

Popular Mobilization and Geographic Distributive Paths:

The Case of Argentine *Plan Trabajar*

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Paper prepared for delivered at the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association (LACEA-PEG) Fifth Annual Meeting, Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), September 25 - 26, 2003

Introduction

In recent years, the scholarly literature on the politics of economic reforms in Latin America has explored the reasons that allowed democratic governments to carry out draconian structural changes without major opposition (Acuña and Smith 1994; Blake 1994; Przeworski 1991; Remmer 1995; Schamis 1999; Torre 1998; Weyland 1996a, 1998). An interpretation that gained credit among some analysts underscores that reformist elites in the region symbolized a new “liberal” variant of populism (e.g. Castro Rea, Ducatenzeiler, and Faucher 1992; Roberts 1995; Roberts and Arce 1998; Weyland 1996b, 1999). Central to this idea is the view that the distribution of material targeted benefits to the largely unorganized losers of market reforms helped to silence their opposition by fragmenting powerless sectors, impeding horizontal linkages among popular organizations, and encouraging vertical forms of political clientelism.

The evolution experienced by Argentina in the 1990s, however, illustrates a different pattern from that suggested by the neo-populist thesis. In effect, neoliberal reforms were pushed through without any substantial targeted social emergency and anti-poverty program.¹ Only in 1996, once comprehensive institutional changes had already been enacted, did the national government launch an ambitious emergency employment program (the *Plan Trabajar*, Work Plan) to tackle increasing unemployment and incipient social turmoil. Since then, the country has witnessed an escalation of popular protests led by unemployed and informal workers, the consolidation of their organizations, and the institutionalization of their political influence.

This paper aims to examine the relationship between popular protest mobilization and policy outcomes in the aftermath of market reforms through an analysis of the allocation of the *Plan Trabajar* to the states. Concretely, did popular protests have had an impact on the way in

¹Scholars have debated about whether President Carlos Menem (1989-1999) was a populist reformer. See Adelman (1994), Novaro (1994), Palermo (1998), Sidicaro and Mayer (1995).

which these federal transfers were allocated? Did disruptive political tactics increase powerless sectors' chances of affecting policy outcomes?

To address these questions, I present a statistical model that provides evidence for a positive effect of protests undertaken by unemployed workers' organizations (or the so-called *piquetero* movement) on the distribution of the *Plan Trabajar*.² Even though this effect is not observed throughout the period under study (1996-2001), substantive analysis demonstrates that findings are consistent with the dynamics of social upheaval and the parallel development of the movement. In addition to the hypothesis that popular protest mobilization shapes the geographic allocation of federal social transfers, I examine whether distributive paths respond to socioeconomic hardships rooted in U-turn structural changes or to political preferences of the national government.

By showing that defiant organizations have obtained benefits for their members and expanded their political influence, this study moves away from literature on neo-populism and state compensations under market reforms (e.g. Angell and Graham 1995; Cornelius, Craig, and Fox 1994, Haggard and Webb 1994; Graham 1994; Waterbury 1993). In contrast to these interpretations, I stress that targeted social policies, such as workfare programs, can empower opposite political actors instead of galvanizing their support or neutralizing their opposition.

This paper is organized as follows. The first section offers an overview of state labor market intervention policies in Argentina during the last decade. The second describes the organizations of the *piquetero* movement focusing on their political origins and ideological differences. The third introduces the hypotheses to be tested. The fourth presents the statistical

²The term *piqueteros* (picketers) refers to those organized groups that set pickets on the road as their primary political tactic.

model and discusses the overall results. The final section advances some conclusions and poses a set of questions for a future research agenda.

State Labor Market Intervention in the 1990s

Economic liberalization policies that include privatizations of state-run companies, administrative cutbacks, and labor reforms aimed at easing the restrictions of hiring and laying-off workers frequently entail major costs for the working class.³ The increasing flexibilization of the labor market in Latin America, however, has affected workers in very different ways. In general, workers already employed were less seriously damaged than new entrants, displaced, and self-employed workers since most labor reforms introduced changes in individual contracts but left collective laws relatively untouched. The new regulations, therefore, did not diminish the legal protections enjoyed by workers in the formal sector but promoted the substitution of full-benefit contracts by more precarious forms of employment with lower payroll taxes and severance payment upon termination.⁴ This generated a system of labor relations in which workers in the informal segment of the labor market are uncovered against income losses derived from unemployment.

To mitigate this adverse effect and help sustain the reformist coalitions, neoliberal projects tend to include some mechanisms to intervene directly in the labor market such as unemployment compensations, employment generation programs, and short-time training schemes. In other words, reformist governments may carry out policies that give some support to the unemployed or attempt to relocate workers and improve their employability prospects.

³In Argentina, real wages decreased by 20% in the initial and more drastic phase of market reforms (1990-1995), while unemployment increased from 7.5% to 18.5%.

⁴Although labor reforms in Argentina intensified labor discipline and decreased labor costs, the critical participation of union leaders in the design of these changes allowed them to preserve significant organizational benefits and delayed the deregulation of the formal workforce. See Etchemendy (forthcoming), Murillo (2001).

Based on the rough distinction between “passive” and “active” state labor market policies, this section describes the actions adopted by the Argentine government in the last decade focusing on the characteristics of the *Plan Trabajar*.

Compensations to the losers of economic modernization did not follow a common pattern. Reformist governments in Chile, Peru, and Bolivia promptly redirected public sector resources to the less privileged groups. The Menem administration, in contrast, only launched an emergency employment and anti-poverty program once major market reforms had been enacted. Neither semi-universal nor targeted pro-poor policies played a critical role in enhancing the political sustainability of institutional reforms. The implementation of the *Plan Trabajar* in 1997 was the first action and its results in terms of political (and social) stability were not the anticipated: Menem lost elections) and unintended consequence (empowerment).

Unemployment compensations in Argentina have been historically negligible and never fulfilled a safety net role for the poor. With an embryonic and unsuccessful precedent created in the mid-1980s, it was not until the 1991 National Employment Law was sanctioned, that an unemployment insurance scheme financed through a payroll tax was implemented.⁵ Yet, access to this program has typically been confined to wage earners since only workers in payroll tax-paying firms, who had made a minimum of twelve contributions to the social security system in the three years prior to their dismissal, are eligible (Marshall 1996). Restrictions to receive the unemployment insurance benefit also apply to workers engaged in labor agencies, construction, rural and household activities, and more importantly, to public administration employees made redundant in the process of state rationalization. Overall, these regulations

⁵In 1984, the Alfonsín administration (1983-1989) created a limited unemployment insurance which, depending on eligibility criteria, granted displaced workers a family allowance and 70% of the minimum wage or a special support for four months (Conte-Grand 1996).

result in a system biased towards middle-class displaced workers thus leaving poor people and informal workers without any protection against the risks of losing their jobs (Mazza 2000).

Although no country in the region has in fact developed a vast unemployment insurance system and very few have legally and/or administratively enacted it, the size and scope of this unemployment scheme in Argentina have been lower than those in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay (Marshall 1997; Mesa-Lago and Bertranou 1998). Between 1992 and 1997, expenditure in the country did not exceed 0.14% of the GNP and coverage fluctuated between 7% and 8% of the unemployed (Government of Argentina 1999).⁶ But what really shows the extremely modest impact of the unemployment insurance system in Argentina is that neither expenditures nor the amount of unemployed people covered by the system increased proportionally with the steady growth of unemployment. In effect, between 1990 and 1996 the number of unemployed people almost tripled but expenditures only increased by 22% (MTSS 1997). Coverage rates lagged far behind those of other “effective” cases of market-oriented reforms. Etchemendy (2001) reports that the percentage of jobless covered in Chile and Spain during years of peak unemployment rate was 37.8% and 51.6% respectively, while in Argentina only 7.1% of the unemployed (or less than 1.5% of the workforce) enjoyed this benefit. In summary, the unemployment insurance system has not yielded a gain for informal workers and the poor but rather it has provided a supplementary income to a limited number of workers in the regulated segment of the labor market during their search for a new job.⁷

This picture does not fundamentally differ when we move into the analysis of the active responses initially taken by the Menem administration to expand the employment opportunities

⁶However, cover periods (between four and twelve months) and replacement rates (60% of the last six wages) have remained close to the region’s average (Marquez 2000).

⁷Certainly, as unemployment insurance systems are commonly financed through payroll taxes there are weak incentives for beneficiaries and firms operating in the formal market to expand the level of their contributions and, therefore, the scope and amount of coverage.

of the most vulnerable groups. Indeed, active labor market policies were virtually nil until 1993 as the national government opted for implementing sometimes sizable market compensations (i.e. early and voluntary retirement and resignation plans) to reimburse state workers affected by the liberalization process. Between 1993 and 1997, however, some actions were undertaken. The Peronist government then devised some amount of employment generation programs, training schemes, and plans to subsidize employment in the private sector. Nonetheless, these actions composed a battery of discontinued and unrelated programs that did not fulfill the role of income support for a large segment of the population.

Employment generation programs, mainly under the form of labor intensive public works, were the primary mechanism developed by the government to protect vulnerable people from income losses. The most relevant program of this period was the short-lived *Programa Intensivo de Trabajo* (PIT, Intensive Work Program), which originally administered by municipalities and later by NGOs linked with the Catholic Church, employed skilled and unskilled long-term unemployed workers in social and community projects. In its year of highest coverage, however, the PIT only absorbed 2.2% of the urban unemployed population (Marshall 1997). Although at least six other employment generation programs with similar characteristics were created, the government evidenced a low commitment in the area as expenditure amounted 0.1% of the GDP in the 1993-1997 period.⁸

The government also developed a varied set of programs to subsidize employment in the private sector by funding (partially or totally) the workers' salaries or offering tax rebates to firms contingent on hiring particular groups of people (young, ex combatants, or women). Programs developed in the first category averaged 20,000 beneficiaries per month (i.e. 1% of

⁸My own estimates based on Government of Argentina (1999), MTSS (1997, 1998). Marquez (2000) reports that circa 1995 expenditure in employment generation programs amounted 0.09% of the GNP. This was less than the amount spent by Brazil, Mexico, and Peru.

the urban unemployed population), while those under “promotional” contractual forms that exempted firms from paying associated labor costs only averaged 5,000 jobless per month.⁹

In general, Latin American countries have invested little resources in employment generation and training programs and, therefore, these mechanisms have benefited a very small fraction of the unemployed. Yet compared with other nations in the region, Argentina have expended less than Mexico, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, and Costa Rica reporting an average of 0.07% of GDP to benefit around 9% of the total workforce (Marquez 2000). Moreover, although this paper does not analyze expenditure in welfare, it is worth mentioning that social expenditure in Argentina during the 1990s (including anti-poverty measures), was lower than in the 1980s and did not increase after the Mexican crisis in 1995.

By 1997, immediately after a massive social outburst arose in the southern oil enclave of Cutral-Có/Plaza Huincul, the government took a series of more decisive steps in the area. On the one hand, it launched a national campaign of public works and increased the amount of money assigned to food programs. On the other, it created a more ambitious and extended emergency employment program that emulated prior successful experiments in the region.¹⁰

⁹The first category of programs were the *Programa de Empleo Privado* (Private Employment Program), which employed workers with or without experience for at least four months; the *Programa de Empleo Privado para Pyme* (Private Employment Program for Small and Medium Size Firms), confined to firms with up to 100 employees; and the *Forestar*, which occupied workers in the forest sector for a maximum of six months. In the second category, the *Fomento de Empleo* (Employment Promotion) targeted any type of workers, the *Práctica Laboral para Jóvenes* (Labor Practice for the Youth) addressed workers up to 24 years old who had technical or professional skills, and the *Trabajo-Formación* (Formation-Work) occupied unskilled young workers without experience. Seven other programs with an estimated target of 2,000-12,000 workers per month (MSTT 1997) subsidized training for disabled and young people, women, ex combatants, and employees in new firms. Some of these programs, such as the *Proyecto Joven* (Young Plan) were co-financed by the IDB.

¹⁰I refer to the Chilean *Programa de Empleo Mínimo* (Minimal Employment Program, PEM) and the *Programa de Empleo para Jefes de Hogar* (Employment Program for Household Heads, POJH) created by the Pinochet's regime in 1975 and 1982 respectively. The former provided a salary similar to the minimum wage to perform unskilled jobs, whereas the remuneration of the latter depended on the beneficiaries' skill levels (Graham 1991, Velásquez 1996). The *Plan Trabajar* also sought to emulate the pioneering Peruvian *Programa de Apoyo al Ingreso Temporal* (Temporary Income Support Program, PAIT) and the *Programa de Acción Directa* (Direct Action Program, PAD) implemented by the government of Alan García in the mid-1980s (Graham 1994, and Vázquez 1997).

The *Plan Trabajar* was designed by a group of local officers of the Ministry of Labor and economists of the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank, institutions that have co-funded the program since 1997. In contrast to previous programs, the *Plan Trabajar* was implemented without interruptions until 2001, accounting for almost 80% of the total amount spent by all state active employment actions.¹¹ Between 1996 and 2001 its coverage averaged 20% of the unemployed population, reaching an impressive 47% in some provinces.

This program targeted unemployed people who did not collect social security or some kind of unemployment benefit by offering a temporary job for a maximum of six months and a salary of 150- 250 U.S. dollars (or pesos). In other words, contrary to prior employment programs that were openly biased in favor of middle-class unemployed workers with some experience in the formal sector, the *Plan Trabajar* was primarily oriented to covering poor unemployed people with some working experience in the informal sector and young people without any labor experience. This particular orientation is even clearer in the second version of the program created in 1997, which specifically established that the beneficiaries should be unemployed people under poor and vulnerable conditions. Thus, to a great extent, the *Plan Trabajar* was born as both an employment and an antipoverty plan. As we will see, however, rather than silencing popular opposition by co-opting powerless sectors and hindering their collective organization, this measure unintentionally paved the way for the development of multiple defiant groups that found in the program a source of resources to reinforce their incipient organizational structures and a selective incentive to attract new members.

¹¹In 2002, the Peronist government of Eduardo Duhalde (2002-2003) designed and implemented an even more extensive emergency employment program which is still functioning: the *Plan Jefas y Jefes de Hogar* (Men and Women Household Heads Plan). The analysis of such program, however, is beyond the scope of this paper.

In reality, the implementation of the program combined a high level of discretionary power in the Executive, who directly transferred resources to the Governors, and certain degree of decentralization since governors decided to which municipalities resources were finally assigned.¹² According to its regulatory frame, provincial and municipal governments, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or private organizations were required to present community or social infrastructure projects that could be accomplished by public works. The plan provided the funds for hiring unskilled labor force, while the executing organization provided the materials and hired the skilled workers. Nonetheless, as many evaluations have indicated, these formal requirements were not properly enforced leaving the President and Governors a high level of maneuver to determine the patterns of distribution (SIEMPRO 1997; 1998).

Under the coalitional government of Fernando de la Rúa (1999-2001), Minister of Social Action Graciela Fernández Meijide introduced a significant modification in the way that both social and employment programs were to be implemented. In order to avoid the influence of Peronist party brokers in the final stages of the distribution process and then limit the possibilities of a discretionary and clientelistic use of the federal funds by the main opposite political party, the national government determined that the *Plan Trabajar* could only be allocated by local Mayors and authorized NGOs.¹³ Thus, the government formed intermediary institutions called *Consejos de Emergencia* (Emergency Committees). But the unemployed workers' organizations that have emerged and consolidated in the course of the last years reacted promptly to this initiative by constituting their own NGOs and gaining a formal position in the arenas of negotiation and forums of distribution.

¹²This mechanism partially changed under the Alianza's government. See below.

¹³The first stage of the distribution process (i.e. from the Executive to the Governors) remained the same.

As disruption continued to be the key tool for unemployed workers' organizations to retain institutional spaces of power and obtain fresh monetary resources for their members, the level of protests did not decrease but grew steadily. This conflictive scenario pressed the Duhalde administration to institute the *Plan Jefes y Jefas de Hogar*, an important part of whose final distribution still remains in the hands of the Emergency Committees.

Mapping the *Piquetero* Movement

In contrast to other Latin American countries such as Bolivia and Venezuela, popular reactions to market reforms in Argentina did only take place once economic liberalization policies had already been enacted. The fundamental change in the national political economy began to show its limits in 1994 when the Mexican devaluation and the consequent capital outflow pushed the country into a deep recession. This stage represented a harmful turning point since authorities embarked in protecting the dollar-peso parity by means of deflationary policies that deepened economic adjustment. As a result, unemployment peaked 18.5% in 1995 and popular protest mobilization began to develop in a gradual but continuous way.

The more direct antecedent of the *piquetero* movement occurred between 1996 and 1997 when a wave of massive social outbursts led by laid-off workers arose in some oil and sugar enclaves deeply hit by the privatization of state-run companies and the restructuring of the sugar industry (Lodola 2002). Even when these episodes were basically defensive and local in nature, they had two important consequences. On the one hand, they diffused the effectiveness of disruptive political tactics (namely blockages) among the powerless sectors, who found in this protest tool a way of solving what Michael Lipsky (1968) seminally called the "problem of the powerless": to create bargaining resources in order to enter in a process

of negotiation.¹⁴ On the other hand, these pioneering episodes forced office holders to design some compensatory programs to tackle increasing unemployment and social ferment.

Following the pulse of the first social uprisings, three different types of alternative political forces began to dispute the control of unrepresented powerless sectors, spawning a very heterogeneous universe of defiant organizations:¹⁵

First, independent and class-based union confederations that had forcefully opposed to market reforms throughout the 1990s and attacked the cooperative position taken by the Peronist Central Union Confederation (CGT) expanded their targets to incorporate informal and unemployed workers as well as previously constituted community-based organizations from all around the country.

Second, a vast number of minor radical leftist parties that shared some programmatic issues -though they reproduced deep political divisions and intense ideological sectarianisms traditionally present in local versions of Marxist-oriented parties- strengthened underground mass actions and formed their own *piquetero* branches.¹⁶

Third, a myriad of grassroots and squatter settlement organizations, some of which had been founded in the early 1980s by members of the Ecclesiastic Base Communities while others were recently created by catholic groups and former militants of the 1970s Marxist

¹⁴Although pickets and barricades are an old component of the repertoire of collective action (see for instance Traugott 1995), in modern times these tactics have been employed as a tool of a more general protest (strikes, lockouts) for many defiant actors. In the Argentine case, however, blocking roads appeared as the exclusive methodology of action of a specific challenger group.

¹⁵Since the beginning, unemployed workers' organizations faced a strategic dilemma: whether they should only demand (and accept) temporary jobs from the state or claim for a universal unemployment subsidy. The implications in each case are significantly different. The former option was easily available and represented a potential source of material resources for the incipient organizations. But it also reinforces the chances of a clientelistic use by the national and local incumbent parties, and put unemployed workers' organizations in a difficult position because they could be seen as justifying palliative solutions to structural problems. The option for a universal unemployment subsidy, on the other hand, was unlikely to succeed and could negatively impact on the organizations' financial resources. But, at the same time, it would allow organizations to expand their appeal by combining the defense of unionized and unemployed workers.

¹⁶For an informative, though biased, relate about the ideological disputes and political accusations among some of these organizations, see Oviedo (2001).

guerrilla movement *Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo* (People's Revolutionary Army), mobilized entire neighborhoods in the south of the Buenos Aires province.

As it is shown in Table 1, this highly varied set of organizations can be grouped into three main clusters according to their political alliances and partisan links.

[TABLE 1 HERE]

The first cluster of organizations within the *piquetero* movement is the most powerful in terms of size, material resources, and capacity for sustained collective action. It comprises the two organizations (the *Federación Tierra y Vivienda* -FTV-, and the *Corriente Clasista y Combativa* -CCC-) that enjoy a more direct channel of access to the distribution of temporary employment programs given their higher level of potential disruptiveness and closer informal contacts with local Mayors. This cluster is composed by a first group of squatter settlement organizations that in recent years has joined the moderate independent union confederation *Central de Trabajadores Argentinos* (CTA) linked with a coalition of democratic socialist parties, and a second group that has moved towards an alliance with the leftist CCC.¹⁷

After leading some illegal land occupations in the biggest district of the country (La Matanza in West Buenos Aires province) during the mid-1980s, most of these organizations evolved following a classical pattern: self-management of urban services, demands for taking part in the implementation of local social policies, and establishment of communal health

¹⁷The CTA was formed in 1992 by a small group of teachers' and state workers' union leaders who broke ties with the CGT. This union confederation has introduced some internal organizational procedures that broke away from the traditional and obscure electoral practices of the Argentine labor movement. In particular, union leaders are not elected by representatives gathered in a national congress but by the direct and secret vote of the members at the municipal, state and national levels. The CCC, on the other hand, was formed in 1996 in the northern Jujuy province by a group of local municipal and state workers' combative unions. It is an independent union confederation that shared the ideological principles of class-based unions. To put it in its own words, the CCC holds "the political autonomy of the working class and the recognition of antagonistic contradictions with political parties, the capitalist state, and the union bureaucracy".

care and soup kitchens (Merklen 1991; 2001). In 1998, some of them constituted the FTV led by former deputy Luis D'Elía, and joined the CTA in a clear attempt to add the claim for jobs from the state to their historic demands for land, housing, and some consumption goods.¹⁸ A second, more numerous, and more radical squatter settlement organization led by Juan Carlos Alderete has allied with the CCC given the political links between this union confederation and the Maoist *Partido Comunista Revolucionario* (Revolutionary Communist Party) to which Alderete has belonged for years.

The second cluster of unemployed workers' organizations is the most ideological and institutionalized. It consists of a series of neighborhood communities mobilized by traditional and some new leftist parties, which have combined underground and "focal" mass actions with participation in the electoral political arena. This cluster includes revolutionary Trotskyist organizations such as the *Polo Obrero*, the *Frutrade* and the *Movimiento Teresa Vive*, and Marxist-Leninist movements such as the *Movimiento Territorial de Liberación*, and the *Agrupación Clasista 29 de Mayo*.¹⁹ Despite deep programmatic and ideological differences, these organizations have recently gathered in the *Bloque Piquetero Nacional* (National Piquetero Block) with the explicit goal of granting certain political unity to the sector and disputing the dominant position reached by the FTV-CCC.

¹⁸The *Movimiento Barrios de Pie* (Neighborhoods on their Feet Movement), formed by a group of former socialist militants and active members of the People's Revolutionary Army, also joined the CTA though it has recently broken institutional ties with the FTV.

¹⁹The *Polo Obrero* (Workers' Pole) and the *Frutrade* (Unemployed Workers' Front) belong to the Workers' Party, the most numerous and electorally supported of all Argentine leftist parties. Whereas the former organization is particularly strong in the south of Buenos Aires province and has close ties with some press and state workers' unions, the latter is a small association created in some neighborhoods of La Matanza mainly to challenge the FTV-CCC. The *Movimiento Territorial de Liberación* (Land Liberation Movement), a branch of the small Communist Party, had a very limited appeal among powerless sectors. The *Movimiento Teresa Vive* (Teresa is Alive Movement) has rapidly developed in Buenos Aires province and in many southern provinces. Its name remembers Teresa Rodriguez, the first person who died in recent popular mobilizations. Finally, the small *Agrupación Clasista 29 de mayo* (May 29 Class-based Organization) borrowed its name from the date on which the popular mobilization known as the *Cordobazo* (1969) took place under the military government of Juan Carlos Onganía.

Finally, the third cluster is formed by the most radicalized organizations which, in contrast to the other groups, do not forge links with political parties or independent unions but rather accused them of softening the development of the movement by negotiating with political office holders and adopting “collaborationist” practices (for example, carrying out “partial blockages” in which authorities and the police are informed about the protest actions that will be taken, and alternative ways of traffic circulation are left unblocked).

Most of these organizations were born in the late-1990s under the influence of former Guevarist militants of guerrilla movements, and a number of progressive parish priests that were expelled from the Catholic Church because of their systematic attempts to organize the poor and the unemployed.²⁰ Even though an important part of their actions are obviously directed to obtaining temporary employment plans for their members, organizations within this third cluster openly claim that their final goal is to fuel a radical social change by seizing power and reorganizing the system of government on the bases of popular assemblies and the collective control of economic production. In consonance with their Guevarist ideology, they promote a territorial conception of power (“liberalized zones”), foster the formation of cadres by means of popular education and congresses in which the ideological foundations of the movement are discussed, and adopt mechanisms of direct democracy and horizontality as the main internal organizational principles. Unlike the other groups, these organizations gathered in the *Coordinadora Aníbal Verón*, always developed an alternative economic system in their neighborhoods by making a more social use of the temporary employment plans.²¹

²⁰Particularly in the south of Buenos Aires, the episcopacy had organized a vast system of social assistance channels through the Catholic Church's official institution *Caritas*. The conflict between bishops and some priests emerged when the Church publicly stated that it "does not organize but assists the unemployed", and removed priest from the distribution process replacing them with local NGO's.

²¹Aníbal Verón was a manifestant killed in an isolated protest in the southern province of Tierra del Fuego. For a detailed description of their internal organizational procedures and ideological principles, see their own relate in *Situaciones* (2001).

While the *Plan Trabajar* established that beneficiaries should work four hours per day in exchange for receiving the employment subsidy, members of these sectors spend that time working on collective projects (such as bakeries, small textile and shoe factories, brick and industrial work shops, pharmacies, and orchards) established and managed by their own. As this practice began to be employed by the other organizations of the *piquetero* movement, the allocation of federal transfers has unintentionally contributed to empower defiant groups by reinforcing their structures and facilitating the recruitment of new members, for whom being part of the movement guarantees an access to some kind of material and social relief.

In sum, the *piquetero* movement is a complex set of organizations divided across deep ideological and strategic lines. Quite far from evolving as a unitary political actor, it has been exposed to continuous political chasms and realignments. Nonetheless, some decisive steps towards the “nationalization” of the movement have been undertaken. In July 2001, unemployed workers’ organizations called for the first National Assembly that gathered 2,000 representatives from all around the country. There, they decided to conduct a national day of protests that mobilized between 40,000 and 50,000 people who participated in around 145 simultaneous blockages. In February 2002, they met once again in the second National Assembly and one month later they virtually paralyzed the country for three days by setting a new massive wave of blockages.

Struggle, Need, and Political Preferences

In the course of the previous description I have asserted that unemployed workers’ organizations have been benefited by the launching of the *Plan Trabajar* and the way in

which it has been implemented. But, which factors determine the way in which these federal transfers have been distributed across the Argentine provinces?

At least three main different factors may have an effect on the distribution of this federal employment social program.²² First, it may respond to social upheaval. Secondly, it may be determined by some kinds of socioeconomic hardships. Third, it may respond to the political preferences of the national government.

The first argument has its genesis in the influential work of Piven and Cloward (1977) about the positive impact of disruptive poor people's movements in the expansion of social welfare spending in the U.S. between the 1930s and 1970s. The authors' central claim is that disruptive protest (rather than organizational tools) was the best mean available for poor people to exert influence on governmental policies because welfare spending was mainly a way of buying social acquiescence. Since this seminal formulation was made, students of urban riots and social movements in advanced industrial societies have largely argued about whether disruptive or moderate political tactics are more conducive to policy change. The evidence is far from conclusive, with some experts acknowledging the effectiveness of disruption (Jennings 1979; McAdam 1983; Gamson 1990; Tarrow 1994) and others stressing that violence matters only under certain conditions (Schumaker 1978; Koopmans 1993).²³

If popular protests in Argentina have had a salient impact on the distribution of the *Plan Trabajar*, we would expect provinces to benefit differentially in terms of the amount of money received depending on the frequency (the number) of disruptive events that took place in their respective territories. Then, my first hypothesis states:

²²Needless to say, these factors are not exclusive.

²³With rare exceptions (e.g. Eckstein 1989; Cook 1995) the literature on developing countries has overlooked the analysis of the consequences of defiant popular movements, and preferred to concentrate on the causes that lead to their emergence and development over time.

Hypothesis 1: The greater the number of protests experienced by a province, the greater the amount of federal transfers the province is likely to receive.

In contrast to the “struggle” hypothesis presented above, a second argument would pose that federal transfers of the *Plan Trabajar* are determined by some “needs” for relief. More concretely, unemployment associated with market liberalization should have a positive impact in the distribution of funds.²⁴ Thus,

Hypothesis 2: Provinces that experience higher unemployment are more likely to receive a greater amount of federal transfers.

The problem with these two arguments is that they do not leave too much room for politics. A basic postulate in political economy is that policies have distributive effects by determining winners and losers. A second basic assumption in the field is that actors who control the implementation of a particular policy have the power to decide who will be the winners and who the losers by simply rewarding the former and punishing the latter. Hence, the actor who has the monopoly to allocate benefits in the process of distribution is going to reward its friends and punish its enemies. Given that the Executive controlled the allocation of the *Plan Trabajar*, we would expect provinces to benefit differentially according to whether they belong to the national incumbent party or to the opposition.

The argument that the national government conditions the allocation of transfers based on its political preferences, however, has two dimensions depending on whether the level of analysis is the municipalities or the provincial states. Given that the final recipients of the *Plan Trabajar* are the municipalities (mediated by the states) the government may

²⁴The regulatory frame of the *Plan Trabajar* explicitly states that “funds should be assigned to the provinces in terms of the percentage of unemployed workers under poverty conditions” (Resolution 240/1997).

define the patterns of distribution by observing the relation of power between its party and the opposition at the municipal level (Díaz Cayeros *et. al* 2000). In consequence, we should expect a positive impact of provinces in which the national incumbent party's municipalities are dominant, and a negative sign otherwise.

Hypothesis 3: The higher the percentage of municipalities controlled by the national incumbent party (PJ or UCR/Alianza) in a given province, the greater the amount of federal transfers the province is likely to receive.

Hypothesis 4: Conversely, the higher the percentage of municipalities controlled by the opposition (PJ or UCR/Alianza), the smaller the amount of federal transfers the province is likely to receive.

Alternatively, the national government may not condition the allocation of funds to the municipality share but rather apply a simple zero-one clause: does the state government belong to the national incumbent party or does it to the opposition? Following this vein, we should expect a positive effect of the provinces governed by the national incumbent party.

Hypothesis 5: Provinces ruled by governors who belong to the incumbent party (PJ or UCR/Alianza) are likely to receive a greater amount of federal transfers.

Those familiarized with the Argentine politics would surely agree that the Peronism deserves an explanation on its own. Since the returned to democracy in 1983, the Peronist party (PJ) has had a considerable electoral advantage over other political parties. Indeed, it has always controlled the Senate (even when it lost the presidency), and both chambers of Congress during its two presidential administrations (1989-1999); by contrast, the Radical party (UCR) never controlled the Upper House and only briefly the plurality of seats in the

Lower House (1983-1987 and 1999-2001). In addition, the PJ has been able to win and retain both provincial and local governments: in the period under analysis, Peronist politicians won fourteen (1995-1999) and fifteen (1999-2001) gubernatorial elections, and between 40% and 50% of the municipalities.²⁵ In addition to this electoral dominance, the PJ's decentralized organization results in provincial authority structures.²⁶ The Peronist governors, therefore, are a very important factor of power in national politics and their acquiescence is critical to govern effectively.

Some time after Fernando de la Rúa took office in December 1999, the government decided to move forward with the enactment of the labor reform (one of the major failures of the Menem administration) and the implementation of a new structural adjustment package oriented to reducing the fiscal deficit (the so-called "Zero-Deficit" policy). While the success of the former depended on the Senate's support, where the PJ retained the absolute majority, the political future of the latter depended on the enactment of a fiscal pact with the Peronist governors, who had expressed that a reduction in public spending would lead to massive opposition and even violent social reactions in their districts. Given this combination of factors, we should expect that Peronist governors will receive a differential treatment by the national government regardless of which party holds the presidency. More concretely,

Hypothesis 6: Peronist governors are likely to be rewarded by the allocation of federal transfers even when the PJ is in the opposition.

²⁵Some scholars have argued that this control provided the Peronist presidents with more resources to sustain effective governmental coalitions at the national level, and more competitive electoral machines at the local level. Gibson (1997), Gibson and Calvo (2001), Remmer and Wibbels (2000), Saiegh and Tommassi (2001) explained how formal political institutions facilitated Peronist incumbents the appropriation of fiscal resources to finance their provinces. In a recent work, Calvo and Murillo (2003) hold that this subnational dominance of the Peronism is mainly due to different access and distribution of patronage.

²⁶Mutapic (2002) have demonstrated that, despite the comparatively higher level of discipline of the country's political parties, President Menem faced serious difficulties to discipline his own ranks in the parliament.

Finally, I will test the hypothesis advanced by some scholars who analyzed the impact of the Argentine Congress on the budget process. In particular, Jones (2000) has shown that the provinces' proportional contribution to the presidential party's bloc in the legislature makes a difference in terms of the federal transfers that provinces receive. The logic of the argument is straightforward. As the legislators' approval to pass the budget is required, those provinces that contribute the more to the president's coalition are more "entitled" to ask for favors (and more likely to be "heard"). Hence, other things being equal, we should expect a positive effect of this variable on the distribution of the *Plan Trabajar*.

Hypothesis 7: The greater the proportion of the presidential party legislative bloc supplied by a province, the greater the proportion of state funds the province is likely to receive.

With these expectations in mind, in the next section I present the statistical model and discuss the results.

The Analysis

In this analysis, I examine the distribution of the *Plan Trabajar* between 1996 and 2001. Six separate regressions using Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) models were conducted. To account for the independent impact of Buenos Aires, regressions for that province were also run separately. Although in 1999 the control of the executive branch was divided, I considered that year as governed by Carlos Menem since Fernando De la Rúa took office in December. Like in the case of the national government, provinces and municipalities in 1999

were considered as ruled by the governments who were still completing their mandates. The unit of analysis for all six years is the twenty-four Argentine provinces.²⁷

The dependent variable is the total amount of the *Plan Trabajar* in April 1991 million pesos (where one peso equals one U.S. dollar) received by the twenty-four provinces during each year between 1996 and 2001.²⁸ An alternative could have been to measure this variable in per capita terms. But as the *Plan Trabajar* only targets unemployed people, results would have entailed some level of spuriousness.

Five independent variables are included in the OLS models. First, unemployment rate is included as the variable for “need”. Second, popular protest is the variable for “struggle”. This variable is measured as a frequency (i.e. the total number of protests) per year. It only counts blockages made by the unemployed based on daily reports conducted by the National Gendarmerie and completed with information gathered from national newspapers. Unfortunately, these data do not include information on the number of protesters, arrests, injuries, and deaths. Such information could have been useful to build a measure of protest intensity. Previous analyses on urban riots in the U. S. suggest, however, that the number of protests tends to reflect their intensity since the two measures are frequently highly correlated. With respect to the issue of appropriate time consideration for these two independent variables, there are compelling reasons for specifying a contemporaneous (i.e. a lag period of less than one year) effect of unemployment and protests on the distribution of

²⁷ Although Capital Federal (the federal capital) and Tierra del Fuego (former national territory) have different rules governing federal transfers, this particularity does not apply to the case of the *Plan Trabajar*. Thus, there were no reasons to exclude them from the analysis.

²⁸ Data on the *Plan Trabajar* were provided by the Secretary on Work Relations at the Argentine Ministry of Labor. Population data were provided by the Centro de Estudios para el Desarrollo Institucional (CEDI). The legislative data are from the Programa de Estudios Ejecutivos y Legislativos (PEEL), University Torcuato Di Tella. Data on municipalities and governors are from Cao (1999). Data on unemployment was obtained from the Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos (INDEC). Data on protests were provided by the Centro Estudios Unión para la Nueva Mayoría.

the *Plan Trabajar*. As the allocation of the program is dictated by the needs of the moment rather than by past effects, the impact of unemployment rate and protests is calculated for the same year of the distribution (i.e. transfers in 1996 were run with the 1996 unemployment rate and with protest that took place throughout that year).

Third, the percentage of municipalities in each state controlled by the PJ and the UCR/Alianza is the first of the two independent variables included in the models to test the impact of the political preferences of the national government. Ideally, both the percentage of Peronist and Radical municipalities should be run together. Nonetheless, due to the fact that they are correlated at the .001 level (Pierson's $r = -.523$ for 1996-1999 and $-.595$ for 2000-2001), and given the small- n of the model, they seriously affected results. In consequence, I decided to conduct separate regressions to capture the impact of each of them in a more precise way. Four, the second political variable is president's party coalition (Jones 2000). It is simply measured as the sum of the percentages each province contribute to the presidents' legislative coalition in the two Houses of Congress divided by two. Separate regressions were run with a dummy variable for testing the effect of governors' political affiliation, coding it 1 for Peronist governors and 0 otherwise.

Finally, a logarithmic value for province population size was included in the model as the fifth independent variable. Although a population size should have a strong impact on the amount of money allocated, it is expected that the effect of the province's share of the total population will diminish as the size of the population share increases.

Table 2 and 3 provides the results of the statistical analysis for 1996-1999. Results for the years 2000-2001 are reported separately given the independent effect of Buenos Aires. As expected, evidence lends strong credence to the "need" hypothesis. Unemployment rate has a

Table 2: Determinants of the *Plan Trabajar* Distribution 1996-1999 (PJ Municipalities)

Independent Variables	1996	1997	1998	1999
Constant	-21.285** [5.799]	-75.353*** [19.817]	-68.104** [20.756]	-26.685 [17.823]
Log Population	1.465** [.458]	5.331** [1.521]	4.397** [1.660]	1.140 [1.473]
Unemployment	34.735** [10.203]	96.083** [38.538]	94.498** [35.992]	56.613** [25.048]
Percentage Municipalities PJ	2.447** [1.064]	9.391** [3.806]	6.127 [3.695]	5.333* [3.035]
President's Party Coalition	-15.897 [14.470]	-53.632 [48.472]	158.962 ** [54.293]	197.181** [53.129]
Protests	-.403 [311]	-.193 [149]	-.382 [325]	.04705 [.065]
N	24	24	24	24
Adj. R ²	.628	.545	.785	.811

Note: Standard errors are below the estimated coefficients in brackets

*p < .1; **p < .05; *** p < .001

positive and significant impact in the distribution of the *Plan Trabajar*. For example, in 1997 (Table 2) the unemployment unstandardized regression coefficient of 94.498 indicates that a 1% percent increase in a given province's unemployment rate would, *ceteris paribus*, result in 960,830 more dollars received by the province. However, in contrast to my expectations, results do not support the expected impact of protests. Quite the contrary, coefficients are extremely low and with the wrong sign. This finding indicates two important things. First, although episodic protest events of 1996-1997 encouraged the decision of launching the *Plan Trabajar*, the program was primarily oriented to dealing with unemployment. Secondly and

consistent with the development witnessed by the *piquetero* movement (Svampa and Pereyra 2003), this finding captures the fact that in its early origins popular protests were basically a local and fragmented phenomenon that only began to affect policy outcomes when the movement expanded nationwide. This interpretation is supported by estimated coefficients of the PJ's municipalities, which in the first two years are significant in the predicted direction at the .05 level, and after 1997 -a year in which elections for local and national deputies took place- tend to vanish after 1997 though they remain significant at a less stringent .1 level.

Moving for a moment into the analysis of Table 3, which only reports results for the Radical municipalities, OLS regressions coefficients show a statistically significant negative

Table 3: Determinants of the *Plan Trabajar* Distribution 1996-1999 (UCR Municipalities)

Independent Variables	1996	1997	1998	1999
Constant	-23.665*** [5.844]	-76.249*** [19.457]	-65.665** [18.111]	-26.799* [14.793]
Log Population	1.861*** [.486]	6.240*** [1.59023]	4.856** [1.481]	1.660 [1.230]
Unemployment	30.011** [9.896]	70.029** [36.340]	67.054** [32.370]	42.147* [20.766]
Percentage Municipalities UCR	-3.602** [1.363]	-12.380** [4.682]	-12.818** [4.390]	-11.136** [3.147]
President's Party Coalition	-13.897 [13.737]	-51.974 [47.325]	185.725*** [48.798]	214.846*** [43.416]
Protests	-.547 [.302]	-.156 [.144]	-.364 [.287]	.04810 [.052]
N	24	24	24	24
Adj. R ²	.653	.561	.832	.869

Note: Standard errors are below the estimated coefficients in brackets. *p < .1; **p < .05; *** p < .001

impact in the allocation of funds. Clearly, provinces with a high percentage of municipalities controlled by the UCR are punished by the Peronist national government. For instance, in 1998 a 1% increase in the UCR's municipalities resulted in 128,180 fewer dollars allocated to the province.

More striking is the effect of the president's party coalition variable, which is insignificant and negative in the first two years and becomes significant and positive from then on. One possible explanation is that, as local and legislative elections had unsuccessfully passed, and unemployment and social discontent had relatively stabilized, the government reinforced its aspirations to advance on the enactment of some uncompleted structural reforms (mainly the labor and tax reforms). Therefore, the political priorities of the national government moved from rewarding local partners to "buying" the legislators' support.

Table 4 completes the interpretation about the impact of the political variables on the distribution the *Plan Trabajar* in the 1996-1999 period by reporting the statistical results of a dummy variable for Peronist governors. Evidence is mixed during the Menem administration and as expected under the Alianza government. On the one hand, in 1996-1997 this variable is significant in the right direction at the .1 level but statistically insignificant in 1998-1999. Its independent effect, then, is lower than that on the Peronist municipalities in the course of the same years. These findings confirm the interpretation already made in the sense that federal transfers of the *Plan Trabajar* were fundamentally oriented to the municipal level, and shed light on the hypothesis that protests, though statistically insignificant, were mainly a local phenomenon.

Conversely, and as predicted, Peronist governors were not punished by the Alianza government but rather rewarded. Interestingly enough, OLS regression coefficients indicate

that a Peronist governor received almost two million dollars more than governors from other political parties when the Peronist party was in the opposition.

Table 4: Determinants of the *Plan Trabajar* Distribution, Peronist Governors (1996-2001)

Independent Variables	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Constant	-18.552** [5.732]	-66.553** [20.313]	-66.558** [20.579]	-24.535 [18.512]	-22.730** [9.813]	-13.056* [7.503]
Log Population	1.271** [.463]	4.841** [1.594]	4260** [1.655]	1.066 [1.539]	28.556 [21.316]	.844 [.605]
Unemployment	38.790** [10.777]	100.267** [42.969]	113.564** [38.956]	63.496** [27.963]	4.619 [15.865]	8.167 [10.484]
Governors PJ	1.417* [.689]	4.355* [2.425]	3.810 [2.275]	2.434 [2.021]	1.999* [1.054]	1.908** [.789]
President's Party Coalition	-20.272 [15.610]	-56.414 [53.047]	149.649** [54.588]	190.022** [57.997]	28.556 [21.316]	-8.094 [19.898]
Protests	-.277 [.327]	-.155 [.157]	-.444 [.329]	.04304 [.069]	.05401 [.025]	.03783** [.008]
N	24	24	24	24	24	24
Adj. R ²	.610	.483	.786	.795	.709	.830

Note: Standard errors are below the estimated coefficients in brackets. *p < .1; **p < .05.

Tables 5 and 6 report the results of two models for the years 2000 and 2001. Model 1 is the same model as the one applied to 1996-1999, while Model 2 excludes the Buenos Aires province to test its independent effect. No variable but popular protests and PJ municipalities

are significant when regressions are run for the whole country. This indicates that the Alianza government focused distribution on the state and local levels by rewarding opposite Peronist governors and mayors. Moreover, population size is less significant than in previous years indicating that there was a more balanced pattern of distribution. The crucial point here is that coefficients reported by Model 1 reveal a major change regarding the independent impact of unemployment and protest. Actually, the relationship has inverted. In both 2000 and 2001 there is strong support for a positive effect of protests in the distribution of federal

Table 5: Determinants of the *Plan Trabajar* Distribution 2000 (Model 2 Buenos Aires Excluded)

Independent Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
Constant	-21.179* [10.243]		-20.238*** [4.326]	
Log Population	1.518* [.821]	.347	1.583*** [350]	.777
Unemployment	-.0156 [16.295]	.152	9.113 [7.011]	.215
Percentage Municipalities PJ	2.403* [1.123]	.239	1.718* [.822]	.289
President's Party Coalition	29.933 [22.663]	.000	-17.118 [10.955]	-.255
Protests	.06339** [.026]	.419	.001918 [.013]	.024
N	24		24	
Adj. R ²	.679		.604	

Note: Standard errors are below the unstandardized coefficients in brackets. *p < .1; **p < .05; *** p < .001

Table 6: Determinants of the *Plan Trabajar* Distribution 2001 (Model 2 Buenos Aires Excluded)

Independent Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
Constant	-12.204 [7.859]		-13.085** [4.092]	
Log Population	.769 [.635]	.173	.922** [350]	.524
Unemployment	6.113 [10.978]	.058	11.763 [5.770]	.339
Percentage Municipalities PJ	2.802* [1.478]	.174	1.713* [.822]	.334
President's Party Coalition	-7.542 [20.950]	-.059	-11.484 [10.955]	-.198
Protests	.04029*** [.008]	.826	.005640 [.006]	.163
N	24		24	
Adj. R ²	.812		.519	

Note: Standard errors are below the unstandardized coefficients in brackets. *p < .1; **p < .05; *** p < .001

transfers. Indeed, protest is significant at the .05 level in 2000 and the .001 level in 2001. Standardized regression coefficients show that protest is the best predictor of the dependent variable, explaining 41.9% and 82.6% of its variance respectively. In contrast, regression coefficients do not support the “need” hypothesis as unemployment is statistically insignificant. This is an important finding that merits further consideration since, on average, unemployment rate remained almost unchanged and protest continued with their increasing pattern.

In order to see whether the impact of protest was determined by the effect of Buenos Aires, this province was removed and the model was run with twenty-three provinces.²⁹ As it can be observed, the effect of protests disappears and the impact of population size increases considerably. This supports the impression that the new geographical patterns of distribution were less disproportional, and that the strong impact of popular protest was produced by the independent effect of Buenos Aires. To put it shortly, since the Alianza took office there are two different patterns of allocation of funds, one for Buenos Aires and other for the rest of the provinces. This is consistent, however, with the development of the unemployed workers' organizations that followed the pulse of the Buenos Aires province.

Originally, Buenos Aires was a province highly underrepresented in the distribution of funds as it only received 7.5% of the total amount allocated by the *Plan Trabajar* while it had around 47% on the total number of unemployed people in the country. The main reason of such a considerable disproportion is that the province had a major alternative source of funding: the so-called *Fondo de Reparación Histórica del Conurbano Bonaerense* (Historical Reparation Fund of Buenos Aires, FRHCB). This fund supported a huge apparatus of social assistance mounted by the Peronist governor Eduardo Duhalde and his wife Hilda "Chiche" González de Duhalde: the *manzaneras*.³⁰

The Fund was created in 1992 as a result of an agreement between Menem and Duhalde, in which the latter agreed to resign to the vice-presidency and run for governor of Buenos Aires while Menem guaranteed the supply of extraordinary resources to tackle acute social problems in the province (Repetto 2001). This agreement was materialized in the 1991

²⁹As it has been already notice, the same procedure was applied for 1996-1999 and no changes were observed. It is worth mentioning that an analysis of the residual plots reveals that Buenos Aires province it is not an extreme case.

³⁰The *manzaneras* or "Neighbors' Workers for Life" were the women in charge of the distribution of food among the beneficiaries of the *Plan Vida* (Life Plan) in their respective blocks (*manzanas*).

tax reform, where it was established that Buenos Aires would receive 10% of all income taxes collected at the national level. These resources were oriented to several programs of infrastructure and public works, and to diverse programs of social assistance centralized by the Woman's Provincial Council under the command of Duhalde's wife.³¹ Among the vast amount of social programs administered by this council, the *Plan Vida* represented the most significant both in social and political terms. This program provided food assistance to pregnant women and children until five years old. Yet its distinctive aspect was the active role played by the *manzaneras*, who acted as gatekeepers between the provincial government and the beneficiaries, and contributed to develop an extremely efficient and decentralized clientelistic system.³²

Paradoxically, this system of distribution designed to encourage vertical clientelistic practices began to fracture from inside. By mid-1997 a group of *manzaneras* from several neighborhoods of southern Buenos Aires province asked the municipality to be included among the beneficiaries of the *Plan Trabajar*. As the demand generalized, the provincial government was forced to organize a meeting with the claimants and accept to distribute some temporary jobs among them. But this was the beginning of the end as those who did not receive a plan left the organization. In other words, the social crisis hit the core of the system what has been planned to palliate it.³³

³¹The evolution of federal transfers to the FRHCB increased from US 427 millions in 1993 to 627 millions in 1995 (Danani, Chiara, and Filc 1996: 31).

³²Repetto (2001: 231) estimates that by 1999 there were 30,000 *manzaneras* with different level of involvement in the distribution of benefits. Without considering pregnant women, the number of beneficiaries was around one million. Data on the amount of money administered by the Women's Council in 1996 was estimated in US 180 millions.

³³Szwarcberg (2001) reports that common conflicts between beneficiaries and the *manzaneras* regarding the rules that regulated the distribution of food as well as the bureaucratic tasks that these women had to fulfill, were an important factor to encourage many of them to break ties with the Peronism.

In short, the trajectory of the Buenos Aires province and that experienced by the *piquetero* movement marched together. If the first unemployed workers' organization were born with the defeat of the Peronism in the parliamentary elections of 1997, the expansion of the movement took place in the years that followed the PJ's internal fracture.³⁴ But it was not until 2000, when the FTV and the CCC made an agreement and led a series of prolonged blockages in their fortress of La Matanza, that the movement expanded. This was a turning point in the way the *Plan Trabajar* began to be allocated. Originally conceived to deal with unemployment, hinder popular protest mobilization, and gain the support of excluded groups, this emergency employment program became a tool for defiant powerless sectors to increase their political influence and strengthened their organizations.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to analyze the effects of economic, social, and political factors on geographical patterns of distribution in the aftermath of market-oriented reforms. Usually, scholars have focused on the emergence of popular protest movements and their development over time but they have largely overlooked whether defiant actors reached their objectives. The lack of systematic work on this issue is quite unfortunate considering the fact that the essence of such actions is to bring about changes in some aspects of society, a fundamental goal always acclaimed but seldom addressed explicitly.

The wide reappearance of popular protest in Latin America after almost an unruffled decade reopened the debate about the problem of social reactions to economic adjustment programs. A crucial matter that needs to be unpacked refers to whether these organizations

³⁴Indeed, the leader of the CCC Juan Carlos Alderete and Silvia Jayo from the Worker Pole indicated the important role played by the *manzaneras* in the formation of the first unemployed workers' organizations.

have empowered powerless actors by obtaining material resources for their members and gaining access to the design and implementation of public policies. This is not a minor issue since pessimism regarding the efficacy and tenure of powerless movements has dominated writings in the field.

The set of factors identified in this paper are far from being exclusive. Much more research should be done to complete an accurate picture of the phenomenon. Unfortunately, we do not have any systematic knowledge about how the fracture of clientelistic networks and the presence of grass-roots organizations relate to each other. Was the fracture of traditional patron-client relations deeper in those places where the unemployed workers' organizations are more powerful? What levels of individual "departure" took place and how were these organizations distinctively benefited from that? Field research is necessary to address these questions as well as to explore the relationship between clientelistic networks and mechanisms that guarantee the allocation of public resources.

This study also highlights the way in which successive Argentine administrations have used federal transfers to either reward or punish party allies and opposite political forces. In parallel with some empirical works (Calvo and Murillo 2003), an important finding in this sense is that some parties (the UCR/Alianza in the Argentine case) appear to be less able to benefit from political patronage as they have had to reward the main opposite political party in order to govern effectively.

Table 1: A Map of Argentine Unemployed Workers' Organizations

Organizations and Alliances	Partisan Links
<p>1. Squatter Settlement Organizations allied to Alternative Union Confederations</p> <p>a. Allied to the Argentine Workers Confederation (CTA)</p> <p>Federación de Tierra y Vivienda (FTV)</p> <p>Movimiento Barrios de Pie</p> <p>b. Allied to the Class-Based Union Confederation</p> <p>Corriente Clasista y Combativa (CCC)</p>	<p>Coalition of Democratic Socialist Parties</p> <p>Patria Libre (Nationalist Revolutionary Party)</p> <p>PCR (Revolutionary Communist Party)</p>
<p>2. Organizations Dependent on Radical Leftist Parties</p> <p>Polo Obrero</p> <p>Frente Unico de Trabajadores Desocupados (Frutrade)</p> <p>Movimiento Territorial de Liberación (MTL)</p> <p>Movimiento sin Trabajo Teresa Vive</p> <p>Agrupación Clasista 29 de Mayo</p>	<p>Partido Obrero (Workers' Party)</p> <p>Partido Comunista (Communist Party)</p> <p>Movimiento Socialista de Trabajadores (Social Workers' Movement)</p> <p>Partido de la Liberación (Liberation Party)</p>
<p>3. Former ECB and New Guevarist Organizations. Politically Independent</p> <p>Movimiento Teresa Rodriguez (MTR)</p> <p>Coordinadora de Trabajadores Desocupados Anibal Verón</p>	

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