthen the legitimacy of Argentine democracy by demonstrating the viability of its political institutions.

Raúl Alfonsín has more than three years left in office. If he survives, it will mark the first time that a civilian Argentine president has completed a full term since Juan

Perón was reelected in 1952. That, in itself, will be a major contribution to the institutionalization of Argentine democracy. But the larger task remains: Alfonsín must convince Argentines that a working democratic order will continue to be an illusory goal until the people and the elites accept the need to strengthen the political system's ability to accomodate change.

NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

1 Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Poltical Decay," World Politics 17 (April 1965): 423.

2 Ibid.

3 Jacques Lambert, Latin America: Social Structures and Political Institutions, trans. Helen Katel, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 206.

4 David Tamarin, "Yrigoyen and Perón: The Limits of Argentine Populism," Latin American Populism in Comparative Perspective, ed. Michael L. Conniff, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 33.

5 For a concise appraisal of the traditional features of political conflict in Argentina, see: Peter H. Smith, Argentina and the Failure of Democracy: Conflict among Political Elites, 1904-1955 (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p. 92.

6 For an account on how the Peronist/anti-Peronist conflict relates to the populist-conservative cleavage in politics, see: Lars Schoultz, The Populist Challenge (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), pp. 85-95.

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